

# Let's Revel in Ephesians

A Devotional Study  
King James Version

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## Dedication

Dr. Willard M. Aldrich, Th.D.

Like sons of thunder,  
Dr. Willard and Dr. John  
taught,  
prayed,  
and served  
beside one another as  
associates,  
brothers,  
companions,  
defenders,  
enthusiasts,  
friends  
for more than 50 years.  
With Dr. John taking the more public  
ministry  
and Dr. Willard, as long-time president  
of the Multnomah School of the Bible,  
the more private,  
the two served their Savior  
with unrivaled devotion.

**The one could not have served so well**  
without the other.

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# Let's Revel in Ephesians

## Chapter One

**We are now starting a study** of the Book of Ephesians and I trust, as we do so, the cry of your heart and mine will be that God will increase our capacity to know Christ Jesus our Lord. Oh, to be like Paul when he could say, “I count everything but loss just to know Him. The things that were gain to me, the things that I used to run after, I count them just the refuse of the streets.”

God grant that today you and I might have an increasing passion to know the Lord Jesus. And may I say, He will not make Himself known apart from His Word. The full revelation of Christ is found in the Scriptures, but I'll never know it unless I take the time to search and to meditate on the Word of God. The Spirit of God will then reveal to you and to me the wonders of His wisdom, of His knowledge, of His counsel.

Oh, friends, God grant in these days of uncertainty, days of lack of peace, days so full of perplexity, that we can turn to Him and know that He will direct, that He will reveal to us His purpose and His counsel—even for us today.

**Now, I would like to go through Paul's prison epistles, starting with Ephesians, then Philippians**

**and finally Colossians. My reason for that is this: In the book of Romans we were dealing with the marvelous revelation of the grace of God—of how God could take men and women who were fit for hell and so transform them, so fit them to stand in the presence of a holy, righteous God, that they are acceptable to Him.**

God also gave to the Apostle Paul another revelation and that is the revelation of the church which is the body of Christ. This is found in the book of Ephesians. We have a great need to know the purpose of God for the church and for this age. There is so much confusion even among God's people today with respect to the church and to Israel, between law and grace, between works and faith until in so many places it is all jumbled up. I do not believe that God intended for us to be jumbled up in our belief. I believe the Lord is very exact in everything He says.

**In the book of Acts**, chapter 15:14 and 16, I find it stated that God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name; and that, when He is through doing that, He is going to return and rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen down. He will come and fulfill the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. But in between this time element, between the resurrection of our Saviour and until He comes for His own, He is doing a special work in the world.

**You see, my friends, before the flood there was one people, one language. There were no nations as far as we know. Then from the flood to the cross we**

**have Jews and Gentiles, just two groups in the world. Either you were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or you were a Gentile.**

Most of your Old Testament, indeed I would say from the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis right through to the end of the Gospels and the crucifixion of Christ, is given over to God's dealing with the people Israel. Then, after the resurrection of Christ until the Lord returns, we have another group, the church, the body of Christ.

**Paul, writing to the Corinthian church** in 1 Corinthians 10:32, declares—"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor the church of God." One finds this revelation of the church, its nature, its destination, its life, its responsibilities given to the Apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians.

Now He gave this to the church of Ephesus, possibly one of the most spiritual churches of the first century. Its history can be found in Acts chapters 19 and 20. It is also mentioned in Revelation 2 and in 1 Corinthians 15:32. In Acts 19, Paul went on to Ephesus and the Lord used him in the transformation of lives there. Indeed, you find in that wonderful chapter that God wrought special miracles by the hands of the Apostle Paul.

Now, why at Ephesus?

**Ephesus, as you know**, was the great city where the devotees of Diana worshiped. It was a city of sorcery, of magic, of all connected with her worship. Yet it was here that Paul spent three years. It was here that God wrought special miracles through this

man, and it was here that the Word of God grew and multiplied.

When you come to Acts 20, the Apostle Paul is on his way back to Jerusalem; and at the end of the chapter he meets the Ephesian elders on the shore at Miletus. He reiterates all that God has done for him and through him in Ephesus. It's a marvelous passage.

And then in Revelation 2, the Apostle John speaks of the Ephesian church and greatly commends it. God had only one thing against the Ephesian church and that was that these people had lost their first love. That is, they had lost their fervent love for the Saviour. It's so easy, is it not, for you and for me to lose that fervency of love for Christ. It's so easy to become indifferent and cold at heart concerning Him. This was true of the Ephesian church.

**As Christ stood in the midst** of the church (and I quote Revelation 2), He commended it for so much. And then He said—I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. . . . Repent and do the first works.

First love produces first works. Oh, what a need for this today. I'm sure that if the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John were in the Christian church in our country today, they would inform us that we had lost our first love, that joyful anticipation, that living in expectation of the coming of the Lord and longing to see Him whom having not seen we love.

**The book of Ephesians** is one of the most astounding epistles in the whole New Testament. It has been called the Book of the Heavens. We're heavenly in our calling, heavenly in our walk and heavenly in our warfare. I would say that the book of Ephesians is comparable to the book of Joshua in the Old Testament. Joshua took the people of Israel, crossed the river Jordan and came into the land that was full of pomegranates and flowing with milk and honey. He had warfare, and God told him that occupation was by possession.

Likewise, when we come to Ephesians, we read that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. It's as if the Spirit of God were saying to us as He did to Joshua, "Go in and possess your possessions." This is a wonderful, marvelous revelation of the church, the body of Christ.

**God expects us to walk** on earth just as He would expect us to walk in heaven.

But you say, "Mr. Mitchell, we're living on earth in weak bodies."

I know that, but do you think God has two walks for His people? One in heaven and one on earth? God does not have two standards for His people. If you boast of the fact that you are a son of one who is God, then walk that way. The book of Ephesians tells you how to do it.

If I were to take Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, I would put it this way: In Ephesians you have Christ ascended, in Philippians it is Christ satis-

fied, in Colossians it is Christ complete. We have the truth stated in Ephesians, we have the truth practiced in Philippians, we have the truth guarded in Colossians.

**In the book of Ephesians**, we see the will of a sovereign God. You can't read the epistle without realizing something of the fact that our salvation begins with God, is continued by God, is going to be finished by God, and He's going to do the whole business according to His good pleasure.

In this book, we are seeing an eternity past and eternity future. I want you to see the scope of this book. Take, for example 1:4—According as He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. In Ephesians 2:7, let me use my own translation here, “That to all created intelligences He is going to make known in eternal ages the wisdom of God through the church.”

**Here we see the hand** and the will of a sovereign God. To me this is an astounding thing. It is as if God were pulling back the shades, the curtains and allowing us to look way back into eternity before the world was ever made; and then He makes us look the other way into the eternity to come and see His purpose accomplished.

The marvelous thing is that you are a part of that purpose. He chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world. In the ages to come, He still sees you.

May I say this to you? God saw you and me in Christ before the foundation of the world, and

through eternal ages He is going to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus. Why should you and I worry about the next 24 hours?

**You know, it is a strange** thing about us Christians. We trust our eternal souls to God, but we can't trust Him for our need for the next 24 hours. You say, one is intangible and the other is tangible. Not necessarily so. God's Word is enough. God has spoken. The eternal, sovereign God, full of grace and truth, rich in mercy and great in love has manifested His will in eternity past and He will reveal it to us in eternity future; and in the between times as He has promised, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper (Hebrews 13:5,6).

As we enter this book of Ephesians, it is going to be with real expectation of blessing.

Notice in chapters 1, 2 and 3, you have some positive facts that God has accomplished in His people. I'm giving you three R's so you will remember them. In the first chapter it is a question of redemption. In chapter 2 it's a question of reconciliation. In chapter 3 it is a matter of revelation. These have to do with our position in Christ, with some positive facts that God has accomplished.

**Now in the last three** chapters, especially 4:1 through 6:9, we have the practical side of it, our walk in Christ. God beseeches us to walk worthy of our vocation. For example, we are to walk in the unity of the Spirit. We are to walk in new creation. We are to

walk in love. We are to walk in light. We are to walk in wisdom, and we are to walk in submission.

After you get through that, in chapter 6:10 to the end you have our warfare. We have a heavenly position, we have a heavenly walk and then we have a heavenly warfare as Paul says that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against wicked spirits in the heavens.

Now, let's look at Ephesians verse by verse.

1:1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

**Here, Paul presents himself** as “an apostle by the will of God.” In the book of Romans, he started by saying, “Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, called an apostle.” In Ephesians, we see the sovereign will of a sovereign God being very prominent.

Now in Galatians 1 and in 1 Timothy 1, he writes a little more in detail concerning his call as an apostle. He was called by a risen Christ, and He's called by the commandment of God. It's an amazing thing that his command, his authority is from God. In fact, I would say that his message to us is dependent upon his authority as an apostle. If he is not a real apostle of the risen Son of God, then his message has no authority.

We see that the source of blessing is from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here in the very introduction of the epistle we are immediately

ushered into the presence of God the Father and God the Son.

**May you today revel** not only in His grace, not only in the peace He gives, but may we revel continually in the presence of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

Isn't it a wonderful thing that the source of all blessing is from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

And then in verse 2, remember Paul is writing to all the saints of God and that takes in you and me as the "faithful in Christ Jesus." He writes,

2. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**As I have said so often, peace is always the result of grace. Where there is no grace, there is no peace. How does Paul state it? "Grace be to you, and peace."**

**Now in Ephesians** we have the revelation of the church, the body of Christ. I have labeled chapter one, "Redemption." In the first verses, three to six, we're dealing with this question of "redemption." And here we have the work of the Father in our redemption.

By the way, it's rather remarkable that from verse three down to verse 14 we have just one complete sentence. One thing runs into the next.

And you'll notice as you read verses three to six, there are four great things that God the Father does for us in our redemption.

The first one is in verse three.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

**Now, remember, I said** the book of Ephesians is comparable to the book of Joshua in the Old Testament, in that as Joshua brought the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, their occupation of it would come by possession. God said to him that every foot of ground they put their foot on would be theirs. They walked by faith.

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Every spiritual blessing that God has for His people is ours. Not that He's going to bless us, but that He—has—blessed us. All that He is and all that He has are ours. We possess this land by faith.

You remember in 1 Corinthians 3:21-23, where Paul says "All things are yours."

Why? Because you belong to Christ; Christ belongs to God. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. Just as God said to Joshua—Arise, be of good courage; walk in and possess your possessions. It's all yours. I've given it to you. Now go and experience it—that's what we have here.

**He has blessed us.** Oh, listen friends, we are rich; but too many of us Christians are living like paupers. All that I need in my life I find in Christ.

You know, every once in a while someone comes to me and says they want me to have certain experiences. And by the way, I'm not opposed to experiences. Thank God for every experience you have with God. We don't have enough of them. But on the other hand, there's a danger of trying to get somebody else to have the same experience as you have; and, my friend, it doesn't work out. I have dealt with hundreds of people who have been deluded and disillusioned on this question. Somebody has a great experience with God; and, because they have been so blessed and so happy, they want everyone else to have the same experience.

**And so people try** to get the same experience and some don't. Most of them don't and they get discouraged. It's detrimental to faith. And, listen, no Christian has any more than you have in Christ. He hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

A preacher once said to me, "Mr. Mitchell, you know that God has more for you."

"Oh," I said, "I don't think so. I have everything I need in Christ. Do you believe I'm a Christian?"

He said, "Yes."

"Do you believe I have Christ?"

"Yes."

"Then, sir, can you add to Christ?"

**I have all things in Christ;** I have not experienced all things that I have in Christ. Indeed, I would say nobody on the face of the earth has yet experienced everything they have in Christ. It's going to take eternity for us to experience all the blessings that we have in Christ. But that doesn't alter the fact that He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. It's a wonderful thing.

Go in and possess your possessions.

Walk with the Saviour, but don't walk like a spiritual pauper. You're rich. Draw on your bank account in heaven. Draw on your resources in Christ.

Where do we walk?

In the heavenlies and the rest of the book of Ephesians will expand on this. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Thank God for the blessings you've had; and, as you walk with God in His wonderful sovereign way, He will give you more blessings and the experiences He thinks you should have. And you will be satisfied with what He has given you.

**Now, that's the first one.** The second one about the Father is in verse 4.

4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him.

I'm going to stop right here. The "in love" I'm going to leave until the next verse.

He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame. Time would fail

me to go into Acts 15:18 or the 139<sup>th</sup> Psalm to tell you that God knew me before I was formed in my mother's womb and called me by His grace. We're chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

Do you realize that the Lord of Glory saw you before there ever was a world? That back in the very counsel chamber of God, He saw you and He loved you and He made a plan to redeem you and to fit you for His presence? Will you not just sit down with me for a moment and meditate upon that?

According as He has chosen us in Him before—before—the foundation of the world, before there ever was a human race, before there ever was a world. Away back somewhere in eternity in the counsel chamber of the living God, He saw you and He chose you to be holy.

**It does not say** He chose you to be saved. Don't read that in there and put words in there that are not there. He chose every believer to be holy. When? Before the foundation of the world.

That's a great statement, isn't it? In John's gospel in chapter 17:24, Jesus said—Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. Before the foundation of the world He chose us to be holy.

Now, I want you to think about that today. If I may change the wording—He chose you to stand before Him, not only holy but without blame. He chose you to stand before Him so holy and without blame

that no one could produce any evidence before God that you ever were a sinner. Way back in eternity He had you on His heart.

**My, what an amazing thing.** No wonder Peter could talk about it in the first chapter of his first epistle. Our Lord was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for us who believe in Him that our faith, our hope, might be in God.

And if God had you in His heart before the foundation of the world, He has you on His heart today.

I'm talking to you Christians. God redeemed you, brought you to Himself, blessed you with every spiritual blessing, and He chose you. He put His hand on you and determined that you would stand in His presence in the ages to come, looking just like His Son, Jesus Christ. My friend, this is amazing, is it not?

Can I leave that with you today? Will you think upon it, meditate upon it, thank the Lord for it – and believe it!

**Now the purpose of election** is that we might be holy. The purpose of redemption is also that we might be holy. The purpose of election is also that we might be cleansed and that we might be kept. In 1 Thessalonians 4:7, we have this amazing verse—For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

**And in the same epistle,** 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24, we have this statement concerning the God of

peace—And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

You see, I repeat it, my friends, the ultimate purpose of all election is to be holy. The purpose of redemption is to be holy. We've been reconciled and cleansed by the blood of Christ.

In Ephesians 5:26, 27—That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

**You take the book of Jude**, verse 24—Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy.

And way back in eternity, the full accomplishment of His gracious purpose was worked out. If God had not chosen us to be holy, we would never have chosen Him. Get this idea into your head and your heart, into your very wrinkles. People begin to tell me that they don't believe that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, and they read into the verse that which was never the intention of the Spirit of God.

**May I digress for a second.** In all Bible study, try to see what the mind of the Spirit of God is and what He says. We are not to take a part of a verse here and a part of a verse there and build up a doc-

trine, but we're to find what is the intent of the Spirit of God in giving it to us. The whole chapter is dealing with redemption. And I repeat it, in verses three to six, what part did the Father God have in our redemption? He blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame.

And if that is the purpose of God, my friend, for everyone who trusts the Saviour, that purpose is going to be accomplished. Don't try to limit the will of a sovereign God or the power of a sovereign God. Again let me say, if God had not chosen us to be holy, I'm sure we would never have chosen God as our Saviour and Lord. Think about that.

Now we come to verse five.

**We have the third thing** that the Father does for the believer.

5. In love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

**Allow me to change** the wording here. May I?—Having determined that we shall be adopted into His family as His sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

He determined that we who put our trust in the Saviour would be His sons. It's a question of adoption into the family of God as the sons of God. This is a relationship; this is a position. In love He deter-

mined to adopt us into His family, not as servants, not as angels, but as His sons.

You remember in Romans 8:14-17 we have a new relationship—For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, where by we cry, Abba, Father. . . . And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

**In verse 29 of the same** chapter, we have where God has determined that we shall be—conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

In Hebrews 2:9, 10—But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Then He talks about those who are sanctified. Hebrews 2:11—For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

**That He might bring** many sons unto glory He became the captain of their salvation through His suffering. You see, this is God's purpose. Even the Apostle John speaks of this in 1 John 3:1-2 when he said—Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons

of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

**Adopted into the family** of God as sons! Imagine! I wonder if we people who profess to love Him, profess to know Him, if it ever really dawns on our consciousness that we are the sons of one who is called—God. He has determined to adopt us into His family as sons, according to the good pleasure of His will—not according to the good pleasure of my will, but according to the good pleasure of His will.

It's the will of an omnipotent, sovereign God who picks up sinners, rebels, renegades, the ungodly, and He transforms them into saints. He forgives their sins; He blesses them with every spiritual blessing; He chooses them to be holy and then determines that they shall stand in His presence as His sons.

My friend, what a picture! What a blessing!

Has it ever dawned on you, that you can say, "I have been adopted into the family of God as one of His sons to stand before God, holy and without blame; that I'm one of those whom God has blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies?" And He does it not because I want Him to, but He does it because He wants to. He chose, He blessed, He determined that we should be His sons.

**My friends, why don't you** and I just spend the rest of today—oh, yes, do our work—but way back in our hearts and our minds and our devotion revel in

the fact that we, today and again tomorrow and through eternity, will be the sons of one who is God.

We have been brought into the family of God, an eternal family where death doesn't even cast a shadow, into a family that's eternal, into a family that's beyond the understanding of angelic beings, into a family where we stand before Him holy and without blame as the sons of God. It's according to His good pleasure. It's according to His will.

Oh, friend, Christian friend, let us no longer live like paupers. Let us live here wherever you may be, wherever you may work, as the children of One who is God.

**Revel in it.** Meditate upon it. Rejoice in it.

And it isn't anything I have done or would like to do, but it's according to His will and good pleasure that every sinner who puts his trust in the Saviour stands in His presence as His child.

Why not revel in that today?

Rejoice.

Say it to yourself.

Get down in the presence of God.

Cry out, "Abba, Father. I wonder and marvel that I'm Your son, Your child, eternally Yours because I've taken Your Son, Jesus Christ, as my Saviour."

Revel in that today, will you?

**Now we come to the fourth** thing with respect to the work of the Father in our redemption. We find it in verse six—

6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Well, how else could He accept us? You know, this is a wonderful thing. What can you and I do just to be in Him. I love those verses in John 14 when our Saviour said in verse 20—As my Father is in me, I am in you, and you are in me.

You have this also in John 17. Isn't it a wonderful thing that we are in the One who is so pleasing to the Father? In fact, I would say that Jesus Christ is the only man who ever lived on the face of the earth of whom the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." You find this in Matthew 3 and 17 when He was baptized by John in the River Jordan and when He was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration in 17:5—This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!

**Where does God see you?** Where does God see me? In One in whom He is well pleased. We are accepted in the Beloved. All that Jesus is before God, that's where you and I stand. All that I need to stand before God, I find in Him.

You remember, Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 1:30 when he said—But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Now I say this very humbly, we are accepted in all that Jesus is before God. Isn't this an amazing thing? Sit down calmly and analyze this. Meditate upon it. Think of a Holy God, a righteous God, an

omnipotent God. How can you and I stand before Him? There is only one place a man or a woman can stand acceptable to God and that is in Jesus Christ, the One who put away all our sins, having burst the bands of the tomb and defeated man's greatest enemy.

**When you and I put** our trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour, we stand before God in all the merit, in all the beauty, in all the righteousness of the Son of God, accepted in the Beloved. You know very well that Jesus Christ can come into the presence of His Father, acceptable. Nothing can in any way hinder His coming to the presence of His Father who is holy, who is righteous, who is love.

And you and I can come with that same confidence, with that same boldness. Why? Because God has accepted us in the Beloved. He hasn't accepted us in some religious rite. He hasn't accepted us in some works that we do. He hasn't accepted us because we're religious. No, we're accepted in the Beloved.

**Here is a union** that is perfect, that is eternal. All that Christ is before God is what we are. I say, there is enough truth here for you and me for the rest of our days to glorify God continually. There is enough truth here for you and me to dedicate ourselves and all that we are to God. How else can we stand? What else can give us hope? How else can we have peace with God if we are not accepted in the Beloved?

And again I repeat, God has confidence in just one man, that's the Man Christ Jesus. God has absolutely no confidence in any flesh, neither yours nor mine—neither religious flesh nor good flesh nor bad flesh nor any kind of flesh. God has no confidence in the flesh. And Jesus could say, "I do always the things that please Him."

And unless we are in Christ Jesus, we are not acceptable to God.

You say, "Why, Mr. Mitchell, you're making it very, very narrow."

**Yes, I am, because once** I see what God is, that He is righteous and that He is holy, that God cannot deny His own character when it comes to the question of sin, then I know that sin must be punished. Jesus, His Son, came and bore your sin and my sin and took it away. He has made us accepted in the Beloved. It is not that I have accepted God in the Beloved. He has accepted me in the Beloved.

The action is on God's part. He accepts us in all the merit and beauty and righteousness of Christ. Remember, Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." And unless we are in Christ Jesus, there is no standing before God.

**My friend, will you revel** in this truth today—that you stand in the presence of God in all the merit and righteousness and beauty and sweetness of the Son of God?

Oh, what a wonderful thing this is. What assurance, what joy, what blessing, what hope comes into

our hearts when we realize we stand before God in all that Jesus Christ is.

Won't you revel in that today?

Now we come to the work of the Son in our redemption. Whom the Father blessed and chose and accepted, the Son redeemed. So we have from verses 7 to 12 of chapter one the work of the Son in our redemption.

**Here we have the purpose** of God worked out, the execution of His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ to make us acceptable before God. And if God is determined that we are to be before Him holy and without blame, if God has determined that we are to be accepted in all that Christ is, then He must provide the things so that our acceptance and our fellowship with Him will be complete.

Now I want to make myself very clear before I take up this question of the work of the Son in our redemption. I want you to understand the purpose of God, the will of God before the foundation of the world. He has chosen us according to the riches of His grace; He has chosen us according to the good pleasure of His will; He's declared that we shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace; He's declared that we shall be holy and accepted in all that Christ is before him. Then He must work out that thing whereby you and I individually can come into the good of what He has already determined.

