

(Through the Bible) Ephesians - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

Christians should live their lives with humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance, demonstrating a heavenly life on earth.

Duration: 55:12

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-5

Topics: "Spiritual Unity", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon delves into Ephesians chapter 4, emphasizing the importance of unity, humility, and living a life filled with the Spirit. It highlights the need for Christians to manifest heavenly principles in their earthly lives, focusing on relationships at home, in the workplace, and in the church. The sermon also touches on the spiritual warfare believers face, urging them to put on the whole armor of God and engage in prayer for strength and victory.

Transcript

Let's turn again to God's Word. We'll turn now to Ephesians chapter 4. In our last session we considered that Ephesians is divided into two sections. The first three chapters are the foundation on which the next three chapters like the superstructure of a building are built.

And if the foundation is strong, then only will the superstructure be strong. And if you only build the foundation and don't build a superstructure, you're like that man whom Jesus spoke about in Luke 14 who laid a foundation and everybody began to laugh at him because he never built a house. There are a lot of Christians like that who live in Ephesians 1 to 3 all the time.

They always talk about being in the heavenly places. There's that expression, no, which says that you are so heavenly minded that you're of no earthly use. We shouldn't be like that.

Our head is in the heavens but our feet must be on the earth. That heavenly life must be manifested on earth. That's how Jesus lived.

Jesus demonstrated how a Christian must live an ordinary earthly life living at home as a little boy, working as a carpenter, as a full-time worker preaching the gospel, but always bringing that mind of heaven to his life as a little boy at home, to his work in the carpenter shop, and to full-time Christian work. See, we live our life at home in our place of work and if you are in the ministry in Christian work. Jesus had all three.

He lived at home, in his place of work, and in full-time Christian ministry. And in all three areas he demonstrated the spirit of heaven. That is the Christian life.

Anything less than this is not Christianity. And so Jesus was not a he was not one who did not eat and drink what other people ate and drank or didn't dress the way other people dressed. Remember this, that Jesus lived just like other people.

In the garden of Gethsemane they needed somebody to identify him, which proves how much he looked like the other disciples. That unless there was somebody who knew him well, they could not identify him. He was just like the others.

He dressed like the others. He looked like the others. He behaved like the others.

He ate like the others in all his external life. But it was always the mind of heaven that controlled his behavior and character. And he has given us an example how we are to live as individuals in our Christian homes and in the church.

And this is what Ephesians 4 to 6 is all about. It begins with I therefore therefore I entreat you to walk like this. I told you in the first three chapters there is no command.

There is no exhortation. Everything in chapters 1 to 3 deals with what God has done for us. He has lifted us up when we were dead.

He has placed us in heavenly places. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He has given us the Holy Spirit.

He has given us a calling. He has made us his inheritance. He has given us his power.

He has put the enmity to death on the cross. He has united Jew and Gentile. It's not my business.

He has already done it. He is the one who has now promised to do beyond all that we ask or think. And so the emphasis in chapters 1 to 3 is on revelation.

You must have revelation. We saw that in chapter 1. Paul says in chapter 3 verse 3 about revelation on this great mystery. And he says now in our earthly life we must live out this revelation.

And there's a verse in chapter 3 verse 10 which I want to show you before I move on. The purpose of all this is Revelation 3 sorry Ephesians 3 10 that the manifold wisdom of God manifold means many-sided wisdom of God can now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. That means there are demons satanic powers that keep saying you know what they keep saying nobody can live like this on earth.

Then Jesus lived like that as a man. He was made like us tempted like us and he lived a heavenly life. Now the principalities and powers say what Jesus could do it nobody else can ever do it.

Every believer will be earthly minded. God says no I'll show you. I'll show you a bunch of people who live heavenly minded on earth.

Through the church through the unity in fellowship they say the demons say it's impossible for Jew and Gentile to be one. Even the Malayalees and Tamilians cannot be one. The Anglo-Indians and the

Malayalees cannot be one.

God says I'll show you. I'll show you how Anglo-Indians and Malayalees and Tamilians and Telugu people and North Indians and Bhutanese and Sikkimese and Burmese and Sri Lankans can all become one and not you know devalue another person. We can all be one.

Now that includes all the others I left out by the way. It's not just these people I mentioned. It includes everybody.

There are too many to mention. But everybody can be one in Christ and that is to show the principalities and powers. See what I've done on earth.

Now let me ask you what is happening in the church today? Is it demonstrating that wonderful wisdom of God to the principalities and powers? What a tremendous calling we have to build a church on earth. I don't mean a building. People.

That this church like it says in 310 can be a demonstration to these principalities and powers of the tremendous power of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. I don't know whether you see that challenge. That's the thing that's gripped my heart.

God wants such a church on earth. Always think that you're building a church which the big demons must look at and say it's amazing. We thought it could never be done.

In chapter 4 it speaks about how each Christian must walk if we are to be that type of demonstration to the heavenly power. So these evil forces who are always criticizing God for the way his people live on earth. Sometimes that we lose that vision which is there in Job chapter 1 and even here in Ephesians 310.

In view of all this, in view of all that God has done, in view of your tremendous responsibility to demonstrate a life to the principalities and powers, how should you walk? Walk in a manner worthy chapter 4 verse 1 of the calling with which you have been called. You've called with a calling. Walk in a manner worthy of that calling.

Number one, humility. With all humility. I told you the other day the three secrets of the Christian life.

Humility, humility, humility. That's where it begins. Jesus humbled himself with all humility and gentleness.

Why does he begin with these two things? Because Jesus said in Matthew 11 verse 29, take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am humble and gentle. The only two things he told us to learn from him were humility and gentleness. Why? Because in all of us there's a lot of pride and hardness and Jesus wants us to learn from him humility and gentleness.

If you are going to demonstrate this heavenly life on earth, it's not going to be demonstrated first of all by evangelism, healing, preaching, Bible teaching, nothing. Social work, nothing. It's going to be demonstrated first of all in your personal character.

In your attitude of humility and gentleness. Remember always in the tabernacle, God began with the ark. Man always begins with the outside and inside he cleans whenever he has time.

God begins with the inside and moves towards the outside. If you are human in your thinking and approach, you'll be more concerned about the outward appearance. If you are divine in your thinking and

approach, you'll be more concerned about the inside.

In other words, you'll be more concerned about the quality of the people in the church than about the painting on the walls. This can impress people. God looks at the quality of the fellowship of the people you have gathered together.

So humility, gentleness, patience, showing forbearance with one another in love or like one translation puts it, making allowances for each other's faults because of your love. You know that there is no one on earth who's perfect or will ever be perfect till Jesus comes again. And therefore we are working with people who are going to make mistakes.

If you work with me, you'll discover that I make mistakes and you have to bear with my mistakes. And I will discover that you make mistakes and I'll have to bear with your mistakes. And we make allowances for each other's mistakes because we love one another.

And if you've made a mistake, I can cover it up. If you left something undone, I can do it for you. That's how the body of Christ functions, making allowance for each other.

And in it all, verse 3, being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Unity is a great thing in Paul's letters because you know what is the mark of death? When a body dies, when a human body dies, you know what happens? It begins to disintegrate. These are bits of dust that at the moment are the bits of dust are held together.

You know that our body is made of dust. But even though it's made of dust, the bits of dust are all held together because there's life in this body. The moment life goes out of this body, the disintegration process starts immediately.

After a few months, you find it has all become dust. It's disintegrated. It's the same with a fellowship of believers.

Where believers are coming apart, you know death has already come in. Where a husband and wife are having tensions, you know death has already come in. Don't wait till the divorce takes place.

That's many, many years later. Disintegration sometimes starts within one day of marriage. Tensions, fights, little distance, misunderstandings.

It can happen in a church. Two or three studs go with great zeal to work for the Lord in one place. And within a few days, disintegration has started.

Death has come in. So unity, the wonderful thing about this body is that all these little bits of dust are united together that you can hardly see where it is joined. And even if you get an injury in this body, immediately the body processes start to close it up to join it.

It doesn't like a cut in the body. Immediately the body processes go to fight it, to unite. The way this body functions is towards unity.

No separation. If two bones break, if a bone rather breaks into two, you put it together. Do you know that no man on earth can join two bones? You know what a doctor does when he puts a leg in plaster? He cannot join the bones.

Only God can join the bones. He just puts it in the proper place. And in a few weeks, it's joined.

How did it join? Just by putting it together. Because the whole body system works towards unity. Unity.

If there's a breakage, come back together and unite it. This is how the body of Christ should function. And if it doesn't function like that, what you're building is not the body of Christ.

So God is not building a whole lot of individuals. He's building one body. And that's what he's speaking about in Ephesians 4. This building of one body.