**In other words, there must** be a foundation for our faith. I repeat it, being a holy God and men being in sin, if we are to be accepted before Him, some-

thing must take place. His righteous character must be vindicated and our sins must be put away once for all forever. Before God can do anything for us and with us and in us, His character must be vindicated.

As a righteous God, He cannot let sin go by unpunished. And if we are to stand before Him, we must have a righteousness, we must have a holiness, we must be without fault; so it must be worked out somehow. We have it here in verses 7 to 12—the work of the Son in our redemption.

**Now just as there were four** things concerning the Father in our redemption, likewise there are four things about the Son in our redemption. I say again, because man has lived in sin, he's been disobedient, he's been rebellious, he's dead in trespasses and sins. Then he must become the object of His grace. And God in infinite grace has provided the ransom; for we read in verse 7—

7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

**You remember,** as we studied Romans 3:24 we took up this question of redemption; and I'm going to repeat a few things concerning that to refresh your memory. This word "redeemed" means to set free by the payment of a price. There are two things involved in redemption. There's a price that must be paid; and because the price is paid, the slave must be emancipated, must be set free. As Romans 7:14 says, we were sold unto sin.

Ephesians 2:2 says—Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world. We lived then in the desires of the flesh and the mind. And 2 Corinthians 4:4 says—The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. And when our Saviour came, He came to provide a ransom. In Matthew 20:28—Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

**The same thing** is found in 1 Timothy 2:6—Who gave himself a ransom for all. He came preaching deliverance. And I love those verses in Luke 4:18 when Jesus said—The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

You see, when our Lord came, He came preaching. He came delivering. He's the only one who can deliver sinners from their sins. We who were slaves and sold unto sin must be emancipated. The price must be paid and the slaves set free.

**So we find that the** ground of our redemption is through His blood. Verse 7 says—In whom we have redemption through His blood.

Remember, Colossians 1:20 says we've been reconciled or He made peace through the blood of His cross. In Hebrews 9:12—He entered once into the holy place with His own blood and there obtained for

us an eternal redemption. God sees the blood of offering and is satisfied. In 1 Peter 1:18-20 we have—Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

**In Revelation 1:5**—Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. In Revelation 5:9, we read—Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

You notice the word that I am emphasizing is and the ground of redemption is “through” the blood of Christ; that is, through His work on the cross. I am well aware of the fact that there are those today in religious circles who don’t like to talk about the blood of Christ.

I’m reminded of a preacher who one time was preaching on the blood of Christ; and when the service was over a dear, well-dressed lady came to the pastor and said, “Pastor, I wish you wouldn’t talk about the blood of Christ. It is nauseating to ladies and gentlemen.”

**He said, “Yes, that’s true, lady, that’s true.”**

And she said, “Oh, I’m so glad you see it.”

“Yes,” he said, “I see it. But Jesus Christ did not die and shed His blood for ladies and gentlemen. He

shed His blood and died for sinners that they might be redeemed from their sin.”

It's not the value—let me put this very clearly to your heart and mind—it is not the value that men place upon the work of God's Son at the cross. It's not the value that men put upon the blood of God's Son. It is the great value that God has placed upon the blood of His Son. Remember in Hebrews 9:22, it says—Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

**There are those who teach** that, when you talk about redemption by blood, it's a religion of gore. They say that this is something that has passed down from the dark ages. This question of animal sacrifices is abhorrent to the present day man, and some such statements are continually being made.

My friend, I don't care what men say. I don't care what value men put upon these things. I do know what the scripture says concerning the value that God has put upon the blood of His Son. God has put such a value on the blood of Christ that the sinner who comes and accepts the Saviour and that work which was accomplished for him has not only been redeemed but set free. He's emancipated. And from what have we been redeemed? We've been redeemed from sin.

**You have that in Titus 2:14**—Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. In Galatians 1:4—We've been redeemed from this present, evil world. In Galatians 3:13—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a

curse for us. In Galatians 4:4—But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Hence, we are no longer under the authority of sin, no longer under the authority of the world or of the law and its curse. We've been set free. We've been loosed eternally. For Hebrews 9:12 says—He obtained for us an eternal redemption. And I want this very, very clear. The character of God does not change and, if He has declared “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” my friend, this is a fact.

**And how glad I am** that Jesus Christ, God's Son, came and shed His blood that you and I might be redeemed. As the Apostle Paul could say in Galatians 6:14—God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

In Him we have redemption through His blood. Won't you today thank God, not only because He died for you, but because He put away yours sins and that the ground of your redemption is the work of Christ at the cross. And that God has accepted that work and emancipated you and me from sin and its guilt, from its bondage, from its power.

Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it;  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed through His infinite mercy;

His child and forever I am.

Sing it today, will you?

**When one thinks of the depths** of the riches which God has portrayed and given to us in His Word, aren't you and I ashamed of ourselves that we know so little of it? We appreciate so little of the riches of His grace. We live like paupers. The tragedy is that we become indifferent to the wonderful grace and love of God. And the worst tragedy is not that we're just indifferent but that we're satisfied to be indifferent with our ignorance of the things of Christ.

I just pray that as we study together the book of Ephesians dealing in the first chapter with this wonderful redemption we have in Christ Jesus that the Holy Spirit will take the things of Christ and make them very real to you and me, that we might learn to revel in the love of Christ, that we might appreciate the wonders of His grace and the marvels of God's purpose whereby sinful, rebellious man can be transformed from being a child of wrath into being a child of God, can be transformed from one who is a rebel into a saint, can be transformed from one who is afar off to one who is made nigh by the blood of Christ.

**From verse 7 running right** down to verse 12, we have the work of the Son in our redemption. We have been purchased with a price and have been emancipated. We are free to glorify God in all that we are and all that we do.

Now we come to the second thing that the Son of God has done in our redemption. Let us read those words, please, in verse 7—

7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace,

8. Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

**In whom we have redemption**—we're redeemed from sin, redeemed from this present evil age, redeemed from the law and its curse.

You know how we used to sing that song, "Once for All"—

Free from the law, oh, happy condition.  
Jesus has died and there is remission.  
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall;  
Christ has redeemed us once for all.

**I say it is a wonderful thing** to have a redemption that is pure, that is rich, that's perfect and that's eternal. And again, may I be allowed to quote from Hebrews 9:12—By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

We have forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Here, I repeat, it is divine forgiveness. I think you must confess with me that there cannot be any sin in heaven. God's holy character is unchangeable and sin must be put away forever. It is a wonderful thing that Christ Jesus bore all our sins, and when He bore all our sins, He must forgive all.

**Do you believe that** Jesus Christ bore all your sins in His own body on the cross?

You say, "Yes."

Then how many did He forgive?

Why, He forgave all.

And if He bore all, how many did He put away?

All of them.

He left none for anything else?

No, my friend, when He died to put away sin, He did a perfect job; and He forgave us all our sin. Psalm 103:3 says—Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. The same psalm, verse 12 says—As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.

**It's final. It's complete.** It's eternal.

We have forgiveness according to the riches of His grace. You see, riches of His grace proceed from the cross. Oh, what a wonderful truth is divine forgiveness.

You know, when you and I forgive somebody, this is the way we say it: "Well, friend, I'll forgive you this time, but never let it happen again."

I'm so glad God doesn't forgive us that way, aren't you? Indeed, we pat ourselves on the back, we feel so holy and so righteous and so gracious when we forgive somebody their sins and then we tack on this thing, "All right, I'll forgive you this time. I've forgiven you three times and I'm not going to forgive you any more."

**Bless your dear heart**, you don't even measure up to Peter. Peter said, "Lord, I'll forgive a man seven times."

The Pharisee said, "I'll forgive a man twice."

The Law says, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Jesus Christ said seventy times seven.

This is what we need today, forgiveness. We need a forgiving spirit, not a vindictive spirit. And how often shall I forgive my brother? Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven me.

Oh, friend, listen. Won't you revel in the forgiveness, the divine, perfect forgiveness on the ground of a Saviour who loved you and died for you.

Yes, revel in it.

**Now we come to the third thing.** In verses eight to ten we've been brought into a fellowship with God; in the knowledge of His will and purpose.

Let us read these verses, talking about the riches of His grace—

8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

**He redeemed us.** He forgave us; and not only that but He abounds toward us in grace in that He

wants to share with us now His purposes. It pleases God to have us share the secrets of God.

I wonder if we Christians have ever begun to realize the tremendous place of importance, the tremendous position we have in Christ; the marvelous thing that God has done to bring you and me into a relationship, into a forgiveness, into a redemption, into an acceptance, into a standing before God in Christ where God not only gives us life and forgiveness but He brings us right into His counsel chamber and wants to share with us the secrets of His counsel, of His purpose, of His will.

He has brought us into an intimacy in the very heart of God, where God wants to unfold before you the very secrets of His counsel. He wants to reveal to you His purposes and His will; for men, for the world, for the universe.

**Paul mentioned some** of them in 1 Corinthians 6 when he said—Don't you know that we shall judge the world? Don't you know that we shall judge angels? Don't you know that your body is a member of Christ? Don't you know that your body is the sanctuary of God? Don't you know that you've been joined to the eternal God in such a way that He's brought you right into His own heart? He's brought you right into His counsel chamber and that He wants to make known to you and to me the very secrets of His purpose?

**Now what in the world** is this, the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself? The mystery of His will is that

God today is doing something new. This is a mystery hidden in God from past ages; the church of Jesus Christ made up of individual Jews and Gentiles. And He not only gave Himself to bring into being this church, but He gave Himself to us. I mean by that that Christ Jesus, God's Son, and the believer have been made one. We've been made one in light, one in purpose, one in body; and this body is called the church.

The mystery of His will is that God should take men and women, Jews and Gentiles, and make them one in His Son. And there's a time coming when He's going to gather everything in Christ, whether it be in Heaven or on earth. Christ in that day will be revealed as the one who is pre-eminent. In the dispensation of the fullness of time every created intelligence in heaven, in earth, in hell is going to be under His authority. You also read this in Colossians 1:16-19.

**Jesus Christ is going** to stand out as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. One day, every eye shall see Him and they that pierced Him and all the kindreds of the world shall wail because of Him. Think of it! They will wail because of Him, when they see that the one who was supreme over all is none other than the one they have rejected, the one they have despised, the one they have cast out.

I say, is it not wonderful that God has brought you and me not only into redemption and forgiveness but into fellowship with Himself and His purposes and plans? In the ages to come, He is going to show

forth the exceeding great riches of His grace and His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus. We can share with God in His future purposes.

**We come to the fourth thing** which the Son of God does for us in our redemption, namely, we have obtained an inheritance,

11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

What a wonderful thing that we are partners with him in his inheritance. Did you ever stop to think of the wonderful inheritance you have in Him, in this one who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour? We are heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We have an eternal, complete, absolute inheritance in Christ. We have an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that cannot fade away. We cannot be touched by the powers of hell and our inheritance in Christ can't be touched by either men or hell.

**Why does He do all this?** As it says in verses 11 and 12, He determined this, not because of your faithfulness, but because of His sovereignty. The ultimate purpose of redemption is the glory of God. In the last words of our Saviour, when He spoke of the fact that He had completed the work the Father had given Him to do, He asked for one thing—Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

When I think of the revelation of God to us in this wonderful, blessed book, I wish and pray that the Spirit of God will take you and take me and enlarge our capacity to receive the truth; that He would open our eyes to the wonderful truth which He has displayed in this book. May we have ears open to what He has to say to us personally. This is a new revelation that He had given to His people through the Apostle Paul.

**We have in Ephesians 1:3-6 what the Father did in our redemption; and then from verses 7 to 12 we have what the Son of God did in our redemption. The Son of God redeemed us and He forgave us and He brought us into fellowship with God that we might be to the praise of His glory and that the ultimate purpose of our redemption is the glory of God, who has been pleased to put His hand on you and me if we've trusted the Saviour. He's brought us into this wonderful position of an inheritance in Christ, an eternal, perfect, complete inheritance that we might be to His glory and to His praise.**

Now we come to the fifth aspect of redemption in the chapter and this is the work of the Spirit. Let's read from the end of verse 12 through 14—

12. Who first trusted in Christ.

13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Now here we have the work of the Spirit of God in our redemption. That which was essentially ours by the will of the Father and instrumentally ours through the work of the Son is now experimentally ours by the work of the Spirit. Having trusted in the Saviour, we are sealed.

**Now this is not a second work** of grace. This is something that happens the moment you accept the Saviour. God declares that everyone who has put his trust in Him is sealed until the day of redemption. God declares before everybody that He has a purchased possession. He chose us. He bought us. Now He possesses us.

Or, if you take this passage, “The Father chose us before the foundation of the world” in verse 4. And then the Son redeemed us and that is in verse 7. Now the Spirit of God seals us. Whom does He seal? Those believing—“in whom also you trusted after you heard the good news, the word of truth,” the good news of your salvation in whom also after you believed, you were saved.

The King James version says here, “After that ye believed.” You take any revision of the New Testament and you will find it is in the present tense, “on believing” you were sealed. That is, the moment we accepted the Saviour, the moment we put our trust in Christ, we were sealed by the Spirit of God. You

heard the good news of your salvation and you believed the word; you confessed your sin, you committed yourself, you trusted yourself to Him and that moment you were sealed by the Spirit of God. God has a possession. We have become God's possession.

**You know, sometimes I would** like to put it this way. You women will appreciate this, I'm sure, if I say that I'm in the "will call" department. You men may not know much about that. But, you know, a woman goes down to the store and there are a lot of goods on display. So what does she do? She chooses what she wants and then pays for them.

Now they're hers, but they're so big and clumsy she decides to put them in the "will call" department where they will be put until someone calls for them so that when she gets in her car, she can go around to that department and say to the man, "I have a package in here for"—whatever her name is. He may have hundreds of packages in there, and he doesn't just blindly throw a package at her. Her name is on her package. It's hers. It's her purchased possession, but it is in the "will call" department until she picks it up. She takes it home and enjoys it.

**Now God chose us in verse 4** to be holy and without blame; and the Son of God came along and paid for us, and the Spirit of God came along and possessed the possession for Him.

Allow me to go to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 just to press this little point home to your heart. The Apostle Paul says—Don't you know that your body is the

temple of the Holy Spirit which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore, (because you've been bought with a price, because you are not your own, because you belong to Him) glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's.

You see, I'm down here on the earth. I've been bought. I've been purchased. I've been sealed until the day of redemption. And one of these days, the one who bought me is going to come for me. That's why I love that passage in John 14:3 when Jesus said to His disciples—If I go away, I will come again and I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.

**He's not going to send** an angel or an archangel or anybody else. He is going to come Himself because He loves you and He bought you for Himself.

Listen, friend, you who put your trust in the Saviour, do you know you belong to Him? You are His purchased possession and He sealed you by the Spirit. And He's saying to all created intelligences in heaven, earth and hell, take your hands off that person. He belongs to Me. I bought him for Myself. As Acts 20:28 says—God purchased us with His own blood. He loved us and bought us for Himself.

Oh, my friend, revel in that for today, will you? You're God's purchased possession. No power in earth or in hell can take you from Him. You belong to Him and He loves you with an everlasting love, sealed by the Spirit of God. It's a wonderful thing to be a child of God, to be a Christian, and to know that

we are His purchased possession. God will take care of that which He has purchased; God will take care of His possession.

**Revel in that** and glorify the Saviour.

Now, let's look again at verses 13 and 14—

13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

**We have four definite things** concerning the work of the Holy Spirit here. For example, everyone who puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is born of the Spirit. Now that speaks of relationship. You have it also in Romans 8:14-15—For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Or take John 1:12-13—But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. That's what our Lord meant in John 3:5, when He said—Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

You see, that's the first thing; that means relationship. We're members of His family.

**And the second thing** the Spirit of God does is indwell us. That means that these bodies become the temples of God. Why? That we might show forth something of the character of God. You remember, you also have this in John 14:16-17—And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

He speaks of the Spirit of God who is with you and He shall be in you and will not leave you orphans in John 14:18—I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

What for? That you might reveal the Father, even as I have, He says. In other words, the Christian becomes God's channel to express His character and His love to men.

**And then the third thing** that the Spirit of God does the moment we're Christians: He baptizes us into the body of Christ. And this speaks of union with Christ. You remember, in 1 Corinthians 12:13, we read—For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

In John 7:37-39, we have—In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

One could go on about the ministry of the Spirit of God; suffice it to say that God does four definite things the moment a person accepts the Saviour with respect to the Spirit of God. He's born of the Spirit; that's relationship. He's indwelt by the Spirit; we become God's channels of expression. We're baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ; and that speaks of our union with Christ and it speaks of our preservation.

**Now the fourth one** is this in Ephesians 1:13-14—We are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, which is the earnest of our inheritance. Earnest means the foretaste of our inheritance. You remember, in Ephesians 4:30, we have—Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. In 2 Corinthians 1:22, we have—Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

These are the three times we have this in the New Testament, just these three places—Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30 and 2 Corinthians 1:22 where you have the Spirit of God sealing the believer. One could enlarge on this by referring to Jude where he says we're preserved in Christ Jesus.

**You see, that indicates** a finished transaction. When you seal something, the thing is finished. It

indicates ownership. We belong to Him. It indicates identification or distinction. That is, we're marked out as the sons of God. Just as our Saviour was marked out as the Son of God by His Spirit, so the believer has been marked out from all others by the Spirit of God. Outside forces cannot come in to spoil the one who belongs to Him.

So we are sealed in Christ, chosen in Christ, placed in Christ, preserved in Christ. I tell you, it's a wonderful thing. As 1 Corinthians 1:30 says—Of him are ye in Christ Jesus. In Ephesians 1:4, we are chosen in Christ. What better place can you be, my friend, than to be in Christ? This means life. And how long are we sealed? It says in Ephesians 4:30 that we are sealed until the day of redemption.

**“What day is that?”** you say. “I thought we were already redeemed.”

Yes. But Paul is talking about the completion of our redemption. In Romans 8:18-25, we are saved by hope. He talks there in those verses about the redemption of the body. You see, I'm saved. I'm a three-part man. I've a spirit, I've a soul, I've a body. My body is not yet redeemed. I am redeemed, but my body has not yet experienced that redemption; but it will.

As that passage in Romans 8 declares, the very creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God when these bodies will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. My friends, it's a wonderful thing. We've been redeemed and we've been sealed until the day of redemption. Not until the day we

backslide, but until the day of redemption. That's what Paul means in 2 Timothy 1:12—I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit until that day. What day? The day when I stand in His presence, conformed to the image of His Son.

**As I said, Ephesians 1** states that we were brought into the purpose of God and that He works all things out after the counsel of His own will. None can say to God, “What are You doing?” God either breaks us or He transforms us. He either judges us or He saves us. When He saves you, He saves you with an everlasting salvation; He makes the thing sure by sealing us by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption.

**By the way, this is** what Peter means in 1 Peter 1:5—Of a salvation yet to be revealed. And you have it in Romans 13:11—And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. He's talking about the completion of our inheritance. And the Spirit is given to us as the earnest or the guarantee of that completion. The earnest is the same as the inheritance. Christ in glory guarantees our access, and the Spirit of God in us guarantees the finished work. It's all to the praise of His glory, as you have in verse 14.

Just go back a little bit. In verses 5-6, we have the Father's work—To the praise of the glory of His grace. In verse 12, we have the Son's work—That we should be to the praise of His glory. And in verse

14, we have the work of the Spirit—Unto the praise of His glory.

**Did you ever think** of it? All to the praise of His glory. The ultimate purpose of all redemption is the glory of God.

One of these days, you and I will stand in His presence. We will not only be conformed to the image of His Son, just like the Lord Jesus, but we'll know that through eternity we're going to bring eternal praise to Him.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if you and I lived today just for the praise of His glory? Instead of living for self, instead of living for mere material gain, instead of living for the lust of the flesh and the desires of the mind, why not live today for the praise of His glory? Just to live today for the Lord Jesus. Oh, that we might glorify Him in our actions, in our words, in our very attitudes.

**You've been living** for yourself; you've been living for your own pleasure, and for some reason or other you've become so occupied with yourself that you've made yourself miserable and everybody else miserable. Now why don't you live for the Saviour? Live for His praise today. Be for the praise of the glory of His grace today and you'll not only be happy yourself but you'll make everybody around you happy.

You'll be a different person. Live for Him today.

**In Ephesians 1:15-23**, we are given the prayer of the apostle Paul, and this is a prayer for knowledge. When we come to chapter 3, we have the next

prayer and this is a prayer for fellowship and power. Now, the reason for the prayer is found in verses 15 and 16—

15. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16. Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

**It is a marvelous thing** to me to realize that Paul's life was one of unceasing praise and prayer. One cannot read the epistles of Paul, whether it be Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, any of these books without finding that his was a life of unceasing praise and prayer. And it's a wonderful thing that these Ephesian believers in the early church had their faith known and their love toward men known. I wonder if that could be said of you and me, where our faith toward God and our love for the people of God is so well known? You see, I can't see your faith except as it is demonstrated. God sees my faith; men experience my love. That's why when Jesus talked to His disciples, He said—By this shall all men know ye are my followers if ye have love one for the other.

**This is something you experience because love is not something that is dead. Love manifests itself by sacrifice, by doing things where we become unselfish, by doing something for the one that we love. And Paul could thank the Lord for the faith they had toward God and for the love they had one for the other. And because of this, he ceased not to give**

**thanks. Here was unceasing prayer and unceasing thanksgiving.**

I'm reminded of those verses in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 where Paul speaks of unceasing joy, unceasing prayer and unceasing thanksgiving. This should characterize the people of God. It's a wonderful thing that some of these churches had their faith toward God spread abroad.

**I wonder sometimes** if we in our churches today in our land know very much about the faith and love of other Christians. Sometimes we throw barriers up between each other and the result is we do not have the experience and the joy of knowing of the faith of other Christians and of their love for God's people. Again I suggest, the more you claim to love the Lord, the more you'll manifest that in your love towards God's people; and, hence, you'll be filled with unceasing prayer and unceasing praise.