He speaks about our being built together. Verse 12 is the building up of the body of Christ. It says in verse 12.

So he goes on to say, preserve this unity of the spirit because there is one body. Now, how do you know there is unity? It says in verse 3, by the bond of peace. If when you think of a brother, your thoughts are always of peace and rest.

You know there is unity. But when you think of a brother or a sister, and you're a little agitated, disturbed, whenever you think of that person, even though you may say praise the Lord, brother, praise the Lord, sister, and outside, there is no unity then. The test always is peace.

Whenever you think of anyone who's in that body of Christ and there's peace in your heart, you know there's unity. So the unity of the spirit is preserved in the bond of peace. There's one body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and so on.

Just let me mention one thing about that one baptism. Some people do not take believers baptism because they think they took one as a child. Now when it says one baptism, it means one proper baptism.

Child baptism is not a proper baptism. And it says here about gifts. To build up this body, you cannot do it without supernatural gifts.

To each of us, grace is given according to the measure of Christ. And then he speaks about Jesus' ascension. Verse 8, when he ascended, he led a captive, a host of captives.

Now I understand that verse to mean that when Jesus died, he went to the heart of the earth for three days and three nights, as he said he would. And we also know that paradise was in the heart of the earth because he also told the thief, today I'll be with you in paradise. So paradise must have been in the heart of the earth.

And that's where he was for three days and three nights. And then he came back into his body in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, came out and he was on earth for 40 days, appeared to many people. And then he ascended.

And when he ascended, he took all those people who are in paradise, who were captives down there in the heart of the earth up with him to the third heaven. Now, how do we know that paradise today is in the third heaven? Because we read in 2nd Corinthians 12 that Paul was caught up to paradise, not down. And he says he was caught up to the third heaven.

So we know that paradise is up there today. And we know from Jesus' words to the thief that paradise was in the heart of the earth at that time. This was the point at which he took it up.

He took all those captives up to heaven. So today when we die, we don't go to the heart of the earth like David and Moses. We go up to be with Christ, like Paul says.

That's where we go. And first he had descended, verse 9, into the lower parts of the earth. Why? How did he go to the lower parts of the earth? Because paradise was there next to hell, but with a big gulf in between.

They could see into each other like the rich man and Lazarus saw. And then he ascended up to heaven. And after he ascended up to heaven, he gave some gifts to the church.

And those gifts were people. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints so that the saints will build up the body of Christ. Read carefully.

He doesn't say the apostles build up the body of Christ. The apostles and prophets and so on equip the saints and the saints build up the body of Christ. So every believer has got a part to do in building up the body of Christ.

But to equip those believers, God has given five gifts, ministries in the church. First are apostles. And those apostles are not only the first twelve apostles.

If you read Acts of the Apostles, you read that Paul and Barnabas were also called apostles. And you read Revelation chapter 2, when there was only one of those twelve apostles living, John, he says, you tested those who claim to be apostles and were false. So that means there were other apostles also.

Some false apostles, but they were genuine apostles. If they were only the twelve, then there's no need to test. You just want to know whether they are one of the twelve.

So there are a number of passages which show there were apostles right up to the end of the first century. And there are apostles today. Apostles are not people who write Scripture.

Not all the apostles wrote Scripture. Andrew never wrote any Scripture. And a number of other apostles didn't write any Scripture.

But they were people who were sent out by God with a specific task. And the apostle means sent, sent one, sent by God, and usually to establish local churches in a number of places, to appoint elders in those churches, and then to be an elder to those elders, to guide them, to solve their church problems, and to lead them to maturity, and then to move on, to lead them so that they take care of those churches, and then to move on to some other ministry. An apostle never stayed always looking after one church.

So that's the ministry of an apostle. He's an elder to the elders of the churches he's planted. Then we read of prophets.

Prophets are those who are given God-given ability to diagnose the problems in a church. It's like a good doctor who can diagnose the problem and give the remedy, do the surgery, remove the cancer, and stitch up the person again. And prophets are not very popular because they're always diagnosing sin wherever they go.

They are diagnosing disease. And just like a person may not be happy with the results of his x-ray or scan, many people are not very happy when the prophet tells them what they are really like. But it's a very, very important ministry in a church.

If you want a church to remain in life, it must have prophets. I'm not talking about these type of false prophets in Christendom today, who are just telling you where to travel, whom to marry, and that type of rubbish. I'm talking about prophets who expose sin in the meetings, and where people are convicted, and they repent, and they turn to God, and acknowledge that God is there.

And third, you have evangelists. Evangelists are those who go out to those who have not heard the gospel, and have got a special ability from God to witness, people in personal evangelism, or large-scale evangelism. And they've got a burden to reach people who have not heard the gospel, and to bring them to Christ.

And God blesses their labors, and bring many people to Christ. Now a prophet may not bring people to Christ. He, like I said the other day, the evangelist is the one who takes the chapati from the plate, and puts it in the mouth.

The prophet is the one who bites it up, and makes it small, and throws acid on it in the stomach, and makes it part of the body. That's not a very popular ministry. This gentle ministry of picking it up, and all is so nice.

But once you get to the ministry of the prophet, that's the thing that makes it part of the body. So the evangelist and the prophet is to work together. So the evangelist goes out, and reaches people, and brings them into the body.

And then pastors, or shepherds. You know what a shepherd is, who looks after the sheep, cares for it. If the sheep is wounded, the sheep needs water, the sheep needs food, the sheep needs to be nurtured.

That's a shepherd's job. To lovingly, tenderly care for the weak ones, for the lambs, and make sure that they grow up in a proper way. That's the calling of shepherds.

And every church needs shepherds. Not just one pastor. Jesus could pastor only 12 people.

So if a church has got 120 people, how many pastors do you need? It's simple division. You need 10 pastors at least. So what does it mean to be a pastor? It doesn't mean to be a full-time worker, who's got a title called pastor so and so, and stands up there.

No. It's a man who's got a shepherd heart. He may be in a secular job, but he's got a shepherd heart for these younger ones, goes and encourages them.

A man could be only 23 years old, and he's encouraging the 15 year olds, and the 13 year olds. He's a shepherd. He's a pastor.

He's a great help to the older shepherd, the older pastor. So as a church grows in size, if there are 20 people, you need at least two shepherds. If there are 40, you need at least three.

Then only it'll grow. So this one man who's a pastor for 3,000 people, he's not a pastor. He's just an administrator and a preacher, who's just glorying in a large church.

He may be a teacher, but he's not a shepherd. Shepherds, you need many, many shepherds in a church. It's impossible for all of them to be full-time workers.

Then it speaks about teachers. Teachers are those who can explain the Word of God, and make what looks so complicated, so simple. So that's another thing.

Every church does not need a teacher, because there are not many good teachers. So you can have one teacher who travels around to 20, 30 churches. But what every church should have is a prophet.

Every church does not need an evangelist, because an evangelist can bring a lot of people from many places and move on. That's why you read in Acts 13, there were prophets and teachers there in the early days. Those teachers moved around.

But what is needed in every church is prophets and shepherds. And the purpose of all these ministries is to build up the body of Christ. In other words, an evangelist must not just have his own ministry, saving souls, and say, go wherever you like, or go back to your old dead church.

That's not the type of evangelist spoken here. Today we have a lot of people like that, who got their own name attached to an evangelistic ministry. And they go and conduct a huge campaign, and people are saved, and they say, please go back to your dead church.

In that dead church, there may not be any shepherd or teacher who leads them to the right thing, to the truth. An evangelist must work together with the prophets and shepherds and teachers. And if he's not himself a shepherd, he must hand over his sheep to a good shepherd.

This is where there's need of cooperation. That's how it was in the early days. Philip was an evangelist in Acts chapter 8, but he was not a shepherd in Samaria.

Other people took over the shepherding responsibility. He didn't just let them wander. And a lot of evangelistic ministry today is just to build up one man's name, and he makes a lot of money.

That's not the type of evangelist spoken here. Here the evangelist is the one who builds the body of Christ. And he says, we have to grow up, verse 13, to the unity.

We must, until we attain the unity of the faith, we must keep the unity of the spirit. Verse 3 says, we must preserve the unity of the spirit. Verse 13 says, until we attain the unity of the faith.

There are a lot of things in which we are not united. For example, you may not agree with my view of the tribulation, and whether the church goes through it or not. That's fine.

But until we agree, maybe we'll agree only when Jesus comes after the tribulation. But, but until then, we must remain united in spirit, even if you hold a different view. And if Jesus comes before the tribulation, I'll tell you, brother, you were right.

I was wrong. But till then, let's keep the unity of the spirit. That's very important.