17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

**Now in verse 17,** we have the source of our knowledge, that it is in God. Now, these dear Christians had faith. They had love, but they needed to know something of God's purposes as we found in verses 8 to 10 of this same chapter. Notice in verse 17 that He is called "The Father of glory." You remember in Acts 7:2, we read that the God of glory appeared unto Abram when he was in Ur of the Chaldees. This speaks of God in His majesty; this

speaks of God in His authority; this speaks of God in the fact that He is God and knows everything—of His omniscience and all the wonderful attributes of God.

As the God of glory, He appeared unto Abram and said, “Get out,” and Abram got out. Who wouldn’t when the God of glory appeared unto him? You find in 1 Corinthians 2:8 that He is called the “Lord of glory.” We read—For had they known it, the princes of this world would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

**And then in the 24th** Psalm, two or three times He is called the King of glory—Be ye lift up (open up), ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? And David goes on to speak about our Saviour in exaltation.

And, if you want to take the book of John, chapter 17, in that great prayer of our Saviour’s, notice that the keynote, especially of the first few verses is the glory of God—Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. . . . Father, glorify thy Son that the Son also may glorify thee. . . . The glory which thou has given me I have given them. . . . Father, I will that all those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.

I’m quoting John 17:1, 2, 5, 22, 24 as these verses come to mind.

**The glory of God**, as I said in the first part of the chapter, was seen as the ultimate purpose of redemption. And now, the God of glory, the Father of

glory, is the source of all knowledge. And by the way, knowledge is a gift from God that He would give to you. He wants us to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. God wants you and me to know Him.

Now, I recognize that God gives according to our capacity. You remember in John 16:12-13 that Jesus said to His disciples—There are many things I would like to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. That is, you do not have the capacity to receive it. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. It is not so much that you want to know God. God wants you to know Him. It's not that God is holding back. The fact is that we are holding back.

**God wants to really** increase our capacity to see the wonderful truths in Christ. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ is the center of all His knowledge. In Colossians 2:3, we read that God has hidden in Him, that is, in Christ, all His wisdom and all His knowledge. The riches of His wisdom and knowledge are centered in Christ Jesus; and this so got hold of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:10, in fact from verses 6 to 10, that he says—I count everything but loss just to know Him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

You can't read the book without realizing his tremendous desire to know God. Daniel 11:32 says—The people that know their God shall be strong. In Psalm 103:7, God made known His ways unto Moses and His acts unto the children of Israel,

for the great cry of Moses in Exodus 33:13 was—  
Show me now thy way that I may know thee.

**And God said**—My presence shall go with thee,  
and I will give thee rest.

How is Moses going to know God?

God says, “My presence shall go with thee.”  
How can you know God today? He has said, “My  
presence shall go with thee.” He’s revealed this in  
His word. He’s already made known to us the mys-  
tery of His will. That which He has purposed in  
Himself until the countless ages of eternity He makes  
known to the people of God today.

**The problem is that** we do not have the capaci-  
ty to receive it. I’m sure that the Lord today is will-  
ing to increase your capacity and my capacity for the  
truth of God. The only question is, will you and I  
take the time for God to speak to us? We run around  
day after day. Our days are simply jammed full of  
programming, of purposes, of wanting to do this and  
wanting to do that, and we budget our time and every  
half hour is accounted for. But we have little time for  
God. You see, we don’t take the time to let God  
speak to us. This is why we’re so ignorant of the  
things of Christ. We do not take the time to let God  
talk to us.

And here we find that the Apostle Paul is say-  
ing—May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Fa-  
ther of glory, give unto you wisdom, the spirit of  
wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

**I say God wants to give** that to you that you  
may know Him. You also have this in Colossians 1:9

when Paul prays—For this cause also since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you (what for?) and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. He wants you to know and He wants me to know His purposes and His counsel.

I trust as we read this book of Ephesians there will be the cry of your heart and mine that God will increase our capacity to know Christ Jesus our Lord and to be like Paul when he could say, “I count everything but loss just to know Him.”

**Let me repeat** because I am so burdened that this gets across to you. The things that were gain to me, the things that I used to run after, I count them just the refuse of the streets. Just to be found in Him, just to know Him—oh, God grant that you and I today might have an increasing passion to know Christ Jesus.

And may I say that He will not make Himself known apart from His Word. The full revelation of Christ is found in the scriptures. But I'll never know it unless I take the time to search and to meditate on the word of God. The Spirit of God then will reveal to you and to me the wonders of His wisdom, of His knowledge, of His counsel.

Oh, friends, God grant in these days of uncertainty, days of lack of peace, days so full of perplexity that we can turn to Him and know He will direct, that He will reveal to us His purpose and His counsel—even for us today.

**We come to verses 18** and 19, and we have the purpose of the prayer. The first thing about the purpose of the prayer is that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened.

First of all, he talks about the eyes of your heart. It's an amazing thing that the gospel of Jesus Christ is an appeal to the heart. It's only the heart that perceives; but with our heads, with our minds, we get a vision of the truth.

Of course, Paul is not speaking of a fleshly heart, this organ in our bodies. He is speaking of the seat of our personality, the seat of our affections, of our devotions. And the gospel is the only good news on earth that appeals to the heart, that can reach the heart, the deepest recesses of our being. That's what he is talking about. It's not a heart of flesh, not even our mind. He wants to go beyond that into the very recesses of our own being that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened.

**The Apostle John in 1 John 2:20** encourages his babes in Christ that they have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. In 1 Corinthians 2:10, Paul speaks of the fact that God has revealed the things to us by His Spirit, even the very deep things of God. Indeed, the work of the Spirit of God is to enlighten our hearts as well as our minds. It is with our hearts that we perceive. Jesus in John 16 says the Holy Spirit is going to reveal to us the very deep things of God. He takes the things of Christ and makes them known to us. In other words, He's praying for our innermost being to be illuminated to the

truth. He wants the whole man to be opened up to the truth of God.

Now you will notice following this that you have three “knows.” That is, Paul prays we might know what is the hope of His calling; he prays we might know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance and he prays we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward.

**In other words**, he wants us to know, first of all, the call of God, that we might know what is the hope of His calling. Someone has said that these are the three “whats.” The hope of his calling, the riches of the glory of his inheritance and to know the power of God.

Mark this, shall we take time with this, with these three things? What is the hope of His calling? Does God ever call? Yes, He’s talking about what the saints are before God in Christ. He chose us and He desires us to become complete, absolutely complete in Him. Just as you have in Hebrews 12:2, where we read concerning our Saviour—Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God.

**He saw beyond the cross;** He saw a redeemed people. He saw a group of rebels who would be transformed into saints. He saw those who were dead in sins and saw them alive and righteous before God. And the hope of His calling is the fact that saints of God will stand in the presence of God, conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Now you have that in Ro-

mans 8:29 where it says that God has determined that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. Or, supposing that we take the book of Jude 24 and Hebrews 12:2—Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding great joy—Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God.

**Here we have our Saviour's joy** in presenting His people faultless before His Father. You see, He has the hope, too. You and I have a hope of seeing the Saviour, of being like the Saviour; but He, too, has a hope that the work which He accomplished will produce a people who will be in the presence of God for eternity. He'll be filled with joy as He presents us to His Father, absolutely faultless.

We have the same thing in Ephesians 5:26 and 27 where we read that our God is going to present the church to Himself, a holy church, having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing. Our hope is the coming of the Saviour; His hope is the believer standing in the presence of His Father without a spot or a wrinkle or any such thing. Indeed, God's hope will be realized when you and I stand in the presence of God looking just like His Son. Oh, what a prospect.

**Sometimes we sing** that song,

“When all my labors and trials are o'er  
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,

Just to be near the dear Lord I adore  
Will through the ages be glory for me.  
O, that will be glory for me, glory for me, glory for me.  
When by His grace I shall look on His face  
That will be glory, be glory for me.”

Did you ever stop to think that that will be glory for Him? The glory of His hope, the hope of His calling, that God has a calling? I tell you, my friend, it is a wonderful thing to know something of the call of God, that you and I are going to stand before Him just like His Son. God will never be satisfied until every Christian stands in His presence conformed to the image of His Son. Oh, to be just like the Lord Jesus. This is His hope; this is my hope.

**Now the second hope** is that we are to know the purpose of God in verse 18.

18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Now mark these three sets of three words: the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Now what is this? That God is going to share His glory with us? Oh, yes!

You see, in John 17:22 it says that—The glory which thou gavest me I have given them. We were speaking of that earlier where, in John 17:1 to 5, Jesus said—Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is

life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent. . . . I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

**Here we see the riches** of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Now in John 17:24 we have—Father, I will that all those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.

This is where you and I come in; you and I are going to share in His glory. For example, Paul could say in Romans 8:18—I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Or 2 Corinthians 4:17—These light afflictions are just for a moment and they are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

That's for us! As 1 Timothy 1:1 says—Christ is our hope.

**We read of the blessed** hope of seeing Him, but did you ever think of the other side of it? Of His inheritance in the saints? We have an inheritance in Him, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away. He has an inheritance in us. God has tremendous interests in us, and His interest is not going to be fully satisfied until every one for whom Christ died, every one He purchased, is sealed, is going to stand in the Father's presence looking just like the Son. Friend,

what a hope—what a hope for Him; what a hope for us.

Won't you revel in this today—His inheritance in the saints and that He has a tremendous interest in you? And believe me, He will take care of His interests and His inheritance.

Meditate upon this and enjoy Christ today, will you?

What a wonderful relationship we have with the Saviour!

**This epistle is the epistle** of the riches of God's grace in chapter 1, the riches of His mercy in chapter 2, the riches of the unsearchable riches of Christ in chapter 3 and the riches of the glory of Christ in 3:16. And remember, we are the Father's gift to the Son. This is the purpose of God—His riches and the place of His riches in His saints.

In Exodus 19:4-5, God said to Israel, "I have brought you on eagle's wings to myself and you are my inheritance." But now, today, through eternity, the church has become His inheritance. It is a wonderful thing. You take Titus 2:14 where it speaks of the fact that He not only redeemed us but we are His peculiar possession, a people for His possession.

**We are the Father's gift** to the Son. We have this in John 6:37—All that the father giveth me shall come to me. And he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. In John 17:6-11, our Lord again speaks of the fact that they whom Thou gavest me are Mine. They were Yours and You gave them to Me and they've kept Your word.

And you remember how He put us in the Father's hand to be kept. Words of mine fail to begin to realize and to present to you this amazing thing, that you are a peculiar treasure to God. You're a people for His possession, and God has such love and such grace for you and me that He sent His Son to purchase us, to buy us, as we have in the first part of the chapter. He bought us for Himself and He seals us by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption.

**And now the third thing** we are to know in the prayer is that we are to know—

19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

We are to know the power of God. Now, let me repeat it—We are to know the call of God in verse 18; we are to know the purpose of God in verse 18; now we are to know the power of God in verses 19 to 23. And notice what this power is. Here is an astounding thing: We are to know the power of His resurrection.

**May I suggest first** of all that the power of God is limited to believers. And Paul prays we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe according to the working of the strength of His might, if I may give you a literal rendering here. What does God want us to know? The

greatness of His power when He raised His Son from the dead is to us-ward who believe.

You see, my friend, in the resurrection of Christ you have the greatest demonstration of the power of God. Do you ever stop to think of it? Of the power of His resurrection? Not the opening of blind eyes; not the creating of a universe; not the cleansing of lepers; not even the splitting of the atom or the stilling of a storm. No, the greatest demonstration of the power of God in the universe is the resurrection of His Son from the dead.

**Let me remind you** of Romans 1:4 where God marked His Son out from everybody else by the resurrection from the dead. And in Romans 8:11, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is in you and me who believe. In 1 Peter 1:21 we have—Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

In Philippians 3:20 and 21, He's going to change these bodies of ours and fashion them like His own glorious body according to the power of Him who worketh in me mightily. One could multiply the scriptures on His ability, His power, and the power of resurrection.

There was a time in my early ministry when I used to ask the Lord for more power. I stopped doing that a long time ago. The problem is not more power. The problem is we don't use the power He's already given to us. Paul could say in Colossians 1:29—I

strive according to the working of Him who worketh in me mightily.

**The power of resurrection** is to us-ward who believe. My Christian friend, I wish in some way I could present to you this fact that the greatest power in the universe is your resource.

You say, "Sir, I'm so weak."

I'll take your word for it. Aren't we all weak!

"Oh, but I'm the weakest."

All right, I'll take your word for that, too. You're the weakest and yet Paul is praying that you and I might know experimentally the power of Him that raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. The power of resurrection and exaltation is for every Christian.

My friend, there is absolutely no excuse for you and me pleading weakness, pleading frailty. It's all right if you believe you are frail and you believe you are so weak. Now you come to God and trust Him. Let Him do the job. Then He'll get all the glory.

**If you think you can** do God's work in your own power, my friend, you're greatly mistaken. That will be nothing else but the fruit of the flesh. But the very power that raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at God's own right hand is to us-ward who believe. Paul is praying that we might experience this power.

When I look over, for example, the life of our Saviour in the gospels, how He stilled the storm, rebuked the winds, cleansed the lepers and opened the eyes of the blind, fed the hungry and raised the dead,

I say, my, what power. When I look into the universe and I see that Jesus Christ not only created the universe, but according to Hebrews 1:3, He upholds it by the word of His power. In Colossians 1:17 it says—By Him all things consist (are held together).

**And even that is not** the greatest power in the universe—neither the power of creation nor of holding all things together. The greatest power demonstrated was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Men and hell were banded together to keep Jesus Christ in the tomb. Do you remember when the Jews came to Pilate they said that “that deceiver” said when He was alive, “After three days I will rise again,” and Pilate said, “You have a watch. You go your way. Make that tomb sure.” So they sealed the stone, and they set a watch. All hell and men were banded together to keep Jesus Christ in the tomb.

And the third day, He was raised again from the dead and sat at the Father ‘s own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.

**Now, then, again, the greatest power in the universe is to us-ward who believe. Paul is praying we might know this.**

I am talking to you. You are frail and you are weak and you’ve been stumbling along. Why don’t you lean on the Saviour and take this prayer of Paul’s and pray, “Lord, may I know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe?” There is absolutely nothing in your life and experience—I don’t care what the opposition is and what the circumstances are—Paul prays that you and

I might have this experience of the power of God that raised Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand.

**The power of resurrection** and exaltation, my friend, is to us-ward who believe.

Why don't you trust the Saviour in this today. Never mind tomorrow. Today, will you and I walk in the experience of a risen, glorified Saviour to whom we have been vitally, eternally joined?

Now it is not only the power of resurrection, but notice in verses 20 and 21 that it is also the power of exaltation to His right hand, to all authority.

20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

21. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

**May I remind you of Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, 10:12 and 12:2:**

Hebrews 1:3—Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Hebrews 8:1—Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Hebrews 10:12—But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

Hebrews 12:2—Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Four times in the book** of Hebrews we read that his Son sat down at the right hand of God. Again, allow me to quote from the 24th Psalm, verses 7 to 10 when the cry came—Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.

**This is the Saviour** who went to the cross and was despised and rejected of men. He went through the heavens to the throne, to the place of highest authority. Do you ever think of it? From the cross to the throne, from earth to heaven, from a tomb to eternal glory. And the power that raised Him and exalted Him is available to you and to me who believe.

Listen, my friend, it is no excuse for us to try and plead that we can't do anything for God. It is true. You can't. But why not put yourself in His hands and let Him do it?

And Paul is praying for this—the power of resurrection, the power of exaltation. And you notice what it says here,

20. Set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

21. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

**We have here His authority.** What is authority? Delegated power. Now authority is dependent upon the force that is behind it. For example, you drive down to a crossing on one of your main streets and supposing the traffic light is off. You and I would plow through that. We'd have wreck after wreck. What does the city do? It sends a policeman out. Now, if I were to stand in the middle of the thoroughfare and put my hand up, people would say, "You fool, get out of the way. Do you want to be killed?"

You see, I have no authority. But let a policeman who has the authority behind him, power behind him, walk out calmly into the middle of the thoroughfare and put his hand up, all the cars would stop. Any one of those cars could kill him, but he calmly goes out with the authority of the law behind him and he puts his hand up and the traffic stops. That's authority.

**What does that man have?** He has all the power of the law behind him.

Now the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, has been exalted to God's right hand and has been given authority over all powers, over all authority. Listen to it—Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the coming age.

Your Saviour and my Saviour has all authority and power. And, my friend, when a Christian begins to realize this in the exercise of authority, there is a divine courage that fears nothing but God. Proverbs says, "The righteous are as bold as a lion." Why? Because of their authority from God.

**Here I see a frail** little woman, way over there in North China and she comes out with more than 100 orphans. She passes through all the Communist forces, and she wends her way without money or anything else, but with the authority of God behind her that she must take them out. This wee woman, frail woman, guides more than 100 refugees out of North China over to Taiwan. Where does she get her courage?

Listen, again, in the exercise of the authority that is from God, there is a divine courage that fears nothing, not even nations. All she fears is God.

**My friend, I must add** this: Though you and I have been given the place of special privilege in knowing the power and authority of God, that same special privilege can become the place of special danger. Over whom does Christ have all this authori-

ty? Over the heaven and the earth. In Matthew 28:18-19 we read—All authority is mine. Go ye and disciple all nations.

The King speaks and He speaks with the authority of God. Here is divine authority. And when God says, “Go ye and speak to all nations,” I’m not surprised at men like William Carey who went to India or Hudson Taylor who went to China or Adoniram Judson who went to India or Martin Luther as he defied the pope and defied the nations of his day.

**Are we afraid to go?** Go ye and disciple all nations with the authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every created intelligence in the heavens and the earth and hell is under His authority. He has authority over all flesh.

Do you remember in John 17:2, He thanked His Father because God had given Him all authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as God had given Him. Need we be afraid, my Christian friend, of bearing testimony for the King of kings and Lord of lords? If He has authority over all principality and power? If He has authority over death and hell? Revelation 1:18 says—I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

**Shall we be afraid** to bear testimony for Him? He is far above all rulers and authorities and powers, even the powers of the coming age. Think of it! And this same authority and power is to us-ward who believe. No wonder when you come to Isaiah 40:29 to

31, he speaks of the fact that old men will have weaknesses and the young men shall utterly fall. The strong shall be weak.

But He goes on to say they that wait upon the Lord—what about them? They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. It makes no difference what the score is. He gives power to the faint and to those who have no might He increases their strength.

**They who entwine** their hearts about the Lord shall exchange their weakness for His strength, and they shall mount up with wings as eagles. And, my friend, it can be experienced by you and me today. And all authority and power potentially is ours in Christ now. It can be experienced as you and I sit down with Him in continual fellowship. And, as we walk with Him, day by day, the very power of the omnipotent God is available to you and to me. This one who has been given headship over all things to the church, this risen, exalted Lord, is yours and mine. It is beyond all human comprehension. I confess, it's beyond me that the very power of the omnipotent God is available to you and to me who believe.

**I say, this power**, this authority which is potentially ours now, can be experimentally ours when we sit down with Him and enjoy His fellowship.

And He says, "All authority is mine. Go ye and disciple all nations and behind you is the power and authority of a risen, glorified Saviour."

God forgive us for our frailty, for our lack of courage in bearing testimony for Him and exalting Him before man.

God grant that today you and I may experience something of the grace and love and power of God as we walk in fellowship with Him.

**Now, one more thing** in the chapter. In verses 22 and 23, we have this wonderful relationship given to us between Christ and the church which is His body.

22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

You know, it is a wonderful thing to know that the Lord Jesus Christ has been made the head over all things to the church which is His body. A risen, exalted Christ is the head of the church.

**Once in a while**, theologically, I have been faced with the question, when did the church of Christ start?

And may I use these two verses as the foundation for the fact that there was no church until there could be a risen, exalted Saviour. The Spirit of God did not come to indwell His people, that is, to continually indwell His people until Christ was risen and glorified.

You remember that John in chapter 7:37-39 said—In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him

come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

**In John 16:7, he speaks** of the fact that when He was glorified He would send from the Father to every believer the Spirit of God to indwell him. In John 14, the end of verse 17 and verse 18, our Lord could say, speaking of the Spirit of God—He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless (or as orphans).

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God was occasionally with God's people, but not to indwell them all. When I come to the New Testament, the Holy Spirit descended in Acts 2 and the church was formed; and the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved.

When we come to Ephesians 3, as well as chapter 1, we see that this risen, exalted Saviour took a new position after the resurrection in that He became the head of a new race of people, a new company called "the church."

**And as Acts 15:16 says**—When God is through gathering out a people for His name, the church, then He is going to return to the earth and rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen down.

What I'm doing right now is giving you in a very brief way the purpose of God for this age. You see, from Genesis 12 until you come to the end of

Malachi, in fact, I'll go through the gospels with you, you find where God is dealing especially with one people on the earth. He's dealing with the people Israel.

**Now that does not mean** that there were no Gentiles who came to know God. But God's special ministry began with the calling out of Abraham in Genesis 12 when the God of glory appeared unto him and said—"Get out (that is from Ur of the Chaldees) unto a land that I will show thee. I'll make thy name great, I'll make you a great nation and from thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Now here is the promise to Abraham, down through Isaac and through Jacob, then through the tribe of Judah and so forth. But God's purpose has been especially with Israel. Today God is not dealing with the nations of the earth; He is dealing with individuals—If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink whether Jew or Gentile. And from the resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Spirit of God until our Lord returns for His own, for the gathering out of the church, God is dealing with individuals.

**When our Lord returns** to the earth again, He's going to be dealing with the nations. He'll deal with Israel. He's going to purge out of Israel her rebels. He's going to make a new covenant with Israel, and then He's going to judge the nations and deal with them.

But today, He is gathering out a people of His own. He's building a church. Every Christian is a member of His body, the church.

When we come to chapter 3 of Ephesians, we're going to see that the revelation of the church was a mystery hidden in God from past ages. I repeat it, this is what God is doing today. He is doing a new thing. He's gathering out Jews and Gentiles individually wherever He finds them, whoever they are. It makes no difference to God who they are or what they are. If they will accept Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, they're not only justified and receive life eternal and forgiveness, but they become members of the church, the body of Christ.

**And the way we get** into the church is by the baptism of the Spirit of God, as you find here in 1 Corinthians 12:13 where it says we have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body.