We have to preserve the unity of the spirit until we attain the unity of the faith. Don't wait till we have united in everything before we keep the unity of the spirit. So we are growing up gradually, verse 13, to a mature man, to the fullness of Christ.

Our aim must be, we are growing, we help others to grow to the fullness of Christ. And we must not be children. We must not be babies, always tossed about here and there.

No. By the cunning of men, trickery of men, their craftiness, that deceit, their scheming. God allows us to be exposed to all this because that's how we grow up.

That's how we get our sense of discernment developed. That's why he has allowed deception. That's why he's allowed false prophets.

That's why he's allowed deceivers around us so that we can discern. That fellow is not right. His spirit is not right.

And every time you discern like that, you don't have to judge him, but you must discern and avoid him. And thereby your spiritual senses are exercised. Verse 15, speaking the truth in love, we grow up.

See the balance between truth and love. Should you speak the truth? Yes. Can you speak it any way you like? No.

You must speak it in love. If you cannot speak the truth in love, don't speak it. Wait till you have enough love before you speak the truth.

Like I said the other day, let's have the blackboard first, that's love. On that, you write the truth. Don't write the truth if you don't have the blackboard of love first.

That's how you grow up to the head, even Christ. And from there, the whole body is fitted together by that which every joint supplies. You know the joint? The joint speaks of fellowship.

You know how many joints there are in one hand? There's one of the shoulder, one of the elbow, one of the wrist, and then in the fingers, there are joints. And each finger, there's one, two, three. Each finger, one, two, three.

These are all joints. And it's the functioning of the joints of fellowship that make the body function together. For example, if I have a strong upper arm and a strong lower arm, but the joint is not functioning, what can I do with this hand? If all my joints are like this, what is the thing that makes this hand useful? Not just strength, but fellowship.

That's called a joint. Here's a good brother, the upper arm. Here's a good brother, the lower arm.

But unfortunately, sometimes they can't fellowship with each other. You know, there's when people have problem in their joints, they call it arthritis. Very painful.

And a lot of Christians, churches, a lot of arthritis. Now, have you seen how when these joints function properly, there's no noise? But some people, when they have arthritis, it gets krak, krak, krak, krak. It's all noise.

And some people's fellowship is like that. Between two brothers, always some krak, krak, krak going on between. Sad.

But see how all these things function so freely and no sound at all. That's how your fellowship with other brothers must be. If it's not like that, take some medicine for arthritis and get rid of that sickness so that you come to the place where your fellowship is glorious.

That is God's will. Okay, so Christians, this I say therefore, don't walk like other people in the world walk. Verse 17.

Their understanding is darkened. They are excluded from the life of God. You must walk differently.

You did not learn Christ, verse 20, in this way. We have to learn Christ. You know the difference between learning the Bible and learning Christ? You understand what it means to learn Christ? You look at the Bible and look at Jesus and learn Christ.

And he says, if you learn Christ, you won't walk like the Gentiles. And you put aside your former manner of life. And you're renewed in the spirit of your mind, verse 23.

It speaks about putting away falsehood, verse 25. Relationships, when you are angry, verse 26. Don't sin before the sun sets.

Set right every wrong attitude you have, verse 26, with everybody else. Husbands and wives, don't ever go to sleep without setting your quarrels right, without removing tensions. When the sun sets, all anger should be over.

Don't give the devil an opportunity. If you don't do that, you've given the devil a chance between both of you, whether two brothers or husband and wife. Then it goes on some practical advice.

Be careful about not stealing. Be careful about the speech, verse 29, that comes out of your mouth. And don't ever do anything that grieves the Holy Spirit, verse 30.

Let all bitterness, all wrath, all anger be put away. That verse teaches us, there must be zero bitterness in my life, zero anger, zero gossiping, zero slander, zero wrath, zero hatred. I remember seeing in an automobile factory once, a little board which said, our aim is zero defect.

They wanted to produce cars with zero defect. And I thought, boy, I want to keep that on my wall. My aim is zero defect.

Even if it takes time to get there, I want to come to the place where I have zero bitterness, zero anger, zero gossip, zero slander, zero sin. It takes time, but let's get there. Look at these automobile manufacturers.

They press on to zero defect. Why don't Christians press on to zero defect? Let us be kind to one another, forgiving each other as Christ has forgiven us. Be imitators of God.

Verse 32 says, as God forgave you, forgive other people. That's where you must imitate God and walk in love. And don't ever talk about anything immoral, verse three, or impure, or anything filthy, verse four, or silly, or dirty jokes.

That's not fitting. But you must be thankful people, because you must remember that impure people have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. And it goes on speaking about purity in our life.

And then it says, in the short time that you have left, verse 15 and 16, chapter five, make the most of your time, because the days are evil. How important for the days in which we live, the days are evil. Therefore, make the most of the time that you have, not being unwise, but knowing what the will of God is.

Then this wonderful verse, be not drunk with wine, verse 18, but be filled with the Spirit. There are two sides to that. One side is, don't be drunk with wine.

That's a command. The other side is, be being filled with the Spirit. It's a continuous word.

Continuously be filled, not just once for all. That means even if you were filled with the Spirit once, you need to be filled with the Spirit again in the evening, again next morning, again next evening. It's a continuous thing.

There's no use coding a date. Be continuously filled with the Spirit. Let God fill you all the time.

Now, what I want to say is, here are two commands. Two commands of God. One, don't get drunk with wine.

The other, be filled with the Spirit. Now, if you had a person in your church who was drunk with wine and comes to the church meeting, you'd be horrified. Say, that fellow's disobeying a command.

What about if a person comes to the Sunday meeting and he's not filled with the Spirit? Don't you think he's disobeying a command? It's the same verse. Two commands. Why is it we look at only one command and not at the other command? This is how we, our mind is blinded when we read the Scripture.

You're horrified when you see a man drunk, but you're not horrified when you see a person not filled with the Spirit. Because we think one is important, the other is not important. But the same verse says, don't be drunk, be filled with the Spirit.

Both are equally important. If you think getting drunk is serious, I'd say not being filled with the Spirit is also serious. Any day.

Can you afford to get drunk once in a month? No, not even once a month. Can you afford not to be filled with the Spirit even one day in a month? Not even one day in a month. It's exactly like that.

If you're not drunk even one day in a month, you must not be without being filled with the Spirit even one day of the month. Okay, when you are filled with the Spirit, what will be the mark of your life? It's not primarily speaking in tongues, but it'll be speaking in a pure way. Your tongue will be on fire.

Notice the emphasis again is on your speech. Verse 19. You will speak, there'll be joy in your speech.

Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. There'll be a spirit of thankfulness and rejoicing even in your conversation to one another. It won't be like we read earlier about gossip and slander and all the other things mentioned there.

You will always be giving thanks. Verse 20. Mark of a spiritual man is that he's a thankful man.

Thankful for everything God allows in his life and all the other things that are mentioned right up to the end of chapter 6. A spiritual man, his life is described from verse 19 of chapter 5 till chapter 6 verse 24. That is a spiritual man. It begins with thankfulness to God.

It begins with praise and worship and it continues in subjection to one another. Verse 21 chapter 5. It continues on to home relationships chapter 5 verse 22 onwards and it continues on to fighting against the devil chapter 6 verse 11 onwards. All this is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Be filled with the spirit, comma, be filled with the spirit, comma, all the rest of the letter to Ephesians. So the secret of this walk and warfare on earth is being filled with the Holy Spirit. You cannot walk the way God wants you to walk without being filled with the spirit.

You cannot fight the devil without being filled with the Holy Spirit. You cannot live at home as a husband or a wife or bring up your children properly if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You cannot praise and worship properly if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

So that's very important. In the home it speaks about three areas of relationships. First of all husbands and wives 5 22 to 33.

Then children and parents chapter 6 verse 1 to 4 and then masters and servants chapter 6 verse 5 to 9. In those days like in many of our homes in India there are servants in the home and it also applies to people who work in an office. They are servants in that office, government servants or servants of a company. Even if you're earning 20,000 rupees a month you may be a servant.

You have a boss on top of you. It tells you how you must work with that boss and if you're a boss with people working under you it tells you here how you must be a boss in your office towards people who are under you and how you must treat the servants who work in your home. So there are a number of instructions here on the home and the office which is the place where we spend almost all our time.

We spend almost all our time if you are in a secular work either at home or in an office 90% of your time anyway and a spirit-filled person his life is transformed in his home and in his office. It's only then that he can build the body of Christ. You know Ephesians speaks about building the body of Christ and Ephesians also speaks about how you work in your home and how you work in your office as a boss or as a servant and the principle first of all that overlies all these areas is Ephesians 5 21.

Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Now when husbands want to tell their wives how wives should behave at home which verse do they go to? They go to Ephesians 5 22 and if the wife is clever I'm giving a little hint to all the wives here you must point out to your husband before verse 22 there's verse 21 where it says be subject to one another. So the wife must be subject to the husband and the husband must be subject to the wife.

Did you know that the Bible says a husband must be subject to the wife? It's there in verse 21 before it goes to verse 22. What does it mean? Does the father have to be subject to the child? Yes just like the child to the father. Does the master have to be subject to the servant? Yes just like the servant to the master.

The verse that controls the remaining verses is verse 21 and many many people never go to verse 21. The secret of good relationships at home is verse 21. What does it mean to be subject to one another? Everyone has got a boundary that God has drawn around him.

A husband has got a certain circle, a wife has got a certain circle, a child has got a certain circle, a servant has got a certain circle. For example let me take a servant first. If you've got a person working in your home let's say it may be a little girl but that little girl has got a circle of a boundary.

For example you're supposed to give her her meals, you're supposed to give her her salary, you're supposed to respect her dignity, not violate her in any way. That's a little circle and you must be subject to that. You must not deny her her salary, a decent salary, her food etc.

Anybody who works for you must be paid properly, must be given their rights. That right, those rights which they have is that circle and by giving them those rights I'm being subject to them. Not being subject means I say you don't have any rights.

I'm, you're my slave. You have no rights. That's not a Christian way, it's not like that.

Even a child, for example, when a child is being punished for some bad behavior I've always made it a rule as a father when my children were small never to punish them publicly in the presence of guests because that is a double punishment. First of all the belt and secondly the humiliation before all these visitors and that humiliation can be more painful than the belt or the rod. So a child has got a little circle, circle of dignity and the father must be subject to that child in that circle and say I must not punish this child and humiliate him in the presence of others.

Maybe his friends are there, his classmates are there. Imagine if a father beats his child in the presence of his classmates. That's a double punishment.

Humiliation before his classmates which is worse than the rod. So the father must be subject to the child and take him home into a private room and there beat him. That's the meaning of being subject to one another.

Recognize even the child has got a small circle of dignity about it. Respect that circle. A wife has got a certain circle.

She may want to do things in a certain way in her kitchen. Okay that's her sphere. The husband need not go there and interfere how she runs her kitchen.

I remember a beautiful story I heard of a man of God who was a very orderly man. His whole mind used to function perfectly in order and his wife was chaotic. All in confusion and her her whole way of life was like that.

If you went into her kitchen all the plates and this thing is all slipshod and not orderly at all and sometimes the husband would go to help his wife wash up the dishes. It's unfortunately what Indian husbands sometimes don't do but this husband had some sense that his wife needs a little help in the kitchen and used to help his wife wash up the dishes and then he used to see this disorderly way in which everything was kept and he could have tidied up that kitchen. He could have told his wife just let me tidy up that kitchen.

You know what would have happened if he had done that? His wife would have been so discouraged. I can't think like my husband. I'm such a wise man.

He would put the plates and the forks and spoons in exactly the same disorderly way in which he used to keep it in the kitchen so that she felt comfortable there. What did they have in that kitchen? Fellowship. Beautiful fellowship.

No tension but the kitchen was a chaos. Now some people they have order in the kitchen but no fellowship. Who is the wise man? Tell me.

The man who allowed the kitchen to be like that and had fellowship with his wife. You know there are some people who tell their children you must not play around in the house and turn everything upside

down. I say where else can they play? They have to play at home.

I say this is their place. I say I'm not bothered while the other fellow comes and thinks about my house. I want my children to be happy in my home.

I want fellowship with my children. I want fellowship with my wife and I'm not bothered if there's orderliness and tidiness and all these things which that's good if you can have it along with fellowship but fellowship is more important. So be subject to one another.

Here is an example and then it goes on to speak about wives must recognize the authority of their husbands. God has placed him as the head. The husband is the head of the wife.

In what way? Just like the head of the body. Just like a man cares it says for the members of his body. Verse 28.

So a husband must love his wife as his own body. What does it mean to be the head? Head doesn't mean just passing orders. The head passes orders.

Tells the hand to do this, do this. Legs do something. Tongue to speak.

The head controls. The brain gives orders but there's something else the head does which husbands must also do. What is that? If there's the slightest injury anywhere in the body immediately the head feels it and does something.