And this is what our Lord is referring to in Acts 1 when He said to the disciples, "You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." And on the day of Pentecost, God started this new company of people called the church. The church of the first born, the church of Jesus Christ, is made up of every individual, real believer in Christ today.

And when I come to the end of Ephesians chapter 1, I find here that the Lord has given to us this fact, that Jesus Christ in resurrection and exaltation became the head over all things concerning the church, His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

**It's a wonderful thing** to know this, that the moment you and I accepted the Saviour, we became members of the body of Christ. And the church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. I am sure that the Lord will bless His word to your own heart as you become occupied with Him.

What I want leave with you is this—that God wants you to know the power of His resurrection. He wants you to know the power of His exaltation, the power that joins you to Christ.

I say, it's a wonderful thing to be a Christian, to belong to Him and to know that your Saviour and my Saviour is the head over all things, having all authority in heaven and in earth.

## Chapter Two

**We come to the second** chapter and I have labeled this “reconciliation.” We travel a long distance in this passage from utter ruin, from being dead in trespasses and sins to a remarkable position in the heavenlies in Christ.

It’s an amazing chapter that moves from utter ruin to a position of heavenly glory. You will notice, as you read the passage through, that Paul writes about certain things that happened in the past and things that are true now. And if you contrast what we were in time past, out of Christ, dead in trespasses and sins, controlled by the forces of hell, and then see what we are now in Christ—it will fill your heart with joy and thanksgiving and praise. And, may I add, real worship.

To think that God should look upon us with such favor that He would take us out of the hands of the enemy, out from being dead in sins and make us alive and fit us for eternal glory. This is good news. This is good news to sinners. This is what God has provided for any and all who will put their trust in Him.

**Let us read the first verses—**

1. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

I'm very much tempted to read the whole chapter. What a wonderful thing this is—from utter ruin into a place of glory. Shall we look into these first three verses? In them, we see our condition in time past—You hath he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.

**Listen to it.** Here we have in these three verses what we were and what we did. What was our condition? We were, first of all, dead in sins. That means spiritual death. Hence, we could produce nothing but death and sin. And this is where every unbeliever in Christ lives. And believe me, my friend, there is nothing attractive about dead people, those dead in trespasses and sins.

In the book of Romans 3:10-12 we have—As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

**The scriptures had concluded** all under sin. God had concluded all in unbelief, that He might be mer-

ciful to all. I say again, there is nothing attractive about dead people. God looks upon men who are out of Christ, out of His Son, and sees them as those who are dead in trespasses and sins, having no spiritual life of any kind. Now they can be moralists. They can be religionists. They can be wonderful people according to the standards of men. But as far as God is concerned, they're dead in trespasses and sins.

And I find here that Paul is saying to these Ephesians who at one time were idolators, "You He made alive." Even those 12 men whom he found in Ephesus (Acts 19:7) were religious people, but they had to be born again. They had to be saved from their sins and given new life. And that is what Paul is dealing with here. He's not dealing so much with the question of forgiveness; he's dealing with the fact of life and death—that we at one time were separated from God and hence had no spiritual life.

**When I leave my body**, my body will be dead. And when a soul is separated from God, that soul is dead; it is separated from its source of all life. There's no life.

It is well for us to realize the difference between life and death. Spiritual life and eternal death center on relationship to Jesus Christ. Now it's just that simple. And the Lord wants us to be delivered from death.

I'm glad for that first verse—You hath He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins. We were Gentiles. We had no covenant. We were without Christ, without promises, aliens without hope, with-

out God in the world. No wonder God had to step into the picture. I'm so glad that times past are times past. We can revel in the fact that we have passed from death to life. We are alive in Christ, one with God's eternal Son.

**In verse three, we have** the second thing that we were in times past: We were children of wrath even as others—children of wrath like the rest. That is, by nature we were born in sin, born under judgment. We were born into a rebellious race. There's no question about this.

My friend, you and I were born into a race that is already under the judgment of God. You remember, the Psalmist said in 51:5—I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. You do not have to take your child and teach him or her to lie or to steal or to do something bad. It's right there in the child who is born with a sinful nature. And Paul says in time past we were children of wrath like everybody else.

**It might be well** for me to say a word of caution here. There are some people who look upon every person who is not a Christian as a child of the devil. Now, I'm not prepared to say that. I know Jesus said to the Jews of His day and I quote from John 8:42-44. You remember they had said that God was their Father. Jesus said words to the effect that if God were your Father, you would believe on me, but you are of your father, the devil, and his works you do. And he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

**In 1 John 3**, we read in verse 10—In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil. And He talks about Cain and Abel as an illustration of the children of God and the children of the devil. But I notice this, that the ones who are called children of the devil are those who have taken a definite stand against the Saviour. For example, in Acts 13:6-10, we have the Apostle Paul faced with a man who was a sorcerer who opposed the gospel. He deliberately tried to keep the leader of that country from hearing the word of God through the Apostle Paul. And Paul pronounced judgment upon him, that he be blind for a season; and he called him, “Thou child of the devil.”

As I said, I don't think we should be so quick to call a person a child of the devil. This word is generally coupled with those who have taken a decided stand against the Saviour. On the other hand, everyone out of Christ is a child of wrath. That is, he is born under the judgment and wrath of God. We are born into a rebellious race, a race where the thoughts and imaginations of the heart of man are evil continually. We belong to a human family where death reigns and where sin is rampant.

**And may I say very bluntly** that when the word of God is spurned, then sin becomes more and more manifest in that person or in that family or in that nation. When a government prohibits the Bible's being taught in schools, the moral dam breaks. How quickly immorality and corruption and rebellion come to the front. You rule the Bible out of a life and you

rule in lawlessness. And when a person has heard the truth of God and has voluntarily and determinedly rejected the Saviour, he reveals himself not only as a child of wrath but as a child of the devil.

But all of us were children of wrath like everybody else because we were born into a rebellious family, born under the wrath of God. The Psalmist could say in 14:3—God looked over the children of men and they were all gone out of the way, all unprofitable, none doing good. And yet, when people hear the gospel of Christ and set their mind and their face against the Saviour, this is a positive act of rebellion. And such ones, in the scriptures, are called children of the devil.

**So the two things** we have thus far are that in times past we were dead in sins; secondly, we were children of wrath.

Now the third thing we had in time past is in verses 11 to 13—

2:11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

2:12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel (that is, we had no part in the commonwealth of Israel); and strangers from the covenants of promise; (we had no promise), having no hope (we had no Saviour), and without God in the world.

And verse 13 says—we were far off.

**Now, just briefly,** this is what we were in time past, dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath

like the rest; we were absolutely bankrupt. We had no inheritance. We had no covenants. We had no hope. We had no Saviour. We had no God, that is, no God who was alive. We had gods that were no gods. They had eyes that saw not and ears that heard not; and we were afar off, dead in sins.

My friend, may I say that when God looked on the rebellious people on the earth, His heart melted with compassion. He provided a Saviour who came, not to save the righteous, not to save the good people; He came to save sinners. He came to save rebels. He came to save children of wrath. He came to translate us from the kingdom of darkness and to put us into the kingdom of His blessed Son.

**It may be that you** know some who are church members, but the reality of being a child of God, the reality of being in the kingdom of God has never gripped their heart. May we plead with them to examine themselves, asking them if they have personally, definitely received Jesus Christ into their own life and heart as their Saviour, as their Lord. Until they are in relationship with Him, they are still dead in trespasses and sin.

Now we come to our conduct in time past in verses 2 and 3. In verse 2, we walked “according to the course of this world.” That is, we lived our lives according to the world system in which we lived, to which we were joined. It might be well for me to suggest that regarding this question of “the world” that he is not dealing primarily here with the earth upon which we live, but rather the world of people.

You see, there is a world system. The world is a system that is directly opposed to God. We read it in Galatians 6:14-15 where Paul writes—God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.

**You remember,** Jesus Christ could say in John 17:15-16—They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. I do not say, Father, to take them out of the world but to keep them from the evil one (the prince of this world).

Three times in John's gospel in chapters 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11, our Saviour talked about the "prince of this world." The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:4 says—The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not.

As I said, it is very obvious that he is not talking about the earth upon which we live. He's talking about this world system into which we were born when we were born into the world. We became a member of the world. And when you and I accepted the Saviour, we were translated out of this kingdom of the world, out of this kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His blessed Son. It's a wonderful thing to know this.

May I give you one other scripture about this in 1 John 2:15-17—Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world.

And the world and the lust pass away, but he that does the will of God abides forever.

**Think of it!** Where did you and I live before we accepted Christ? We had our life. We walked according to the course of this world. And not only so, we walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that energizes the children of disobedience. This is the one who was in authority. I said a moment ago that Satan was the prince of this world, the god of this age; and he keeps his children pretty well in check.

And when you and I accepted the Saviour, we were taken out from under his authority. We don't belong to him any more. He opposes us. That's what Paul means in Ephesians 6:12—We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against wicked spirits in the heavens. Take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil. He is an implacable foe.

**Ephesians 2 informs** us in verses 14 and 15 that Christ through His death not only delivered us from death and the fear of death but from the one who won authority over death, that is the devil. It says here in verse 2, "he is the spirit that energizes the children of disobedience." We're sometimes amazed to find young people, men and women doing the things they do. You wonder why in the world they do it. They do it because they're energized by Satan, the prince of this world. Now this is in time past for us Christians.

And he goes on to speak of the fact that “we walked according to the course of this world.” In verse 3, this is what we did; it’s our conduct. Mark it, please. We lived in the lust and desires of the flesh and of the mind. Now this is the life of all the unsaved. And where else can they walk, not having the Saviour, not having a new nature, not being children of God but being children of wrath, belonging to the world. What else or how else can they conduct their lives?

**Please, Christian friend,** don’t be too quick to judge the unsaved man. He’s energized by another force. And before you and I were saved, we conducted our lives and we had our manner of life in the lusts, the desires of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

People say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, I don’t steal. I don’t lie. I don’t commit adultery. I don’t do these things.”

No, that may be true. But would you like me to peer into your mind and declare what I see there? It’s possible, you know, for people who may not go into any perversion, physical perversion, to have their minds filled with things they might like to do. They take great pleasure in letting their minds roam on these sinful, unclean, immoral things. These are the lusts of the mind. The lust of the mind might also be concerned about other things where Christ is left out.

A great many dear people, good people as far as you and I know, live wonderful lives, sometimes better lives than Christians; but their lives are built

around one thing, the desires, the lusts of the world and of the flesh.

**Whereas a Christian** in spite of his frailty has a hunger for God, a desire to please God. He's been brought into life with Christ, and one of these days it's going to be evident that he belongs not to this world but to the living God. I tell you, it's a wonderful thing to know that times past are times past.

And if I as a Christian profess to others that I belong to God, that I'm a child of God—no longer a child of wrath but a child of God—then my life, my words, my actions, my very attitude toward things should be changed. It's high time we Christians lived as Christians, lived as children of God instead of children of wrath. Instead of desiring the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the mind, may we have a great desire and a great passion for Christ Himself.

**May the Lord put** that into your heart and into my heart today—the longing, the desire to really know Him, and to live, not like one who belongs to this world, but one who has been raised from the dead, joined to a living Saviour.

So we come to Ephesians 2:4—

4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.

Do you remember in Romans 3 we mentioned the fact how we enjoyed God's "buts." In Romans 3:10-20, there was given to us our character, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Then we had our conduct which paralleled our character. And the

cause of it all was there was no fear of God before our eyes; God was not even in our reckoning. We stood before God with our mouth shut, guilty, condemned to death. Then after God had shut man's mouth of glorying in his own so-called self-righteousness or goodness, God opened up His heart.

**And remember that 21st** verse of Romans 3 declared that "now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." Having proved man to be absolutely unrighteous, then God begins to display His righteousness. We had it also in Romans 5:6,8, "When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

And now we have it here again in Ephesians 2:4, having said that we were dead in trespasses and sins, energized by the powers of hell, children of wrath like the rest. Then we have the change. "But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins."

God steps into the picture when man is in utter ruin. When man gets to the end of himself, then God steps into the picture and does something for him. You know, one of the great reasons why so many people have never accepted Christ is because they have never come to the end of themselves. They've always got the idea in their heads that they can do something to merit favor with God. It is very difficult for people to come to the place where they realize that they really are helpless when it comes to fit-

ting themselves for the presence of God. We must come to see ourself as God sees us; for, my friend, the true picture of you and me is not what we see, it's what God sees.

When Job saw the Lord, he cried out, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of mine ears, now mine eyes see thee. I abhor myself." And he was one of the finest men who ever lived on the earth; and yet, when he caught a glimpse of God in His righteousness, he saw how filthy he was.

**Like Isaiah, that great** prophet in Isaiah 6:1,5, when he said that in the year King Uzziah died, "I saw the Lord." And when he saw the Lord, what did he cry out? "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King."

You see, you tell people, "Don't you know you're a sinner?"

"Oh, yes, we're all sinners."

"Do you know that you're a lost sinner needing a Saviour?"

And quite often the reaction is, "Mister, I'm just as good as you are."

We'll acknowledge that we're sinners but we will not acknowledge that we're lost sinners, that we're hopeless in our sins, that we can't do anything to save ourselves. But when we come to this place where we realize what we are, then we can thank God for this fourth verse—God, who is rich in mer-

cy, for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins.

**Let's look at this** first little statement—God, who is rich in mercy.

In Romans 11:33, we have “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

My, what treasures we have, those of us who have accepted the Saviour. God is rich in mercy. In the first chapter, God was rich in grace. In the third chapter, God is rich in glory. In the third chapter we also read of the unsearchable riches of Christ. And now we find here in the second chapter that God is rich in mercy.

The 136<sup>th</sup> psalm says—His mercy endureth forever.

I do not want to know how much sin you have been in or how bad you are or how corrupt you are. All I know is that the mercy of God can reach us right where we are.

**Now we take up the second** little statement I want to concentrate on.

5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).

As I like to put it, He is not only rich in mercy but He is great in love. When did He start to love you and me? When I believed? Oh, no. When we were dead in sins. When we had absolutely no spiritual life.

God puts everyone on the same plane. You and I make a difference of sins. We talk about big sins and little sins; we talk about outbroken sins and secret sins. We talk about all kinds of sins and we catalog them, saying that we are not as bad as somebody else and we are better than most.

**Now God doesn't do that.** We were dead. You take a dead body and fix it up, it is still dead. And every one who has not accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour is dead in trespasses and sins. My friend, dead people need life; they don't need to be just powdered up and fixed up. They need life. But before we can have life, something must be done with our sins; something must be done to get rid of this corruption. God is rich in mercy and great in love; and what His righteousness could not do, what His holy character could not do, His love has accomplished.

**You see, we're dealing** with a righteous God. We're dealing with a holy God. No one in sin can come into the presence of God. When Christ came, He came because of God's love for you and me. He is great in love. That's why we have all of those wonderful verses like John 3:16 where "God so loved" and Romans 5:8 where "God commendeth His love toward us" and 1 John 3:1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." John 13:1 tells us "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Jeremiah 31:3 says—and God was talking to a wayward

people when He said it—Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

In the book of Romans it is a question of unrighteousness, whereas in the book of Ephesians it is a question of death. In Romans we had a revelation of the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. But when you come to Ephesians it is a question of life and death. To have Christ means life and not to have Christ means death. In other words, the difference between life and death is the person of Christ. The difference between heaven and hell is the person of Christ, not our badness, not our goodness.

**Now God is rich** in mercy and He is great in His love toward us even when we were dead in sin. And He not only did this, but in verse five He made us alive together with Christ. Even when we were dead in sin, He has made us alive. The old English word “quicken” means to “make alive.” He has made us alive together with Christ.

You know, I have met so many people who told me they were raised in a Christian home, went to Sunday school and church all their lifetime; but for some reason, they never came into the reality of a relationship with God where they experienced life. They say they’ve been baptized and they know the Bible. They say, “I’m not living like those old Pharisees, like those old sinners on the streets. I’ve never been drunk in my life and I’ve never done this and I’ve never done that.”

And I ask them, “But are you alive in Christ? Do you have LIFE?”

**When you meet people** like this, give them John 1:4 which I think is the key to the Gospel of John, “In Him (Jesus Christ) is life.” In the third chapter of John, Christ says He is going to give us eternal life. In John 4, He talks about the water of life. In chapter 5, He talks about everlasting life. In chapter 6, He talks about satisfying life, resurrection life, indwelling life. In chapter 10, He talks about an abundant life. In chapter 11, He says, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

In chapter 14, He says, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.” In John 20:31, He says that these things are written that we may know that we have eternal life.

6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

**He has quickened us** together, the Jew and Gentile, together with Christ. The one place where Jews and Gentiles are made one is in Christ. The only place you will find them sitting together in perfect harmony, in perfect fellowship, is in Christ. “He has raised us, Jew and Gentile, up together and made us, Jew and Gentile, sit together in the heavenlies in Christ.”

Every barrier is broken down. We are one in Christ. We can revel in the fact today that we have a myriad of brothers and sisters who are one with us in Christ. See the emphasis here? Twice Paul uses the word “together.” He wants us to sit with them, be at home with them, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Think about that today and may the Lord fill your heart with love for your family in Christ.

Now we come to an amazing passage in verse 7:

7. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

**Now here we have** revealed to us what God is going to do and the ground upon which He is going to do it. He shows his mercy and His grace and His love for a purpose, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

You know, it's an amazing thing in this book of Ephesians where we read the eternal purpose of God for those who put their trust in Christ.

For example, in chapter 1:4, we read that He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before Him. Now in 2:7, "That in the ages to come!" My, what a distance—in 1:4 in past eternity, in 2:7 in the future eternity. He saw you and me who believe in His Son in past eternity; He sees us in ages to come, showing forth the riches of His grace.

**My friend, why do you** think you were born on the earth? Why do you think He saved you? Why do you think He died for you and rose again and then by the Spirit of God brought you to Himself? He opened your eyes by the Spirit of God to the word of God to your need of a Saviour. And in simple faith you took Christ as your Saviour. What for?

I tell you, in the ages to come He's going to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace. In verse 10, we are His workmanship. He's going to show us forth to the angelic hosts and to all created intelligences, to all powers, to all authorities, to principalities, to every personality in God's universe. He's going to put on an exhibition, the revelation of His grace and His kindness and His mercy and His love through you and through me. We are going to be the channels for the display of the wonderful, wonderful grace of God.

**When we come to** chapter 3:9 and 10, we are going to see another thing through eternity. He's going to show forth His wisdom, His counsel through the church. He's going to show forth through you and through me the wonderful, manifested grace of God. As Peter says—The manifold (many colored) grace of God.

Then Paul slips this verse in—

8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Now why in the world did he put that in? Why not go on and talk about His workmanship? No, you'll notice in verse 5, he said—By grace ye are saved. In verse 8, he says—By grace ye are saved. In verse 9—

9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10. For we are his workmanship . . .

**You see, there is always** the danger even in the Ephesian church of their boasting in their faith instead of Christ. Faith is the only channel used to bring us into contact, into relationship, with Christ. The important thing is not your faith, but Christ. I have met Christians who boast about their faith. I wouldn't do that. Boast about the One who is the object of your faith, Christ Jesus.

I could sit here and tell you about Christians who boasted about their faith and they were proud of their experience and proud of their faith. And instead of attracting people to Christ, they were attracting people to themselves. This is a dangerous thing, isn't it?

**For by grace are ye saved** through faith. We've got nothing to boast about, my friend. We can't even boast about our faith; our faith was a gift of God. What we have has come because of the mercy of God, because of the love of God. We need to rejoice in Him who is our Saviour instead of rejoicing in the gift. Let us not be children tossed about by every doctrine. Let us be mature men and women in Christ and rejoice—not just because He has blessed us, given us His salvation, but because we're joined to Him, because He is the object not only of our faith but the object of our love and of our devotion.

It is true in the ages to come, you and I who love the Saviour are going to stand forth as the illustration, as the exhibit to all created intelligences of the wonderful, wonderful grace of God.

**But don't forget**, we have nothing to glory in except in Christ. As Paul could say in Galatians 6:14—God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.

You see, friends, Christ must be the center. Sometimes we sing that song:

O could I speak the matchless worth;  
Or could I sound the glories forth  
Which in my Saviour shine.  
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
In notes almost divine.  
In notes almost divine.

And, you know, we used to sing a little chorus. Maybe you know it:

Holy, holy is what the angels sing;  
And I expect to help them make  
The courts of heaven ring.  
But when I sing redemption's story,  
They will fold their wings;  
For angels never felt the joy  
That our salvation brings.

**You see, friends**, angels know nothing of the grace of God. The only thing they know about it is what has been displayed in you and me. How are angels going to know about it? There is no need for them to know the grace of God. They've never sinned. That's why Paul could say in 1 Corinthians

4:9 that we're upon the stage. He uses theatrical terms. And we are a sight. We are actors on the stage to show forth the grace of God to angels, to men, to demons, to all created intelligences. I tell you, it's a wonderful thing to be a Christian, and it's a marvelous thing to revel in His grace and in His mercy. But it's still another wonderful thing to look forward to the day when God will take you and me and teach the whole universe the wonderful, wonderful grace of God.

So, today, when you glory, don't just glory in the gift that God has given to you. But glory in the giver, our precious Saviour. For remember—By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

Now in verse 10, what is He going to do with us? We are His workmanship; we are His handiwork; we are His craftsmanship. Listen to it in verse 10.

10. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

**This is what we are**, the handiwork of God. We're not self-made men. We're God-made men. And this is even more marvelous than in material creation. Do you ever stop to think about the handiwork of God, for example, in Psalm 8:3—The heavens and the earth are the work of His fingers. Let me cite that section—When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands and so on. That's an astounding scripture. The worlds He made with His fingers; but as Isaiah says, with His mighty arm He saved you and me.

And yet it says in verse 10 of Ephesians 2, that we are His handiwork. We are His craftsmanship. We mean far more to God than all the heavens with their stars and their constellations. That's what I think was in the mind of Jesus when He said in Matthew 16:26—What shall a man profit if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

You see, the world is a material thing. It is a passing thing. To me, I'm amazed at even God's people being wrapped up and caught in the mesh of a materialistic philosophy that detracts them from Christ and the purpose of God.

**In a conversation** with some businessmen yesterday, one of them said, "I don't care how you get it

as long as you get it.” He was speaking of money. That’s the materialistic philosophy. It is cold, atheistic, materialistic. There is no place for God, no place for eternity. And Jesus gives us the solemn warning—What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul.

You see, the heavens, the moon, the stars which God has ordained, these which are the work of His fingers are only material things. They are passing things, inanimate things. What is man that God should be mindful of him? Here we are, little specks upon an earth which is just a speck in God’s universe, and yet He deigns to look upon you and me. God is vitally interested in the individual. I am well aware that some people say, “I’m not interested in the individual. I’m interested in society. Let’s forget the individual and save society.”

My friend, what a false premise. How in the world can you save society without saving the individual who makes up society. We’ve got a distorted idea of values. It is well worth our while to think about what Jesus said—What can a man give in exchange for his soul. If a man should gain the whole world and lose his soul, what does he have at the end? Nothing but judgment.

**But listen** to this marvelous verse, “We are His, God’s, craftsmanship. We are His handiwork.” And where are we? We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. The most marvelous, the most beautiful thing in God’s creation is not the heavens or the

earth but a church of living stones, as Peter speaks of it in 1 Peter 2:5—We are living stones in the building. The most marvelous creation which God is performing is the building of a church, made up of individuals, of men and women who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and who have been brought into a relationship with the Saviour. We are His workmanship, created in Christ.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says—If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, a new creation. And the Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 1:4—that by these exceeding great and precious promises (speaking of the word of God) we believers have been made partakers of the divine nature. Here is a new thing that God is doing. In Galatians 6:14 Paul says—God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.

**Being a Jew or a Gentile** profits nothing, says Paul in Galatians 6:15, but a new creation. You see, we've been dealing with the fact that he was glorying in the cross. And because of Christ's work on the cross, the world is crucified to us and we to the world. Why? Because we are a new creation.

Irrespective of our color or our tongue or our tribe or our country, irrespective of who we are, what we are by creation, God demands a new creation.

You remember in John's gospel, chapter 1:10, it says—He was in the world and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. The world rejected its creator. The next verse says the Jew re-

jected his Messiah. What would God do? He's going to bring in a new creation. I tell you again, this is an astounding thing. The most beautiful thing in all God's creative acts is not the heavens or the earth, let me repeat, and not the sun, moon or the stars which He has ordained, but the building of a church of living stones, of men and women who will come and accept Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. And then we become the object of the craftsmanship of God.

**I repeat, my friends,** the body of Christ, is far more important to God than all His creation.

You know, when God starts a work He always finishes it. In Philippians 1:6 we read—Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. Or you go back to Ecclesiastes 3:14—I know that whatever God does, He does it forever. No man can add to it and no man can take from it. And God does it that all might fear before Him.

I say, it is a marvelous thing that we are His craftsmanship. We are new men, new women in Christ. Thank God that He's not patching up the old creation. He's not patching up the old man that we received from Adam's race, but He's bringing into being a new thing entirely.

**The most astounding thing** of all the creative acts of God is the bringing into being of a group of people called the church, called the body of Christ. They're redeemed. They've received eternal life. They're accepted in the Beloved. They're joint heirs

with Christ in the inheritance. They've been vitally, eternally, perfectly joined to the Son of God. This is the light of His heart.

What is God doing today? Saving society? Saving the nations? No. No. That's in the future for God's purpose. Today, God is interested in just you and me; in every individual man and woman in the earth. And His great desire is for us to receive His Son and then we become a member of the body of Christ, the church of Christ, and we become His handiwork. He begins to work on us. And we are created in Christ Jesus. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." You have to be in Christ to belong to this new thing. That's why Peter could say in Acts 4:12—There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. This is why Jesus said in John 10:9—I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. You see, we belong to Him; we are His handiwork.

**This salvation we have** is started by God, is continued by God, is going to be completed by God. That's why Paul could say in Romans 8:18—I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Or Colossians 3:4—When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. That's why the Apostle John says—When we see Him, we shall be like Him. That's why God says in Romans 8:29 that He's determined that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son.

We are His craftsmanship. I always love to think of what dear brother Barker of the Evangelical Alliance Mission used to say. I've heard him say it so often when he was speaking to God's people, "My dear friends, please do not criticize any child of God. You wait until God gets through with them, then start your criticizing."

**When God gets through** with us? Yes, when God gets through with you and me, we're going to be just like the Lord Jesus—conformed to His image. This is the purpose of God. We are His craftsmanship. We're not self-made men. We couldn't do this. You can't do it. God must do it. What He wants you and me to do is to come into His presence, into right relationship with Him and let Him, by the Spirit of God, move in upon us and perform His purpose and power.

It may be that today you are in affliction. You are discouraged. You are disheartened. It may be, perchance, you are in sorrow. You say, "Why? Why?" And you begin to question God. But did you ever stop to think that all the tests of life, the afflictions, the misunderstandings, the sorrows, the heartaches, and one could go on—these are nothing else but the open door for God to display His power, His love, His grace, His tenderness, His mercy. We open the door for God to manifest His power.

You see, you and I, if you love the Saviour, are the objects of God's purpose. And whatever comes into our life is a part of that purpose, part of His handiwork, His craftsmanship. You remember that when

Solomon built the temple, there were no sounds of saw or hammer in the temple. All that noise was down there in the quarry. Solomon's men quarried the stone and they cut it and they chipped it and they polished it. They fitted it down in the quarry so that when it was brought up from the quarry it fit into a special place in the temple.

**Now then, you and I** have been “quarried,” if I may use the illustration. We have been quarried out of the quarry of sin and corruption and death, and He's taken us and given us a new life. And He tests us, He chips us, He grinds us, He's polishing us down here. What for? That He might fit us into the very place He has for us in the church of Christ in eternal glory. We are His craftsmanship; and you and I are going to display through eternity to all created intelligences the grace of God, the wisdom of God, the wonder of God. We're going to be on exhibition. We are His craftsmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. That's why I think of that verse in John 15:16, you remember, where Jesus said—You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.

**You see, this is it.** You and I, when we're saved, we are in the hands of an eternal, wonderful God. And everything that comes into our life, if we love Him, is for a purpose. We may not understand everything God does. We may not be able to analyze or plumb the depths of what God is doing; but, my friend, you can trust God. Everything He does is

right. And whatever His actions may be to you and to me, it is because He loves us and because He is working out His purpose in us.

We are His craftsmanship. I want you to get this right down into your heart. We are the handiwork of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Titus 2:14 speaks of our having been redeemed and then He goes on to say that we might be unto God a people for His possession, zealous of good works.

In other words, your life, by your action, by your words, by everything, even your very attitude, ought to reveal the fact that you belong to the Saviour.

**Now I'm not asking** you to do what somebody else may do. All I'm asking you to do is to let God work in your life. Be a yielded vessel to Him so that He can work in and through you. As you have in Philippians 2:15 where Paul says—You are the sons of God and in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights, holding forth the word of life. Remember, the only place where God has a place to manifest His character and His love is through you and me. The Lord is in heaven and you and I are His workmanship. He's shaping us and moving us and working in us and through us that we might be to His praise and His glory. You think about that, will you?

**I want to say one more** thing in regard to verse 10 before I leave it. We have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works. You know, in the Bible there are three kinds of works. There are good works, there are dead works and there are bad works, sinful

works. Now the last one I needn't spend time on because I think anyone who has any sense at all will realize we all know what sin is. We all know what bad works are. I needn't spend time on that. Christ died to redeem us from such things. But also from dead works.

Now dead works in the Bible speak of those works that men do to try and merit favor with God. As Hebrews 9:14 says—We've been delivered, redeemed from dead works, set free from dead works. What for? In order that we might live pleasing to God. In dead works, people are trusting, for example, in ceremonies, ordinances, sacrifices. They do it to merit favor with God. You see, we do not do these things to merit favor with God. We do them because of the life we have in God. Not to merit favor but because of His grace we do these things. Not to receive grace but because we have grace. Not to become a child of God but because we are children of God.

**It's impossible** for an unregenerate person, one who has not come into a right relationship with the Savior, to do these things to merit favor with God. This book says in this chapter—We were dead in sins. And what do dead people do? Nothing. You can fix them up, patch them up and color them up, but they are still dead. What dead people need is life.

Now what are good works? Good works are those works that are done by the Spirit of God in the believer. He has created us in Christ Jesus unto good works. In Romans 3:10-12, God says—There is none righteous. There is none that understands. There is

none that seeks after God. There is none that does good, no, not one.

And men with their arrogance will say, I'm going to prove to God that I can do some good works. God says—Being dead in sin, you can't do any good works. Righteous acts, good works, good acts can only be done by those who are good. Good works are the fruitage of the Spirit of God in the believer. As you have in Galatians 5:22—The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. This is the fruit of the Spirit. These are good works. Philipians 2:15 says—You are the sons of God in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights, holding forth the word of life.

**Someone says,** “Well, what about the preceding verse—Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure?”

My friend, it has to be in you before it can be worked out through you. And when you and I accept the Saviour, He comes to indwell us by His Spirit. And then the Spirit of God takes these various portions of faith and uses them to the praise and honor and the glory of God. We have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained. This is God's desire. All of this has been God's desire that we do this. Again, may I say, we are His workmanship; and God does these things in

order to bring praise and honor and glory to His name.

Now we're going to run from verse 10 over to verse 13. The reason I'm doing that is because we coupled verses 1 and 2, what we were in time past, with verses 11 and 12. In the first 2 verses we were dead in sins. We were children of wrath like the rest. And in verses 11 and 12 we were Gentiles. We were without Christ, we had no promises, we had no covenants, we had no hope, we were without God in this world, we were afar off.

**Now we come** to this marvelous section from 13 down to 18. And this has to do with what God is doing in the question of reconciling us. We've had in verses 4 to 10 the ground of His mercy, the ground of His love and His grace. He has brought us to this place of having life, so that in the ages to come He is going to show forth the riches of His grace.

Now, starting in at verse 13, He tells us the basis for how He has done this—this question of reconciliation. Let us read these verses.

13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

**Now we come** to this amazing doctrine of reconciliation. “You who were far off have been made nigh by the blood of Christ, for He is our peace.” And then in verse 15, He made peace. And then in verse 17 He preached peace. This is what reconciliation is.

In Hebrews 10:19-20, Christ through His work at the cross has opened up a new and a living way by the which we can draw nigh unto God. In Hebrews 9:12, He entered in once into the holy place with his own blood and there obtained for us an eternal redemption. In 1 John 1:7 I read—In whom we have cleansing through His blood. It says—And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

What I am emphasizing here is the work of Christ. The only way whereby we can be delivered and cleansed from our sins is on the ground of the blood of Christ. That speaks of His poured-out life at the cross. In Ephesians 1:7 we read—In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. In Revelation 1:5—Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. In Revelation 7:14—For thou hast redeemed us by thy blood out of every nation, kindred, tongue and tribe.

**You'll notice that** the cleansing from sin is always on the ground of what our Savior did at the cross. My friend, you may have all kinds of ideas of why Christ died, but let me say, the Bible teaches us,

the scriptures inform us. It's on the ground of the blood of Christ. On no other ground are men and women redeemed from sin, loosed from their sins, cleansed from their sins. He has made us nigh unto God by the blood of Christ. We're not ashamed of the fact of the blood of Christ. For remember, it is not the value that men put upon the blood of Christ. It is the great value that God has put upon the work of His Son. "In whom we have redemption through His blood. Even the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).

We sing it so glibly at times:

I need no other argument, I need no other plea  
It is enough that Jesus died and that He died for me.  
My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and  
righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on  
Jesus' name.  
On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sink-  
ing sand.

**When we sing that**, my friend, remember the only way of approach to God is through Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for us. That's why in the book of Philippians the Apostle Paul speaks of the humiliation of Christ before His exaltation—He who was in the form of God thought it not a thing to be held onto but emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a slave and was found in fashion as a man and humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross.

God forbid that I should glory, says Paul, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And one could multiply the scriptures.

In Isaiah 53:6—All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

**First Peter 2:24** says—He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. The scripture speaks from Genesis to Revelation of this fact that whether by type, shadow or by the reality of the cross the only access, the only way into the presence of God, the only way of cleansing is by what Jesus Christ did for us at Calvary.

So I just love this verse—You who sometimes (we Gentiles in our sins) were far off have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. And, oh, how glad I am that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. And He is our peace. We have it again in Colossians 1:20—And, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

Now we're dealing with verses 13 through 18 and here we read again,

13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

**We've been dealing** with the marvelous grace of God and our condition. We've been made nigh by the blood of Christ. Remember this: We are dealing here with the question of reconciliation. As I said a moment ago, the only place where you find both Jew and Gentile made one is in Christ, made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Now in verse 14 on through—For He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity.

He's ruled out the things that were between them, the barrier has been broken down, and Jew and Gentile have been made one. Peace has been made on the ground that He is our peace.

**You know, in thinking** about this, it's a wonderful thing sometimes to think through the scriptures how God has made peace for men. You remember in Romans 5:1—Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This, of course, is the experience of everyone who accepts the Saviour. And then you remember in John 14:27, Jesus said—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Here we have the gift of peace.

In chapter 16 of John the last verse—In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace. In the book of Philippians, chapter 4:7, you remember Paul speaks of experimental peace when he said—And the peace of God, which passes all understanding shall garrison your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus. In fact, He is more often called “the God of peace” than any other title in the New Testament. He’s the God of Peace, for example, in Philippians 4:9—And the God of peace shall be with you. He—is—our peace.

In fact, it would be a wonderful thing if we were to take the time to think about what Christ is to us. He not only is our peace, but He’s all that I need. He’s my life. He’s my righteousness. All that I need to stand before God acceptable I find in Jesus Christ.

**So when you come** to the 14th verse, “He is our peace.” The ground of peace is in Christ and we are reconciled. He not only is our peace, but He made peace and He preached peace. You have this in verses 14, 15 and 17.

Now the ground for our reconciliation is the cross of Christ. In Romans 5:10 I read—For if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. In Colossians 1:20 I read—He made peace through the blood of His cross. The ground of reconciliation, I say, is at the cross. It was at the cross where man was reconciled to God, and it is at the cross where Jew and Gentile were made one in Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 5:19-21, you remember—God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath given unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

**Now, why? Because**—He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He became what I was that I might become what He is. My, what a wonderful thing this is. Reconciled! Barriers broken down! The partition that was between Jew and Gentile, the enmity between the two, has been broken down. The law that hemmed the Jew in and shut the Gentile out has been met by Jesus Christ, and now the law with all its ordinances no longer has dominion over the man in Christ.

In Colossians 2:14 we read—The law which was contrary to us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

**What I'm trying to say** to you here, friend, is that we are new men and women in Christ. The Jew is no longer a Jew; the Gentile is no longer a Gentile. God makes us both new in Christ. Peace has been made on the ground of what Christ has accomplished for us, and God has been doing an entirely new thing. And I repeat it, the only place where you find a Jew and Gentile in perfect union is in Christ Jesus.

All the barriers that were raised up from the day of Moses until the day our Lord died on the cross are

gone. Remember, the law was given to God's people, Israel; and it shut the Jew in from the Gentile. It made them a separate people. Now at the cross, God broke the barrier down. There is now no difference between the Jew or the Gentile. They can be reconciled together in Christ.

**I repeat it as** Colossians 2:14 says—He took it out of the way. This barrier which shut the Jew in and shut the Gentile out has been removed through the work of Christ at the cross. And now any individual whether Jew or Gentile can come to the Lord Jesus Christ and have perfect peace of heart and mind and say with Paul—Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is our peace who has made both one.

This is what you have here in chapter 2 of Ephesians, verse 14. Christ has broken down the wall of partition between us. He has given us access unto the Father. The law with all its ordinances no longer has dominance, I repeat, over the new man in Christ Jesus. And the result, of course, is in verse 17.

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

**Oh, I tell you,** it is a wonderful thing. We are no longer afar off and dead in sins, no longer estranged from God by wicked works, no longer barred because of the law of Moses that shut the Jew in and

shut us Gentiles out; but now we come with confidence into the very presence of God. He has made the way. Peace has been made.

You know, sometimes people say, "Mr. Mitchell, have you made your peace with God?"

My friend, I couldn't do that. Neither can you. The fact is, God has made peace for us through Jesus Christ and you experience that peace when you accept Him as your own personal Saviour.

Again I would suggest that you read this chapter over and over and over again. The more you read it, the more you milk it, the more marvelous is the grace of God to usward.

**My friends**, as I talk to you, I just pray that the Spirit of God will today and in the days to come fill your heart with a passion for Christ and fill you with worship and praise to the One who has done so much for us.

I want to read again verses 17 and 18.

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Do you ever stop to think of it? We who were afar off are no more strangers and foreigners. We have access into the presence of God. We are no longer, I say, afar off, no more strangers, no longer foreigners but having peace with God. You see, in verse 13, sin must be met and hence we were made

nigh through the sacrifice of Christ, He having met the demand of putting away sin.

**Now in verses 17** and 18, relationship, sonship must be established if we are to come into the presence of God, Jew or Gentile. That's what you have in verses 17 and 18. Those of you who were afar off were Gentiles. Those of you who were Jews were nigh. Through Him and only through Him on the same ground do we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Here is a new relationship. Sonship must be established.

If you say that God is your Father, my friend, then you must be declaring the fact that you are a child of God. You're declaring you've been born again from above. Then you're no longer a child of wrath which we read in the last three verses of the chapter, but we're now coming unto the Father.

**You remember** that the Lord Jesus, after resurrection, could say to His disciples in John's gospel, chapter 20:17—I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. I repeat it; and, by the way, I do not mind repeating these things because I believe that until we see this amazing fact, this wonderful truth, we'll not begin to appreciate our position in Christ. God is not patching up the old creation, whether Jew or Gentile. God is bringing into being an entirely new thing. And because of this, whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, you come into the same relationship having the same privileges and the same inheritance in Christ. We have access unto

the Father by the same Spirit of God. Hence He could say in verse 19,

19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

**What I'm after here** is in verse 18, to have access into the presence of God sonship must be established.

You know, I was talking to some friends just last night on this question. They asked about angels and cherubims and the children of God. I'd like to suggest to you that when you and I accept the Saviour, we belong to a race of people, to a new family that is eternal, that is perfect, and that has full access to God. As far as I can read my Bible, I do not believe that angels can come and go in the presence of God as they desire. Angels are in the family of God by creation; they know nothing of redemption. They know nothing of the grace of God as you and I do because they've never sinned. They're holy angels who have always done His bidding. And yet the Christian has been brought into a closer relationship with God than even the holy angels.

**You remember** in Hebrews 1:14 it says—angels are sent forth to minister to us who shall be the heirs of salvation. Allow me, please, to repeat myself. I think not long ago I mentioned the fact in John's gospel, chapter 1—if you go from verse 10 down to 13—He was in the world and the world was made by Him; and the world knew Him not. The world, the

Gentile world, did not know its Creator. And then in verse 11 we have the Jewish people—He came unto His own and His own received Him not. The Gentiles rejected their Creator; the Jews rejected their Messiah. Now is God in a dilemma? Oh, no. Oh, no. What is He going to do then? The Gentiles have spurned Him; the Jews have spurned Him; what will God do?

**God will take individuals** out of the Jews and Gentiles and make them something entirely new. For we read—To as many as receive Jesus Christ, to them He gives the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but who were born of God.

**In John, chapter 3**, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You are born wrong. You must be born from above.” If any man be in Christ, he’s a new creation.

Galatians 6:16 says the same thing. Being a Jew or a Gentile doesn’t mean anything, but a new creation. What I’m trying to get to you is the fact that when you and I accept the Saviour, He not only forgives us our sins, He not only pronounces us righteous, not only gives us eternal life. These are wonderful facts. But He brings us into a relationship with Himself that’s beyond the ken (the understanding) of men. And we have access. This is the thing I’m after—because of this relationship we have access unto the Father. Is it not, I say, a wonderful thing that you and I as Christians can come into the presence of the Father at any time, under any circumstance?!

**“Oh,”** you say, “well, that’s all right for you preachers or for those who are walking with God, but for me—I’m just a backslider—I’m a cold, indifferent Christian. I don’t know much about it and I’m so tied up with the things of the world that I don’t know what to do with myself.”

Listen. In the book of Hebrews 4:16, I read these words—Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of grace, and there obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You see, my friend, God is accessible to the man who will put his trust in Jesus. This is what you find in Hebrews 11:6—He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

**God is more open** to your reception than you are to receive Him. God is more desirous of coming into your life than you are to have Him come. The trouble is not with God, my friend. The trouble is with you and me. And here the Apostle says whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, through Jesus Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Think of it! You and I can come with all our frailty and failure, whatever the problems may be. We can come at any time, under any circumstances, into the presence of God.

I remember writing a friend of mine many years ago, encouraging him to come to the Saviour. He wrote me and said, “You know, when I think of what I have done in my life, I’m afraid to come into the presence of God.”

**My friend, do you** realize that when Jesus Christ (this is what I wrote him) died on the cross, He opened the way for man to come into the presence of God? He opened the way for sinners to come to God? He removed all the barriers between God and men? This is reconciliation. It is not that you are making peace with God but God has made peace for you; and that if you will come in simple faith, trusting the Saviour, you have access unto the Father. Notice what He says. He didn't say access unto God—though that's true—but access unto the Father.

Here is a relationship that has been established by God for any man or any woman. I don't care who they are or where they are or what they've done. The way has been opened for you and me to come into the very presence of God. As Hebrews 10:20 says, "By a new and living way which He has consecrated, which He has set apart through the veil, that is to say His flesh." In other words, He died to remove the barrier of sin between and make it possible for you and me to have access unto God. Is it not a wonderful thing, my friend, that you can come into the very presence of God through faith in Jesus Christ and come where angels fear to come? In fact, they cannot come unless bidden to come. But you can come because you're in the family, because you belong to this new race.

**What a wonderful thing** this is. Aren't you glad God isn't passing you up? He's making you new, and through Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, we

have access unto the Father by one Spirit. I say, a new relationship has been established.

Now we've been slowly expounding these verses for the purpose that it might get into your heart and into your mind. Indeed, we pray that the Lord may grant to you and to me an enlargement of capacity to receive the word of God.