What should husbands do? They must be very sensitive to the hurts of their wives. I don't mean physical hurt, emotional hurts. When a wife is feeling sad about something the brain must sense it.

The head, the husband. When a wife is feeling depressed husband must sense it. When a wife is feeling discouraged.

When a wife is hurt by something somebody said, husband said. He must sense it. If you don't sense it like that you're not fit to be the head.

What type of head are you? Just giving orders? That's a dictator. That's not the head of the body. The head of the body gives orders at the same time is very sensitive to the slightest pain.

Even a pinprick the head feels it. That's a challenge for husbands and if a husband can be like that and a wife can work in submission to that husband there's a beautiful picture of what Christ and the church should be. That is the type of home we must build.

It may take time. Let it take 20 years but let's build that type of home. Children must be brought up chapter 6 to obey their parents.

Most important thing we have to teach our children is to obey their parents. Slaves and masters not by eye service. Masters without partiality.

Then finally we come to chapter 6 verse 10 onwards where we speak about this speaks about this warfare with Satan. Immediately after the home comes this subject on warfare. Warfare is always in the home first.

The immediately after the section on the home you have the section on warfare. Stand against the devil. Put on the whole armor of God because we are not struggling with flesh and blood.

Verse 12 if you want to fight the devil number one qualification stop fighting with human beings. Verse 12 stop fighting with human beings. Anybody who fights with human beings cannot fight demons.

The reason why many believers cannot fight the devil is because they are fighting with other human beings. I made a decision many years ago in my life that I will never fight with a human being. You make that decision and then you'll be able to fight demons and do something for God in the church.

That's number one. We are to fight against these demons and to fight against these demons there are a number of things we need. He uses the picture of armor.

A belt, a breastplate, feet, shoes, shield, sword etc. Number one is verse 14 the belt of truth. If you don't have truth in your life that means sincerity, reality, no hypocrisy, no telling lies.

Brother, sister forget about fighting the devil. If you got lying in your system the devil is a liar. He'll have fellowship with you.

You can't fight him. If you want to fight the devil who's a liar there must be no lie in your life. Your life must be transparent.

Number two you must have the breastplate of righteousness. There are two types of righteousness. The righteousness with of Christ with which we are clothed we stand complete in him and the righteousness of Christ which we partake of through the Holy Spirit little by little in the areas where we have light.

In other words a clear conscience in my heart. That's the breastplate. Clothed with the righteousness of Christ and not conscious of any unrighteousness that I'm doing in my life.

Number three shoes. Shoes the readiness to preach the gospel. Do you know that preaching the gospel is one way by which we can overcome Satan? Those who are lazy and never think of serving God they are overcome by Satan frequently but those who are active serving the Lord they are protected.

I remember in my younger days the thing that protected me so much from so many temptations that young men face was I spent all my spare time serving the Lord. I was working. I was spent my spare time either studying the Bible every day of the week doing something for the Lord.

Twice a week in the open air down the streets of Cochin. I think I covered all the streets of Cochin in those couple of years I worked in the naval base there. Evangelism, giving out gospels, visiting homes, having little meetings in homes with two three people.

Always busy. That protected me from so many temptations. Many of you have temptations because you've got a lot of spare time which you're just lying in bed sleeping or doing nothing else.

Feet shot with the readiness always ready to share the good news with somebody. You try that and see if you don't overcome Satan. The next one the shield of faith the devil tries to attack in so many ways.

We say I believe in the love of God. I believe in the love of God. I believe he loves me.

I believe he loves me. Every missile is quenched. The sword of the spirit with Jesus used it is written.

I don't care what you say Satan. The Bible says he will not allow me to be tempted beyond my ability. The Bible says he's able to keep me from falling.

The Bible says vengeance belongs to him. I will not take revenge. You quote the word of God and he will flee.

And overall this is to keep all the armor oiled. How do you keep the armor oiled and fresh? With all prayer. Verse 18.

Praying at all times in the spirit. In the spirit does not mean in tongues. It means not in the flesh.

That means not for carnal things. In the spirit means with your mind or in tongues. Either way but it must be in the Holy Spirit.

And praying for other saints. Paul says pray especially for me. We need to pray especially for God's servants like the Apostle Paul who are out in the forefront fighting the Lord's battles.

And if we do that we can build the body of Christ and make the triumphant against the gates of hell. Let's pray.

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