I would like to read again from verse 17 to verse 22.

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

**Now we've been dealing** with our condition past and what we are now in Christ. And now we are coming to our condition in the future. Verses 19 to 22 show our permanent position. Now this is a logical sequence to what we've been going through. He came and preached peace to those that were afar off—us Gentiles—and to the Jews who were nigh. And through Him, both Jew and Gentile who believe on the Saviour have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Therefore we are no more strangers and fo-

reigners. We are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

Let me just stop there for a few moments. Here you have access unto the Father as we have mentioned. The Jew and Gentile come in one spirit, one in life, one in relationship, one in the Holy Spirit. All barriers are gone. All legal obstacles have been broken down. All fear is gone and the result is we have access to the Father.

**I am very much tempted**, by the way, to just stay there. Oh, how I wish God's people would realize the privileges they have in Christ Jesus. Many Christians thank God that He's forgiving, but going on from there seems to be foreign to them. This life in Christ is a wonderful life of living each day in the consciousness that we are sons of one who is God and that, whatever our circumstances may be, we have the right and the privilege of access unto the Father.

**Friend, have you ever** stopped to think of it? We run hither and yon. We run to this one and that one with our problems, with our troubles, and rightly so. I'm not saying anything against that; but why not try to come into the presence of God?

"You mean to tell me, Mr. Mitchell, that I can come with any little detail of my life to God?"

Well, who better can you bring them to?

"The little wee decisions to be made?"

Yes. If you can't make a decision, why not talk to God about it? In other words, why not come in actual experience? Take your place as a child of God

in the family. The eternal sovereign God is your Father and you can come to Him at any time under any circumstance. Make a confidant of God.

Can I put it that way? Make a confidant of God. In your blessings, in your joys, thank Him for them. Praise Him for them. In your tests, in your trials, your afflictions, your sorrows, turn to Him. He understands.

**Sometimes people say,** “Well, Mr. Mitchell, nobody seems to understand me.”

Oh, yes, there is One who really understands you. As we used to sing that song, you remember:

“Oh, yes, He cares;  
I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief.  
When the days are dreary  
The long nights weary,  
I know my Savior cares.”

Yes, He does. Oh, why don't you and I take the access He has given to us. He says, “Come with boldness to the throne of grace and there obtain mercy.” Find grace to help in every time of need. Which leads me to verse 19:

19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

**Paul is telling** especially Gentile believers that they are no more strangers, no more those on the outside, without covenants, without inheritance, no

more foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, citizens of heaven. This is their present relationship.

You see, in Philippians 3:20, it says, “Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” You see, Israel is God’s earthly people, but we are of the household of God just as they are. Only we belong to His heavenly household. We were once strangers, but now we’re citizens. Once we were afar off, now we’ve been made nigh. Once we were on the outside; now we’re members of the family. No, not boarders, not roomers, not guests, but we belong to the family, having equal rights.

**Oh, think of it.** Access to God. The objects of His love. Intimate fellowship with the Father. Heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, one in the family. I tell you it is a wonderful thing to belong to a family, isn’t it? You have your family. I have my family and there’s something about it. It’s a family matter. We’re “family men.” Some children in the family—you wonder why they are so different. There are generally one or two in the family. You wonder what in the world has happened to them, but they belong to the family. Some Christians are lovable and sweet. You just love them. And you find some Christians who are ornery and sour and they’re out of fellowship with God.

**Did you ever go** to a foreign land where you don’t know their language? I’ve had the privilege of traveling quite a bit in the ministry of the word of

God in southeast Asia a number of times; in Africa, in Central and South America; and I've been around to different mission fields of the world. And I tell you, it is a strange feeling to come into a country where they look different and they talk differently. They act differently. Their attitude, their philosophy of life is different; and you feel so out of everything. You can't talk to people. You know you don't belong. You're a stranger. You're a foreigner. They don't take you into the intimacy of their hearts or their lives. You're on the outside. It's a funny feeling, isn't it? It's a strange feeling, an empty feeling.

**Listen, you and I** are not foreigners with God. We belong to the household of faith; we belong to heaven. When you and I as Christians get to heaven, it's going to be no strange place. We'll not have to learn a new language. We belong to the family. We're on the inside. We're children of one who is God. We belong to this new race of people. We have eternal life. Death doesn't even cast a shadow.

I tell you, my friends, we Christians who are rich in the grace of God, rich in things that are eternal, we live like paupers down here. We get our lives cluttered up with material things and fleshly things, carnal things, good things and miss—oh, I say it so sadly—we miss the riches of the grace of God; we miss the riches of fellowship with God. We miss the thrill of belonging to the family of God.

**When you go down** the street today, when you go among your neighbors, when you go to work, when you deal with your children and your own fam-

ily, remember, we're children of One who is God. We're no longer foreigners and strangers; we're fellow citizens with the saints. We're on the inside, not the outside. We're in the family of God.

Oh, listen, Christian friend, don't rob yourself of the treasures of the grace of God. No wonder Paul could speak in chapter three of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." I pray that some of this will get a hold of your heart and my heart. Instead of living like spiritual paupers, let us be rich in the grace of God, living as the sons of One who is God, living as those who have an eternal, complete inheritance which neither thieves can break through and steal nor can rust corrupt. We have an inheritance which is eternal, sure, and perfect.

**Now then, you're not** a stranger or a foreigner, but you are a fellow citizen with the saints in the household of God.

You see, that's why when you and I walk with God, the man of the world, the man outside of Christ, can't understand us. I'm not asking you to be unique or funny or peculiar or to dress peculiarly. I'm talking about a real life with God, just as when our Saviour walked the earth. The Pharisees, scribes and Herodians couldn't stand Christ because they couldn't understand Him. They knew He was different.

I trust you and I today will live before God no longer as a foreigner and a stranger but as a member of the household of God.

I say again, isn't it a wonderful thing to be a member of the family of God?

20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

**May I just suggest** to you for your thoughts that certain things are said in the epistles about the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. For example in Ephesians 1:23, we find that the church is called "the body of Christ." In Ephesians 2:21 we find the church is called "the temple of God." In chapter 5:25-32 we find the church is referred to as "the bride of Christ" and one could go on. We find that as the branch is to the vine and as members are to the body and the stone is in the building and as the flock is to the shepherd and the bride is to the bridegroom, so the church is to Christ. These are different aspects of truth concerning the same relationship between Christ and His people.

Now I've heard people say, "Well, a person cannot be in the body of Christ and be in the bride of Christ."

**Of course, one can be** in the body of Christ and be a stone in the temple. These are just aspects of truth. For example, when He talks about the church being the body of Christ, Paul is just talking about

our union with Him. When he talks about the church being the temple of God, he is speaking of the church's being an habitation of God through eternity. When it comes to the question of the church and the bride, he is speaking of the relationship of the love that Christ has for His church. He loved the church. He gave Himself for the church. So don't go off the deep end by trying to read into the scriptures what was never the intent of the Spirit of God.

Now we're dealing here in verses 19-22 with the temple of God. "We are built upon the foundation," and the church is a habitation of God. In other words, the church constitutes the temple of God for eternity. The temple of God is not made with stones and bricks and mortar, but He comes to live in His people. And you remember, our Saviour spoke of this as also did the apostles.

**Our Lord, for example,** in Matthew 16:17-18 said after Peter's confession, identifying Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. I say that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Now certainly Peter was not the rock. Peter himself corrects that idea in his first epistle (2:5) when he said that he, also, was just one of the living stones, an elder with the rest of them. No, "upon this rock" means Christ Jesus.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 3:11, Paul speaks of the fact that our Saviour is the foundation, "For

other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” You have it also in Ephesians 4, verse 11. God gave to the church prophets and apostles.

**In 1 Peter 2:4-6**, Peter talks about the fact that we are living stones in the building; but Christ is the foundational stone. And the apostles in their writing made Jesus Christ, the person and work of Christ, the foundation of all that they taught.

You see, the foundation was laid by them. They gave to us these foundational truths concerning the person of Christ. And, by the way, when Paul talks about the apostles in prophecy, he’s not talking about the Old Testament prophets. He is talking about the New Testament apostles and prophets.

You have this in Ephesians 3:5, “Which in other ages (he’s talking about the church) was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” He’s not talking about Old Testament prophets. And by the way, may I say this very frankly, you do not find the church in the Old Testament. You had in the first chapter of Ephesians, remember, the last two verses, that the church is a complement of Christ, that our Saviour in His death, resurrection and exaltation became the head over all things to the church. There could be no church until we had a risen, exalted Saviour.

**When it comes** to the revelation of the church in chapter 3, we’re going to see that the church was

something that was hidden in God from past ages but is now made manifest to His people.

So here you have, first of all, the foundation of the church and Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. And you remember that the corner stone, the foundation stone, is that which gives strength to all the building. In fact, all that we have, all that we hope for, rests on Christ Jesus. Everything we have rests on Him.

I tell you it is a wonderful thing to have the Lord of glory who put away sin, who burst the bands of the tomb, who defeated death, who defeated Satan. He is the foundation and other foundations can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. The structure of a building depends upon its foundation. And if the local church (allow me to say this) is not built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and the word of God, my friend, that structure will fail.

I wish in some way I could get this clear to the hearts of every professing Christian, every church member, every pastor and teacher. Unless it is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has accomplished and His precious word where we have the revelation, then that church will not be spiritual and will not stand in these last days.

**Can I just say this?** Let me just bring this up to your heart.

21. In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We're all fitly framed. Each one has a particular place in the body of Christ, and each one is being fitted for that place. And when the church of Christ is completed, it will be taken to glory to be a habitation of God. The eternal habitation of God will be in the finished building. Beautiful, perfect, glorious, complete, indestructible and eternal, this is the church of Christ. It is not only the body of Christ, but the temple of God.

**I plead with you** to revel in your Saviour. Get to know something of the purpose of God for you as well as for the church.

All individual believers, it is true, are now the temple of the Spirit of God; but collectively we're also the temple of God. It would be a wonderful thing to remember this, that each individual believer in His body has become the sanctuary of God. You remember 1 Corinthians 6:19 which says "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" This is true now of individual believers as you have it in Isaiah 66:1-2, "The heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool: where will you build a house that I may find my rest? All these things have my hands made, but to this man will I look."

**I tell you again**, my Christian friend, it is a marvelous thing to know of the relationship and the union we have with the Son of God. I tell you, it was no simple thing when the Lord Jesus died to put away our sins. But the more marvelous thing is that you and I are identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection and exaltation. Each individual be-

liever has a special place in the heart of God and a special place in the temple of God.

22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Now this is what God is doing. As Acts 15:14 says, “God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” And here you have the finished building occupied.

**You remember** in the Old Testament when the tabernacle was finished, the glory of God filled it. When Solomon built his temple, the glory of God filled that tabernacle; and when the church of Christ is completed, the glory of God will fill it then, too. It will be an indestructible building of living stones.

No wonder Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Nothing can prevail against this purpose of God of gathering out a people and knitting them together in one body called the church. That was Ephesians chapter 1.

Now in chapter 2 we are His temple. We are a building. We are stones in the building—prepared, polished, fitted for a special place in the building.

**You know, I think** we Christians have failed to realize the marvel of it all, that God today is doing something that was never known in past ages and will never be duplicated, as far as I know, in the ages to come. He’s bringing out a people.

You see, when God created man in the garden and gave him special responsibilities, man failed

God. And it came to pass that the very thoughts and imaginations of the heart of man were evil continually. Failure was everywhere and, God's being righteous, He must judge. As a result, the flood came and destroyed that whole human race. Only eight souls were saved, Noah and his family. Not very long after the earth had been renovated, you have sin and rebellion coming in. God judged the people at Babylon, the seat of idolatry. He scattered them upon the earth, and they became nations. I'm quoting from chapters 10 and 11 of Genesis.

Then God let the nations go their own way; and He picked up Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and on down through to the other people of Israel. He gave them His word; He sent them His prophets. He dwelt in the midst of them doing marvelous things. But when they failed, He scattered them among the nations of the earth.

**Now what will God** do? As I've said before, God is doing a new thing. He's taking men and women, individuals like you and me and saving us, transforming us. And He's not only making us members of the body of Christ—and this speaks of life—but now he's joining us together into what He calls a temple, a building, a habitation of God in the Spirit, a building that's complete. It is beautiful, it is perfect, it is glorious, it is nearly complete. And when the church is complete, God is going to inhabit the presence of His people. God is going to be in the midst of us and, as the book of Revelation 22:4 says,

“We shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.”

As Revelation 21:3 says, God will be with men and will dwell with them. But the church of Christ is going to be a special company through eternity. We're not going to be the only saints in heaven, the only saints in God's universe. Oh, no. God has different kinds of saints. The church is only one company of saints, one company of His people, but a special company, the temple of God. We are to be the habitation of God.

Just as God indwells the believer now individually, God is going to indwell all believers collectively; and we are to be the habitation of God through eternity.

**What I'm trying to say** to you is this, that God today is gathering out a people for his name called the church and it has become a building. We are to be the ones in whom God will dwell through eternity. No wonder Paul or whoever the writer of Hebrews was, chapter 1, the last verse, said, “The very angels of God are sent forth to minister unto us who are the heirs of salvation.” Even the very holy angels have been called to be the servants, the ministers, of God's people in the church.

Now it is true in the kingdom period, when Christ returns, Israel will be the leading nation; but they will be limited to the earth. But the Christian today, the man who is trusting Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, as we have had in this second chapter of Ephesians is “reconciled in the body by the cross, having

access unto the Father.” We are special members of a new race. We can cry, as Paul says in Romans 8:15, “Abba, Father.” We will have the same relationship as a child to his Daddy. And here we are in a rather wonderful, peculiar place in the purpose of God.

**I say again,** I wish in some way you and I could, by the Spirit of God, be gripped by this amazing fact that we not only have forgiveness, we not only have eternal life, we not only have all these wonderful things, but we’ve been brought in the purpose of God into a special, special relationship with God Himself.

This is something different from anything that’s ever preceded us and, as far as I know, will not follow us. God’s eternal people will be a habitation of God through eternity. A perfect, complete, beautiful group called “the church,” the temple of God.

I am not surprised, as I read the rest of the New Testament, that what God has purposed He will surely perform. God is not playing at this business. God doesn’t play with souls. He takes all of us willing men and women and transforms us in Christ, brings us right to Himself, and not only gives us life, but joins us to Himself to have a peculiar place in the purpose of God through eternity as the temple of God.

**We shall be a temple** made of living stones, each one having a particular place in that temple. This is what God is doing, my friend. And this is what we have in the revelation of Paul in the book of Ephesians.

Now we start with the third chapter dealing with revelation. Read it through, will you please. And the Lord bless you.

## Chapter Three

**N**ow as we come to this third chapter of the book of Ephesians, we have the revelation of the church which is the body of Christ as to what it is and its nature. In the first 13 verses of the chapter we have the revelation given to us; and then the last part of the chapter is Paul's second prayer, a prayer for strength, for power and for fellowship.

Now in the very first verse you have a key to what Paul went through because of this revelation. Allow me to read these first few and will you follow along with me, please:

3:1. For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

3:2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3:3. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

3:4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

3:5. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

**Now here you have** a revelation. In the first verse you have Paul's own personal experience. Because of his teaching and preaching of this revelation of the church made up of Jews and Gentiles, Paul could say for this cause, because of his allegiance to

God and his desire for men to become members of the church of Christ, he became “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.”

You know, here is a wonderful thing. Paul never said he was a prisoner of Rome. In chapter 4 of this same book, the first verse, he referred to himself as “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord.” You know, there’s a dignity about this I like. He didn’t say the Romans came and took me prisoner and I’m now here in chains in Rome in prison and I’m sorry but I’m the prisoner of the Romans.

**No, oh no. He’s beyond that** and above that. “Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” I love to think of this. The reason why the Apostle Paul was in prison was because he had opened the door to the Gentiles.

Now, it might be well for me to stop here for a few moments. In fact, I would say it is very difficult for us who are Gentiles to appreciate that through which Paul was going. You know in Acts 22 and 23, you have where the Apostle Paul is giving his defense before Israel, and the great issue is that he’s been going to the Gentiles with the word of God.

**“Well,” you say,** “what’s wrong with that? Didn’t Jesus Christ say, ‘Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’? Weren’t some of the last words of our Saviour in Acts 1:8, ‘All authority is mine in heaven and earth. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea,

Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth.' Wasn't Paul just obeying the commands of Christ?"

Yes, but you see, he was Jew; and the early church was made up of Jews. In fact, you don't read of any Gentiles really being saved until you come to the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Acts when Peter went down to the house of Cornelius. You get a little picture there of the prejudice that was in the hearts and minds of even the disciples concerning the Gentiles.

**When our Lord was** here in Matthew 15:24 and 26, He could say, "I was sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I can't take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." He's talking of Gentiles. In Romans 15 and 16, chapter 15 especially, where Paul says that he was sent to confirm the promises made to the fathers, the Gentiles were on the outside. Remember that for 1500 years from Moses to Christ, the great commandment of God was that they should not mix up with the Gentiles; they must not intermarry with the Gentiles. They had nothing to do with the Gentiles; they were a separate people unto God, and they tenaciously stood by that.

And now along comes Paul who says that this message is for the Gentiles. As I started to say a moment ago, when God was sending Peter to go down to the house of Cornelius at Caesarea, God had to give him a special revelation from heaven that what God had cleansed he was not to call common or unclean.

**And now the Apostle Paul** was having quite a time. You take in Galatians 2:14, he accuses Peter

before them all because Peter was trying to make a difference between Jews and Gentiles. And it was because of Paul's insistence that the gospel was for the Gentiles that he was in prison.

If he had restricted his message to the Jews, he wouldn't have had the persecution that he had. But to bring in a message that would put the Jews and Gentiles on the same plane upset the orthodox. It was very, very difficult, for example, for John Mark to go along with his uncle Barnabas and Paul as they preached to the Gentiles. You see, there was no early indication that the Gentiles were going to be blessed. The place and the channel of their blessing was thought to be through the Jews.

**And then along comes** this man Paul who says, "No, sir; these Gentiles can come into direct connection with God through Jesus Christ." For saying that, the Jewish rabble went after him; they were going to tear him to pieces. They would have killed him if the Romans hadn't rescued him. So you see, it's a tremendous thing when Paul says, "I, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

And then, see verses 2-3, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;" and verse 5, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

**Here is something** which God has given to the Apostle Paul; it is a special revelation of a mystery.

And the mystery is the church, the body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. It was because of this message that Paul could say, "I am the prisoner of Jesus Christ." He brought the message of the gospel of the grace of God to Gentiles as well as Jews, making no difference. This was the issue, making no difference between Jews and Gentiles.

I tell you, my friend, it makes no difference whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, whether you are black or white or red. It makes no difference who you are or what you are, where you are or what you have done. The gospel of the grace of God is open to any individual who will accept it. As far as God is concerned there is no difference. As Romans 3:22-23 says, that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." What we need is a Saviour. Gentiles need saving and the Jewish people need saving; and there is only one ground of salvation and that is in Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son.

**And it was this message**, the message of the grace of God that is for everybody and anybody, that led to his imprisonment. It is not for the righteous and the moral and the good folks. It's for anybody, good, bad or indifferent, religious or irreligious. The message of the gospel of the grace of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, let me repeat, is open to anybody who will receive Him.

In Ephesians 3:2-5, we have the revelation of the mystery. Notice that Paul is a steward of the manifold, wonderful grace of God. This word "dispensa-

tion” by the way means a stewardship, a responsibility. And Paul is saying, “God made me responsible for the revelation, not only of the grace of God, but of the church which is a mystery hidden in God from past ages.”

**You remember, if I may** refresh your memory, that in the book of Romans, Paul was given the revelation of the grace of God. In the book of Ephesians, God gave him the revelation of the church, the body of Christ. Now let’s read what he’s talking about.

Verse 3, “How that by revelation—” He wasn’t taught it by somebody else; he wasn’t taught it by Peter, James or John. God gave to Paul this special revelation of the church, the body of Christ.

3:3. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

3:4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

3:5. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

**Now let me just stop** here for a few moments more. Here is something that was unknown to past ages—unknown. Adam didn’t know it; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob didn’t know it. Moses didn’t know it. Elijah didn’t know it. David didn’t know it. None of the prophets knew it.

“Now do you mean to tell us that what Paul is going to write about is something that was never known before?” you ask.

That's correct. Look at verse 5. Whatever this mystery was (we'll come back to that in a few moments), it was not made known unto the sons of men in past ages. It is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Now don't read Old Testament prophets in there. You remember in Ephesians 4:11, He gives some to be prophets, some evangelists, pastors and teachers. He gave these gifted men to the church. He's talking about a mystery, not something mysterious.

**Now, what was this mystery?** It was the mystery of the church, the body of Christ. It's something new. You remember in I Corinthians 4:1, Paul says that he was made a steward of the mysteries of God. In fact, when you come to your New Testament, there are seven mysteries spoken of.

For example, in Ephesians 3:6, 9-10 is the mystery of the church, the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 15:51 we have another mystery, the mystery of the translation of the church of Christ—Behold, I show you a mystery. We're not all going to die, but we're all going to be changed.

In 1 Timothy 3:16 he talks about the mystery of godliness. What was that? "God was manifest in the flesh."

**In Romans 11:25-27** we have another mystery—that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

In Revelation 17:5 we read of mystery Babylon.

When you come to 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, you have the mystery of lawlessness which ends up in the antichrist.

And in Ephesians 5:32, you have the mystery of this relationship between the church and Christ. This marvelous union is between Christ and His people; that's Ephesians 5, dealing there with our relationship and affection toward Him.

Now, in verse 6 of chapter 3, we have the nature of the mystery. Let's read it,

3:6. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

**Now we're getting down** to the reason why Paul was really persecuted: "That the Gentiles," these dogs of Gentiles with no covenants, no promises, with no fathers—just idolaters, sinful men and women, outside the pale of Israel—should be fellow-heirs with the Jew, "and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." In other words, he's telling us that there's no difference now between Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ. We have the same position; we have the same place; we have the same inheritance; we have the same relationship, Jew and Gentile.

Now, let me say again, it was no mystery that the Gentiles were going to be blessed through the Jew. The Old Testament is full of that.

**In the kingdom period**, when our Lord reigns, Israel is to be the leading nation of the world. The

Jew is to be the minister of God to the nations; and it is going to be through the Jew, through Israel, that the nations of the earth are going to learn of God. They were chosen to be God's witnesses to the nations of the earth of the oneness of God. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4) and holy is His name.

This is going to be their job in the kingdom period when our Lord purges the rebels out of Israel and cleanses the nations. As Isaiah 66:8 says, there is going to be a nation born in a day, cleansed and renewed and brought back into fellowship with God. Then God is going to use the Jews among the Gentile nations. This is Old Testament prophecy.

**But now along comes** Paul and says, "Wait a minute. God's doing something today. He is not going to wait until the kingdom; but today He is taking individuals, not nations. He's taking Jews and Gentiles and redeeming them, giving them the same relationship, the same fellowship, the same inheritance. There is now no difference between the Jew and Gentile."

As I said a moment ago, this stirred up the enmity of the Jew against Paul for bringing such a message to the Gentile. So in verse 6, you have the nature of the mystery that the Gentiles are going to be on the same plane of equality with the Jew.

**Do you remember** in John 17:22, our precious Saviour could say, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." Who? Every one who will believe on Him through their word. I tell you, it was for

this truth that Paul was persecuted. It caused an upheaval among the Jewish people when he brought this testimony. It was something never dreamed of before, that these Gentiles with no promises, no inheritance should be made fellow-heirs with the Jewish people in Christ by the gospel.

From verses 6 through 13, we have the purpose of the mystery. What was the purpose of the Lord's starting a church made up of Jews and Gentiles, individuals, something of which Paul was made a special minister?

Now you'll notice in verse 6, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs.

3:6. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

3:7. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

In verse 9,

3:9. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

3:10. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

3:11. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Now, here we are** dealing with the eternal purpose of God. God wants us to see that His eternal

purpose is in the church. What was the purpose of the mystery? To show forth the manifold wisdom of God.

You and I, for the most part, are concerned about those who live on the earth. We belong to the human family on this little planet called the earth. Now, there's no question that the scriptures teach us that there are millions of holy angels and also teach us that there are myriads of demons following Satan, the arch enemy of our souls. And the scripture speaks of principalities and powers and authorities in the heavenlies. There is no question that there are myriads of created intelligences throughout God's universe.

I question whether the earth is the only place where you have intelligence or that the earth is the only place where we have any created beings. I am not talking about human beings here. But the earth is being used by God to show forth aspects of His character, of His heart, so that the whole universe will know something of the grace of God and the wisdom of God.

**For example, go back** in chapter 2, verse 6 and listen to what it says. He has taken Jews and Gentiles who believe in His Son and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What for? Now, mark this 7<sup>th</sup> verse, "That in the ages to come (in the eternal ages ahead of us) he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Did you ever stop to think that the believer in Christ through eternal ages is going to be the demonstrator of the grace of God? That the only way whereby angels and principalities and powers may know of the grace of God is through you and me? And do you know that even today, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:9, we are made a spectacle on the world stage? God is making known through you and through me, Christian friend, the riches of His grace.

**Do you think that just** because nobody sees your life down here that you are not seen? I question if we Christians realize, if it could ever get a hold of us, that there's a great multitude of unseen powers that see everything you do and hear everything you say. The revelation of His grace, the manifestation of His love, His mercy, His compassion are to be revealed through every individual Christian. In the ages to come we're going to be demonstrators of the grace of God. God through you is going to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace.

Now you come to chapter 3:10.

3:10. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by (or through) the church the manifold wisdom of God.

**Not only are you** to display the grace of God, but the very wisdom of God is going to be made known through you and through me. It is beyond our comprehension, isn't it?

“Do you mean to tell me, sir, that when I came as a sinner and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal

Saviour, and that when He gave me life eternal and He forgave me my sins and made me His child and put me into the church, the body of Christ, that I'm to be an instrument in God's hand through eternity for the instruction of all the great multitude of personalities in the universe?"

Through you and me He's going to make known His grace and His wisdom. That's exactly what He is saying.

**Oh, listen, friend,** you're never alone; you're never alone. Your words, your actions, your attitude, your life are being seen. Are we going to bring disgrace and reproach upon the name of Christ by the way we live? As Paul could say, "We are a sight, we are an object, we are the actors on the stage before angels, before men, before demons to display the grace of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God.

I can't plumb the depths of the wisdom of God—why He should save a man like me and why He should save you. I don't understand this wonderful, divine wisdom. But I do know one thing He's revealed to us in His word. He wants you and me to know His purpose that He saves men and women to show forth His grace and to show forth His wisdom in the countless ages of eternity.

**Believe me, my Christian friend,** in the purpose of God we're somebody. He's going to make us somebody where the very holy angels will be your servants. I'm not making this up. I'm not becoming fanciful. This is what the Book says—that in the ages to come He will show forth the riches of His grace.

In the ages to come He's going to show forth His wisdom through the church of Christ, through you and through me as individual members of the body of Christ.

Will you walk today, will you live today with this truth gripping your heart? We have a tremendous place in the purpose of God. We belong to Jesus Christ, and through us God has been pleased to display His grace and His wisdom.

**This question of the building** of a church made up of individual Jews and Gentiles was purposed by God way back in eternity and is now being made manifest to us through the Apostle Paul here in the book of Ephesians. Now as you think of this, of the church, it had a tremendous effect upon Paul. And I wish sometimes it may have the same effect upon you and me. It so transformed this man Paul that he could say in the book of Colossians, I strive according to the working of Him who "worketh in me mightily." I'm quoting from Colossians 1:29.

What is the eternal purpose of God which He purposed in Christ? That through the work of Christ on the cross and the resurrection and exaltation, He might gather together individual Jews and Gentiles and make them a new company called the church of which Christ is the head. And that through this company of people He's going to show forth through eternity the wonders of His grace and the marvels of His wisdom.

**Now such a thing** had a tremendous effect, I say, upon the Apostle Paul. Let's look at how it affects him in verses 7-9:

3:7. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

3:8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

3:9. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

And you go down to verse 12,

3:12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

3:13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

**The effect upon this man** Paul is tremendous. He was transformed, you remember, from a Jew to a Christian. This man was before a blasphemer; now he's a saint. Before, he was a Pharisee; now he's an apostle. Before, he was a persecutor; now he's a missionary. My, what a tremendous transformation in this man.

May I repeat it? When he saw the tremendous wisdom of God manifested in Jesus Christ and the provision for our salvation, and that we were to be the instruments through whom he would display His grace and His wisdom to every created intelligence in the universe throughout all countless ages, I'm not

surprised at the tremendous effect upon this man. This is the man who was before a blasphemer and now he's a saint of God. This is the man who was a strict Pharisee, and now he's an apostle of the Lamb of God. This is the man who was a Jew, transformed into a Christian, fellowshiping with Gentiles. This is the man who before persecuted the people of God and now he's a missionary for God, carrying the message of the gospel of the grace of God to everybody. Oh, the effectual working of His power!

**When I think of what** Paul saw in the church of Christ, I'm sure that he reveled in these verses which he wrote to us, for example in 1:18-20, when he said, "We might know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." And may I be allowed to quote again from Colossians 1:29, I strive according to the working of Him who "worketh in me mightily." And then you see the tremendous humility of the man in verse 8,

3:8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

**Mark the man's** humility; he is "less than the least of all saints." In 1 Timothy 1:15, he could say, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." He called himself

“The chief of sinners,” and “less than the least of all saints.” And then you remember he speaks of it again when he said, “I am not meet to be called an apostle,” in 1 Corinthians 15:9. I’m not even fit to be called an apostle, “because I persecuted the church of God.”

**I wonder, my friend,** when you hear of the riches of the glory of His grace and the marvelous purpose of God in you and in me, what is the effect upon us? Does it make us proud or does it humble us? God grant it will humble us.

And the Apostle Paul could say in that same passage of 1 Corinthians 15:10, “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

If it had not been for the grace of God in redeeming me, Mitchell, what in the world would I have been? Nobody knows where I would be. Because of this tremendous fact, God transforms us from blasphemers into missionaries. He transforms us into saints. He transforms us from those who were afar off and makes us nigh. He transforms children of wrath into the children of God.

**We who were unrighteous** He now declares to be righteous. We who were afar off, without hope, without Christ, without God, are now intimate members of the family of God. We are objects of the wonderful grace of God; and I can say what Paul could say, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

Oh, the transforming power of the word of God, the transforming power of Christ. Will you do something for me? Will you take the first chapter, the second chapter, the third chapter, and take the verses where you find the word “riches”; “riches of grace,” “riches of glory,” “unsearchable riches of Christ,” “riches of mercy.”

**Just read them through.** In chapter 1, verse 7, we have forgiveness according to the riches of His grace. In chapter 2, verse 4, we have this question of the richness of His mercy. In 2:7, we have “the exceeding riches of His grace;” in 3:8, “the unsearchable riches of Christ;” in chapter 3:16, “according to the riches of His glory.”

The verse that comes to my mind is Romans 11:33, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

I tell you, I can’t understand it. I can’t even begin to appreciate it. It’s so marvelous; it’s so wonderful; it’s beyond all the capacity of the human person to understand the unsearchable riches of Christ.

**My friend, it’s going** to take all eternity for us to begin to appreciate the riches of His grace, the riches of His mercy, the unsearchable riches of Christ, to enjoy the riches of His glory, the riches of His inheritance in the saints. “Riches!”

Please don’t walk like paupers when we can enjoy the riches of God. I want you to revel today in the riches of His grace, the riches of His glory, the

unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, the riches of His mercy.

Oh, friends, God grant you and me an enlarged capacity to appreciate the wonderful love, mercy and grace of God. I tell you, it's beyond all human comprehension; and when Paul saw it, when Paul caught a glimpse of this marvelous church of Christ in which he was a member, in which you and I are members, it humbled him. But it transformed him.

**Believer, revel in your Saviour.** Oh, the depths—let us not live like paupers; let us live as those who are rich in Christ.

Now not only did this cause Paul to be filled with humility, but also it filled him with a boldness. Will you notice in 3:12,

3:12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Notice the words he uses. Knowing something of God's eternal purpose, this gave him boldness; this gave him confidence. It gave him boldness to speak; it gave him access without fear; it gave him confidence and trust. I'm sure that angels, holy angels in the presence of God, must have been astounded, must have been amazed at such boldness. When a man could come into the very presence of a holy, mighty, sovereign God and come with a confidence, with a boldness to speak!

As far as I know angelic beings cannot come into God's presence unless bidden. As I've been telling you, my friend, in the church of Christ we've been

brought into a relationship superior to holy angels who are our ministers.

**Now, I do not want** you to get the idea that we come into the presence of God with arrogance. I have heard Christians, and I say this very sadly, I have heard Christians talk about “Jesus” with a flippancy that is not the boldness of faith but the arrogance of the human nature. Can one who is redeemed, cleansed by the blood of Christ, a child of the living God, come into the presence of our holy, sovereign, mighty God with flippancy? With a lightness? With a shallowness that is so evident?

Paul here says, “We have boldness (and that word means boldness to speak) and access with confidence.” Why? We’re coming into our Father’s presence. As he could say in Romans 8:15, “We cry, Abba, Father.”

**You remember in I John 2:28**, where John says, “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear,” we shall be bold to speak. We’ll not be full of fear. We have access into the very presence of God. We have access through the blood of Christ. This is the ground upon which we can come, the ground of redemption. We come on the ground of relationship as the children of God. And we come bold to speak, not with the boldness of arrogance but the boldness of faith. We come knowing that we have a distinct place in the purpose of God, knowing that we are the objects of the love of our Father.

**I'd like to suggest** to you here, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." You remember in Hebrews 4:16, Paul is saying to stumbling, weak believers, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." He says, "Come with boldness." Why? It's the throne of grace. We're not coming to a throne of judgment. If we were, we'd come with terrible fear. We'd be scared to come. But we're coming to the throne of grace. And the One who is seated upon that throne is full of the Spirit of grace.

**Furthermore,** He's our Father and we are in relationship with Him. So we come with confidence, with boldness to speak. We have our access. I say again, it must be a tremendous amazement for angels to see the boldness of God's people, the boldness of Paul. You remember, in the 24th Psalm, and I think I am reverent when I say this in my own words, "Open up, ye everlasting doors and let the King of Glory come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty in battle; the Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory." And, of course, this speaks of our Saviour in resurrection and exaltation.

**But are we not accepted** in the Beloved? Does God not see us in His Son? And because of our relationship to the Son, because we're trusting in Him, we have access into His presence. Oh, I'd like to bring this before you that you and I might come today into the presence of God. This is why Paul could say in the next verse,

3:13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

“Don’t worry about me,” says Paul. “I can come into the very presence of my Father. My circumstances, though I’m in difficult circumstances and persecuted for the gospel’s sake, don’t sympathize with me,” says Paul. “I’ve access into the very presence of my Father. I can come where angels fear to tread.”

Oh, the confidence! Am I talking to some stumbling, weak, halting believer today? Listen, dear friend, are you down because of your failure? Because of your mistakes? Because of your frailty and weaknesses? May I encourage you to come to the throne of grace. You’re coming to the Father; He understands. You are the object of His love, the object of His grace. Why don’t you come and let Him meet your present need right now. And come with confidence. And when you come with confidence, you have all the mercy and all the grace that you need.

**Open up your heart** before Him. Remember, He’s your loving Father. Remember, He’s rich in mercy; and remember you are the object of His love and devotion. So come. If you’ve failed Him, tell Him all about it. Be very bold to speak and tell Him about your failures. And as you confess your sins, He will cleanse you. He will forgive you. He’ll bring you back into His own fellowship. Oh, walk today in fellowship, in the intimacy of His fellowship.

My friend, I wish in some way by the Spirit of God through His word, I could bring to you just what Paul is talking about—being brought into the purpose of God. I again repeat that verse in Romans 11:33, “Oh, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out, for who hath known the mind of the Lord God or who has been His counselor?” Nobody!

And to think that God should take you and me, creatures of the dust, we who at one time were sinners. To think that He should pick you and me up and not only redeem us, but bring us into this relationship, into this closeness with Himself whereby we're one with Him in His inheritance—children of the living God. We are one with Him in His purpose and can come at any time, having our access in Christ to the very throne of God.

**I say again how much** we Christians have robbed ourselves of blessing, of power, of usefulness because we get so occupied with ourselves in our own little world, our own little things and our own little programs. We have missed so much of God Himself. I fear that too many of us are more occupied with the service of Christ than we are with the person of Christ and more occupied with our own little program instead of being occupied with the great purposes of God. Let us revel in the fact that we're one with Him in that purpose.

Now, out of this great revelation of God to the Apostle Paul, comes this wonderful prayer for power, for strength, for fellowship.

**And starting in at verse 14** of chapter 3, and running down to the end of the chapter, we have here before us this second prayer of Paul. You remember in the first chapter, we had his prayer for knowledge, that we might know the purpose of God, that we might know the riches of the glory of His inheritance, that we might know what is the hope of His calling, that we might know what is the greatness of His power to usward who believe. That power was manifested in resurrection and exaltation. This is the first chapter, his first prayer.

Now when you come to the third chapter, the second prayer covers the truth of the first three chapters. The first prayer in the first chapter covers the question of knowledge of redemption; likewise, when we come to the third chapter, his second prayer is a prayer for strength and fellowship.

**Allow me to read it** to you, verse 14:

3:14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

3:15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

3:16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

3:17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

3:18. May be able to comprehend (to lay hold of ) with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and the depth, and height;

3:19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

3:20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

3:21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (or unto the ages of the ages). Amen.

**Now, let's look at this prayer** just briefly for a moment. In verses 14 and 15: “For this cause”—because the purpose of God had been made known to Paul and to you and to me through His word, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,” and then he goes on to make his request.

May I suggest, to whet your appetites for the prayer of Paul, that you go back over the first two chapters, to read and reread and think and meditate upon what we have said about the revelation of the church, the riches of His grace, the riches of His glory, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the riches of His mercy, access into the presence of God, one with Him in His purpose, in His counsel. And then, what do you find?

**“For this cause—”** because the purpose of God in Christ in the church is going to be consummated

and completed in spite of all the attacks of men and hell.

3:14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3:15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

In other words, it produced worship and praise and adoration and thanksgiving. My friend, when you see these truths, do your knees bow before Him? Do you bow your head and bow your heart in the presence of God and thank Him and worship Him? To think that God should pick up you and me and transform us into children of God and that through us He's going to display His grace and His wisdom through the countless ages of eternity.

**To think that you** and I can come into His presence and as Revelation 22:4 says, "And they shall see His face." And when we see Him, we're going to be just like Him for we shall see Him as He is. Does it drive you to your knees? For this cause, says Paul, I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing today if you and I would spend a little time in the presence of God and bow our knees before Him and thank Him for His mercy and rejoice in the riches of His mercy, in the riches of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Let us magnify Him today in our lives by our words, by our actions, that we might reveal some-

thing to our present generation of the wonderful, wonderful grace of God.

Oh, the Lord bless you today, and may you come into His presence with confidence, having access through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Did you ever stop to think of it, that we are His by creation? That we are His by right of redemption?

**“Well, Mr. Mitchell,** don’t you believe that every person is a member of the family of God?”

No, no. “The whole family in heaven and earth is named.” That doesn’t take everybody in. Galatians 3:26 says, “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” John 1:12 says, “But as many as received him gave he the power (to them He gives the right) to become the sons of God.” Romans 8:14 says, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (children) of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not.”

No, the only ones who are really the children of God are those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ—“To as many as received HIM”—to them God gives the right to become His children, nobody else—not to those born of flesh and blood, but to those born of the Spirit of God, born of God.

**You see, again I want** to make it very clear to you; there’s no such thing in the scriptures as the common fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of man. Jesus didn’t teach that. Jesus didn’t

even come to bring that into being. He could say in John 8:44,42, to the Jews of His day, “You are of your father the devil. If God were your Father, you would believe in me.”

The Apostle John, writing of this in his epistle (3:10), said, “In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil.” In the second chapter of Ephesians, you remember, Paul speaks of those “who were children of wrath like the rest.” No, those who are the children of God are those who have come to God, who have been brought into relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. And when he speaks here of the “whole family in heaven and earth is named,” he’s talking about the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and everyone who is in Christ. There are a great many in heaven who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and there are a great many on earth who belong to the same Saviour, redeemed by His precious blood. They’ve been brought into relationship with Christ.

**I remember** dear Dr. Bach, who at one time, in fact, for many years was the head of the Evangelical Alliance Mission. One day he was in my home, and he put his arm around me and said, “Brother, what did the Apostle Paul mean when he spoke in Ephesians, ‘Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named’?”

“Well,” I said, “Brother Bach, I think you’d better tell me. You’re asking me; but I think you want to tell me, don’t you?”

He kind of smiled and said, “You know, (and by the way, Mr. Bach at that time was seventy-some years of age and was having quite a bit of heart trouble and was very frail) it’s just like this, the family in heaven is saying, ‘Brother Bach, come home;’ and the family on earth is saying, ‘Brother Bach, stay here.’ Now what can a fellow do?”

**And I said, “Well, I think you, dear fellow, better go back and lie down and get some rest.”** I always enjoy that because it reveals the fact that there is a family in heaven and a family on earth. We belong to the same family.

Those who have put their trust through past centuries, having put their trust in the Saviour, are with their Lord today; that’s the family in heaven. And we on earth who have put our trust in the Saviour, we are part of His family here on earth. And Paul here says,

3:14. I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

3:15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

That’s why I say, to those of us who are saved, we are in the family of God; we are His by right of creation, and we are His especially by right of redemption.

Now note, first, to whom he is praying. So many of God’s people direct their prayers to “Jesus,” saying, “Dear Jesus.” He was “Jesus” as He walked this earth. Following the resurrection, our Prince and our

Saviour has become the “Lord Jesus.” True, He is our Advocate, our Intercessor, and we may pray to Him as “Lord.” But as you listen, you will find mature believers are praying to “the Father.”

**And now we come** to the prayer of Paul, starting in verse 16, and I’ll take up the very first thing, the first request. You’ll notice, if I might be allowed to do this, in verse 16, the first request is that he would according to the riches of his glory be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.”

The second request is that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

The third request is that we might be rooted and grounded in love; we might be able to comprehend “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

The fourth request is “that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” And then verse 20 tells us how it’s going to be accomplished.

**Now let me again** take a little time on this prayer of the Apostle Paul. Just as we took time on the first prayer in chapter one for knowledge, this second prayer of Paul is a prayer for strength and for fellowship. Now in the first request in verse 16, he prayed that God “would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.”

Now here is a request for strength. If I may give you a literal rendition there, he prays that we might be made powerfully strong by His Spirit. He wants

us to have a life that is energized by the Spirit of God in power. Now the place of this action is in the inner man, the place where we are most weak. And by the way, oh, how we need this strength. As Paul could say, “I strive according to the working of Him who worketh in me mightily.” Where? In the inner man.

**You remember** in 2 Corinthians 4:7, Paul says, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” In 2 Corinthians 10:4, Paul says, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” Paul is praying that we might be made powerfully strong by His Spirit in the inner man. And I say that that is the part of our being where we are the most weak, where we need the most strength—in the inner man, not the outward man.

And Paul could say in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, “but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

**And the place of action** by the Spirit of God, where we need to be made powerfully strong, is in the inner man. God, give us some strong men, men who are strong spiritually. I’m not talking about physical strength but strength to stand in these days

when there is so much corruption, when men are spurning the word of God, when men ridicule Christ the Saviour, when intellectual leaders are full of arrogance with respect to the person of God. Paul prays that we might be made powerfully strong in the inner man.

My friend, this is what you need; this is what I need. You and I are facing unseen powers. Satan seems to know that his time is very, very short; and we see rebellion all around us in every part of the world. Those foundations, which we thought were strong and stable, are crumbling into the dust and the structures are falling down. Our nation has been pulled to pieces like the rest of the world. Evil men are everywhere in authority; “evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse.”

**What do I need?** I need to be made powerfully strong. Let me repeat it once more. You go to work, go among your neighbors, go among your friends, and there's a sneer, an indifference, a coldness, an arrogance manifested; and you feel like pulling into your shell.

May God grant to you and to me that we might be made powerfully strong by His Spirit. Where? In the inner man. This is our weakest part—in the inner man. And yet this is where Christ dwells in the believer. And if you let Christ have His way—His will instead of your will, His desires instead of your desires, His purpose instead of your purpose—you'll find yourself made strong, powerfully strong by His

Spirit in the inner man. And it's according to His riches in glory.

I want you to pray today that the Lord may make you powerfully strong in the inner man by His Spirit, according to His riches in glory. Oh, friend, we need this. You and I can't afford to live a day out of fellowship with God. And may you today revel in the fact that we belong to the family of God, and then pray that He will give you His strength in the inner man so you may glory in Him day by day.

And where you think you are the strongest might be your weakest point; and where you are the weakest, He can make that the strongest. May that be your prayer today.

**Now then, it's "according to the riches of His glory;"** and I would like to spend a few moments here on this amazing phrase—that He would grant you His strength in the inner man “according to the riches of His glory.” You remember, we've had in chapters one and two, the riches of grace and the riches of mercy. Now in chapter three, we have had the “unsearchable riches of Christ” and here in verse 16, “the riches of glory.” You see, the riches of glory proceed from the throne. The riches of grace proceed from the cross.

May I take a little moment here to contrast these two? Riches of grace is the provision made by God whereby men and women, sinners, can be transformed and fitted for the presence of God. It's according to the riches of grace that we have forgiveness; according to the riches of grace we have re-

demption. You remember in Ephesians 1:7, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

**I say, the riches of grace** proceed from the cross. This fits me for the presence of God. Now then, the riches of glory proceed from the throne. And Paul here is praying that he may be made powerfully strong “according to His riches in glory.”

I just trust that today you will be reveling in this fact. The riches of glory are for you—all that Jesus Christ is on the throne of God. Remember four times in Hebrews I read that He sat down on the right hand of God. That means that our Saviour has been given all authority in heaven and in earth. Everything is in His hands; and He’s altogether, completely for you today. He meets your need according to His riches in glory, and you can come right to the throne of grace. And how close is the throne of God to you? How close is the throne of grace to you? Just as close as you can touch it.

**The moment you start** to pray, the moment you call upon your Saviour for your present need, He hears you. And I love that verse in Psalm 34:17, telling us that the ear of the Lord is open to the cry of the righteous. “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.” What a wonderful thing, this. I tell you, it’s a marvelous thing to revel in the riches of His grace. But it’s also a wonderful thing to revel in the riches of His glory.

Now you trust Him today, won't you? You think of these few things. The "riches of grace" come from the cross, the "riches of glory" from the throne—riches of grace for my need to stand before God, the riches of glory for anything that I need today from God.

**And all the riches** of God's glory are your resources for your tests and trials and afflictions. It makes no difference how severe the test, how rough the path, how bad the way seems to be. He's right there with you. Oh, my Christian friends, there's never a moment that the Lord ever leaves you.

You say, "But I don't feel Him."

Whether you feel Him or whether you don't feel Him, He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." One of the final words to His disciples on earth were, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." And He not only said that for those eleven apostles; but He says it for all His people, for those who should believe on Him through their word. Right down to the present time there never has been a moment that God has ever left you or me. The trouble is, we get so occupied with passing, temporal things we fail to realize the wonders of God's grace and God's glory for us.

**I wish in some way** I could get this into your own heart. Only the Spirit of God can do it. Please don't live like a spiritual pauper today. Revel in the wonders of the glories of His grace and the riches of His glory. To be made powerfully strong, according to His riches in glory, there's no limit to the re-

sources which you have. No limit. So you can say with Paul, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; they’re mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

You can say with Paul, “I strive according to the working of Him who worketh in me mightily.” Do you ever stop to realize it, that the One who burst the bands of the tomb, the One who put away your sins, the One who was exalted, the One who went to the very right hand of God to be given all authority, all authority in heaven and earth, is for you—He’s for you.

**Do you ever stop** to realize that when our Saviour went back to heaven, the very angelic hosts cried out, “Who is this? Open up ye everlasting doors and let the King of Glory come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty in battle.” The Lord of Hosts is His name; the Lord of Hosts is for you; the King of Glory is for you to be made strong according to His riches in glory.

Oh, that we Christians would know something of the riches of the glory. My, my! When I think of how most of us just putter along. We strive and we set our wills and we set our jaws, and we’re going to do this and we’re going to do that; and first thing we know, we’re in failure. We’re in defeat. Why? Because we’re trusting ourselves.

Listen, the riches of grace fit you for God’s presence. That’s a cause for glory, that’s a cause for worship, that’s a cause for praise and thanksgiving. All that God is, all that Christ is today as eternal so-

vereign God is for you. He's interested in you—in you.

I remember a fellow saying to me one time, "Why, Mr. Mitchell, you talk as if the Lord really takes care of you personally."

I said, "Of course He does."

Listen, you mean more to Him than the whole material universe put together. Didn't Jesus say, "The very hairs of your head are numbered?" Didn't He say, "Two sparrows are sold for a farthing, and yet not one of them falls to the ground without my heavenly Father knowing all about it? Are you not worth more than many sparrows?"

**My friend, listen,** you mean so much to God that Jesus gave His life for you to put away your sins. And on the ground of this wonderful, matchless, finished work of Christ, on the ground of the grace of God, He brings you into the presence of the God of glory, righteous, accepted, a child of God, a joint heir with Christ. Do you have needs today? "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory." This is what I want to get over to you.

Now we come to the second request, which is in verse 17; and he prays,

3:17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Let me just stop here for a moment.

You know, you say to me, "Why Mr. Mitchell, weren't these Christians?"

Yes, they were Christians.

“Then why does he pray that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith? Doesn't Christ dwell in the heart of every believer?”

**Yes. Do you remember** in John 14:20, our Lord said to His disciples, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” Paul could say to the Corinthian church, the worldly church, a carnal church, in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “Don't you know that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, the sanctuary of God?” A wonderful thing, this! Every believer is indwelled by the Spirit of God—another marvelous thing.

Then why does He pray that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith?

May I add a little word in here. If I may be a little technical, the Greek word “to dwell,” that Christ may dwell down in your hearts by faith, is a prayer for intimate fellowship. What Paul is praying for is that the believer may have a full revelation, a full realization of Christ dwelling in his heart.

**As I said a moment ago**, in John 14:20, he speaks of this. In John 17:23, he speaks of our union with Christ. As Paul could say in Galatians 2:20, “I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me.” Our bodies are actually the sanctuaries of God.

You know, I remember—was it Romans 8:9, “if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Verse 11, “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up

Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

**You see, being in Christ** is a position; but Christ in us—this is a possession. Paul wants us to realize that Christ actually is living in every believer. And he’s praying that Christ may have complete freedom in our hearts, in our lives, not as a guest, not as a lodger; but he is praying that we will have the full realization of Christ living in us—in other words, that He is enshrined in our heart, in our affections, in our emotions, in our very innermost being. Not just an object of faith (thank God for that), not just a simple doctrine that Christ lives in us, but Paul wants us to have the full realization that our body is the temple of the Spirit of God. He’s praying that you and I may give Jesus Christ His rightful place in our heart.

**I remember one time** hearing Dr. Harry Ironside speak to this point and I’ll pass it on to you. Dr. Ironside of our past generation was one of God’s great Bible teachers. And in speaking of the fact of Christ’s dwelling in His people, he said this: “Please remember that Jesus Christ is living in your life and give Him the run of the house. Don’t let Him have just one room in your house. But give Him the run of the whole house, every facet of your life, socially, religiously, economically, in business, with your neighbors. So that everybody will know that Christ lives in you, give Him the run of the house.”

**The reason why we** have so much trouble as believers is because we don’t let Him run the house.

For example, he said, somebody is coming down the street and you look out, and you say, "Oh, here comes Mrs. So-and-so." A neighbor is coming in to see you.

So you say to the Lord, "Lord, why don't You go back to Your room. Mrs. So-and-so doesn't like You, and I think it might be well for You, so there'll be no complications for You, if You go up to Your room until she goes."

In other words, Christ hasn't the run of the house. Or it may be your business associate comes to see you, and you say to the Lord, "Lord, will You please go back to Your room because this man has no time for Christianity. He has no time for the gospel, no time for You. And I know it will be very embarrassing if You're here when he comes."

Now, you can go on and multiply that and amplify it, but what he's after is this: Does Jesus Christ have the run of the house? Is the Lord in every facet of your life? Or do you put the Lord into your life on Sunday morning and bar Him out of your life the rest of the week?

**As one man said,** it's all right to be a Christian, but please don't bring your religion into business.

Well, my friend, if you can't bring Christ into your business, you'd better leave or get rid of your business. And what about your neighbors? What about your friends? Listen, my friend, may I suggest to you that, when Paul is praying that Christ may dwell down in your heart by faith, he wants Him to have complete, intimate, blessed fellowship with

you. This is what he wants; this is what he's praying for, that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith. Again I say, give Him the run of the house. Let Him run your life today.

**You know, I've often** asked people this question: Do you think that Jesus Christ can run your life better than you can run it? Of course, their answer is always in the affirmative—"Of course, of course. Why, of course, He can run my life better than I can."

Then why don't you let Him run it? I ask myself the question: Why don't I let Christ run my life? Why don't I yield myself so much to Him that His will and His purpose are the paramount things in my life? Not what I want, but what does He want? Not my will, but His will. You see, let Him have the run of the shop; let Him have the run of the life, that Christ may dwell down in our heart by faith.

**Think of it!** The righteous, sovereign, eternal God who framed the ages by the word of His mouth, who upholds all things by the word of His power, the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth, is all for you and all for me. We mean that much to Him. Would it not be a wonderful thing, would it not delight His heart and fill you and me with joy and blessing if we today would just put ourselves in His hands and say, "Lord, for today at least, I want you to run my life. Not what I want, dear Lord, but what You want."

Now some startling things may happen if you really mean business, but are you afraid to let God

run your life? Are you afraid of what God might do if you do yield yourself entirely to Him, afraid what God might do with us if we really put ourselves in His hands? He might take something out of our life that we've enshrined as an idol—I don't know—I don't know. But can we trust the Saviour enough and, just for today, let Him run our life?

Can we pray, "Lord God, what is Your purpose for me today? What is Your will for me today? In sovereign power, You put into my mind and put into my heart the things that I should do and close out the things that You don't want me to do."

Can we dare let Him do that? Suppose you and I do that today, won't you?

**Christ wants to run** the house, your life and my life. Certainly as the children of God we ought to be able to trust the Lord to run our lives. I'm sure He can run our lives better than we can. When we run our own lives, we run them into the ditch; we get into trouble. So, when you and I yield ourselves unreservedly to Him and ask Him to come and run our lives so that His will and His purpose may be accomplished in us, we may be amazed at what God will do. It will be a life of joy, of blessing, peace, of power, of usefulness.

Now that does not mean that I won't have tests. It does not mean that I will be free from affliction. It does not mean that I will not have any sorrow. The common tests of life will still be mine; but, instead of meeting those tests and trials in one's own strength, we do it in His strength. We do it in fellow-

ship with Him. And I'm positive, absolutely positive, that everything that comes into our life is because God loves us and because He wants to perfect us in His Son.

**You see, all eternity** is ahead of us and God is fitting us for eternity. We're all in school down here. Some are still in the abc of spiritual life. Some never get away from the abc. Some have gone farther on in their spiritual maturity. As the Apostle John says, some are fathers and some are young men and some are babes in the faith. Wherever we may be in our growth, we're all the children of God. We're all perfected in Christ on the ground of His grace, and He wants to meet my daily need according to His riches in glory.

What I'm trying to say to you, my friend, is this—we can well afford to let the Saviour take over in our lives. I confess with a great deal of shame how much I have failed God. And I failed God because I trusted Mitchell instead of trusting the Saviour.

**Are your faith and my faith** big enough to be able to say to the Lord Jesus, "You come and take over full possession." He is not only indwelling my life. That's true of all believers. These bodies are members of Christ. These bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. But He wants to come in and glorify Himself in and through us. He wants to work out His purpose and His will in our hearts and lives. And it's far better for us to let Him do it voluntarily than for the Lord to cause certain things to come into our life

so that He might keep us in His will and in His purpose.

But be sure of one thing, the purpose of God is going to be fulfilled. The will of God for you and me is going to be fulfilled. And it takes God longer, sometimes, for some of us than it does for others. Suffice it to say, He has a particular place for you in the glory. Remember this. He saved you for a purpose. He didn't save you just to get you to heaven; He's got a real purpose for your life and my life. But He wants us to enjoy His fellowship and His power down here; so he prays that we might be made strong by His Spirit in the inner man, and he prays that Christ may dwell down in our hearts by faith.

**Now then, in verses 17 to 19** we have the third request, and he prays that we might comprehend the measureless purpose and grace of God. I'm going to read these verses. The third request:

3:17b. That ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

3:18. May be able to comprehend (to lay hold of) with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

3:19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

Now, the first request was to pray for strength. The second request in verse 17 was to pray for intimate fellowship. And now the third request is that we might comprehend, that we might lay hold of the measureless purpose and grace of God, "that you being rooted and grounded in love."

Let me just stop here. He did not say, “be rooted and grounded in doctrine.” Now I’m all for doctrine; I’m a stickler for doctrine—oh, yes.

You say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, I’m not concerned about doctrine.”

Well, you ought to be.

You say, “Well, I’d rather have life than doctrine.”

Now just a minute, my friend, if you love the Saviour, you must have some doctrine. You may call it by any other name, but doctrine is just plain teaching; and what you know about Christ is your doctrine, is your teaching. You go to church and your pastor teaches you certain things; that’s doctrine. And don’t get this idea as some people have told me, they’ve got no use for doctrine.

“Oh, he’s a doctrinal preacher,” they say.

**Well, he ought to be.** One of the troubles today is that the believer in Christ has not been taught doctrine. But doctrine is just plain teaching. The words “teaching” and “doctrine” are the same thing. And here he prays that we might be rooted and grounded in love.

You see, Paul here is not teaching doctrine. Paul is talking about fellowship; he’s talking about the intimacy of a life in Christ.

Now you say, “Well, that’s doctrine.”

All right, that’s doctrine, but he’s working here not from the thought of a mental knowledge of truth; he’s talking here about experimental knowledge. This is where the Spirit of God comes into our lives

and makes the doctrine real to us, makes the teaching a living reality. This is what He wants. Too many Christians are sadly in lack of doctrine. I say this very bluntly, my friend. Too many of God's people have never been taught.

**A pastor was talking** to me the other day, and he said, "You know, I'm having quite a problem with my people. We've got so much trouble among the assembly."

"Well," I said, "you know, well-fed sheep never fight. Did you hear what I said? Well-fed sheep never fight. And instead of being negative in your ministry, sir, I would exhort you to be positive in your ministry; feed the flock of God. This was the exhortation of Paul to the Ephesian elders on the shore at Miletus in Acts 20. 'Feed the flock of God over the which he has made you overseers.' And when the people of God are fed doctrine, when they're established in the teaching or the doctrines of the church, they don't fight."

You see, our problem today is that too many of God's people have never been taught the scriptures. Now I'm taking the time to just mention this. But Paul here is talking about being rooted and grounded in love. God is love; and when we get this basic, fundamental grace into our hearts and lives that we are to be rooted and grounded in love, then there will be a manifestation of the character and heart of God in and through you. This is what God wants.

**And I would plead** with your heart today to be rooted and grounded in love. You see, this is a rela-

tionship. When Christ dwells down in your heart by faith and has the run of the house, then you'll begin to learn something of being rooted and grounded in love.

Now it's wonderful to be rooted and grounded in love, but it also is wonderful to be rooted and grounded in doctrine, in teaching. We need to feed on the Word of God and then to pray that the Word of God will be made real to us. God sees my faith, but men experience my love. And the closer I walk with God, the more the manifestation of His love will be in my life. Remember that and read 1 Corinthians 13 on this question of love.

As we have been studying, the third request runs from verse 17 down through part of 19. May I read those verses again? Ephesians 3:17-19,

3:17. That ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

3:18. May be able to comprehend (or to lay hold of) with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

3:19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

**In the third request** Paul prays that we might comprehend the measureless purpose and grace of God and, as we were saying, that you would be rooted and grounded in love. It's the love of God that has made possible the marvelous revelation of these first three chapters. Love is the fundamental grace that God has given to His people and rightly so because, you remember, God is love. The last revela-

tion of God in the Bible is that He is love. You find this 1 John 4:8 and 16.

That's why I say, the very fundamental grace is love. And this is the great need today. One of the greatest needs among God's people is love one for another. And it's this want of love that reveals the fact that we are not real disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**You remember**, our Lord said this in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." I recognize that in certain quarters, ecclesiastical quarters, they have preached love to the exclusion of truth. But love never compromises the truth; love never compromises, period. Truth can never be compromised. His Name is truth. Jesus Christ Himself says, "I am the Truth." And though the very fundamental grace is love, it never compromises the truth. And He says, "Thy Word is Truth."

I say Paul is dealing here with the experimental side of truth. We are to be rooted and grounded in doctrine, but also in love. And one is a complement of the other. The more I know the truth, the more there should be the manifestation of love. God sees my faith in the truth, but men experience my love.

And you know, it's a sad thing. I've met Christians, and I'm going to say this very bluntly, I have met Christians who boast about their knowledge of the truth but manifest no love. Sometimes we hear men preaching the truth, but they're like an icicle,

like an iceberg. They are cold. The great need today is for us to be grounded in love.

I have seen some people, too, who boast about their spiritual experiences and I'm not opposed to that; but I'd like to see a little more love evident. Isn't it folly for me or for you to boast about our knowledge of Christ or some great spiritual experience we've had if there's no love manifested?

**And I say again,** the want of love for each other is an outward manifestation, an outward evidence that we're not the disciples of the Son of God. Oh, I plead with your heart to be rooted and grounded in love.

Now, remember again what I'm saying; we must be rooted and grounded in truth, in the doctrines of the church. But the more I claim to be rooted and grounded in doctrine, the more evidence there should be of the love of God in my life. This is what I'm pleading for. And many, many people have been detracted from knowing Christ, from coming to Christ, because of the lack of love in the hearts and lives of His people.

Oh, it's so easy to become abrupt and cold and unlovely in the things we say and the things we do. May the Lord forgive every one of us. God grant that you and I shall so walk before the Saviour that Christ is given His rightful place in our affection, in our devotion, in our living, and in our fellowship. Then there will be more and more of the manifestation of love. We'll be rooted and grounded in love.

**Now, then, shall we continue.** In verse 18 he prays, being rooted and grounded in love that we “may be able to lay hold of the breadth, the length, the depth and the height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

Now I’m going to say something here, and I want to be careful what I’m saying here, because I know that you read commentaries and hear preachers and they say that the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, is of the love of God.

Now listen, there are no measurements to the love of God. His love is boundless. Then what is Paul talking about? Now just like in chapter one, his prayer for knowledge had reference to what he had just taught with respect to the Father and the Son and the Spirit in our redemption and that we might know the call of God and the purpose of God and the power of God.

**But now when we come** to chapter 3, he has been dealing not only with redemption in chapter one, but he’s been also dealing with the marvelous truth of reconciliation in chapter two. And in the end of chapter one and chapter three he has been dealing with the revelation of the mystery of the church, the body of Christ, made up of Jews and Gentiles, all having the same relationship, the same standing and being fellow-heirs of the same body. And because of the marvelous revelation of that, the purpose of God in the church, I maintain that this is what He is talking about.

You may disagree with me on this and it's all right. But he's given us here four dimensions—the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height. For what? If the love of God is measureless, how can you measure the love of an omnipotent God? But I can measure His purpose and counsel with respect to the church. And this is what He's been dealing with, the four dimensions of His purpose and grace which is found in these three chapters.

**Now I'm going to ask you** to do something for me. I'm going to ask you to take chapters one, two, and three and read them through and find out what is the breadth of the purpose of God and the length and the depth and the height. And when you find that, he adds this: “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth all knowledge (the understanding of men).”

I want you to mark what it is. Somewhere in the first three chapters you've got the breadth of His purpose, and then you've got the length, and then you've got the depth, and then you've got the height of His purpose in His people, His purpose in taking a people and redeeming them and fitting them for His presence that they might revel in the riches of His grace and in the riches of His glory.

**Now you hunt them up,** will you? And you'll find some in the first chapter, you'll find some in the second chapter. You'll find the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth. And I hope you'll find just what I have found.

Now remember, he's praying that we might lay hold of the measureless purpose and grace of God,

being rooted and grounded in love, the fundamental grace. He wants us also to lay hold of these four dimensions of His purpose and grace. Will you find them? In chapter one and in chapter two. And the Lord make it precious to you.

Now don't leave all the digging to me—you do some digging. And I wonder if your answer, what you find, will be what I have found.

Let's see what it is. Did you find it? First of all, the purpose of God in its breadth. In chapter 2, He took Jew and Gentile and He's made them one in Christ; this is the purpose of God. This was the mystery of chapter three; He takes Jews and Gentiles with nobody left out. It's broad enough in the purpose of God to take anybody, Jew and Gentile, and make them one in Christ.

**My friend, it's broad** enough to take anybody in. When a person comes to me and says, "I've passed the redemption point. I'm beyond being saved."

No, you are not. The grace of God, my friend, is broad enough to take in any man, wherever you find him, whether Jew or Gentile. The Jews who have turned away from their Saviour and crucified Him? Yes, the grace of God can reach them. One only needs to read the first few chapters of Acts to realize that God did that. In fact, the Apostle Peter in chapter two and chapter four of Acts offered salvation to those who crucified Christ.

"I know you did it ignorantly," he said, "but you crucified the Lord of glory."

**And you remember**, in chapter 2 they said, “Men and brethren, what in the world can we do?” The grace of God reaches out to Jews. And what about Gentiles? Gentiles in their sin, in their idolatry? As Paul could say to the Thessalonian church in 1:9, “You have turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.”

The grace of God can reach anybody. It's broad enough to take in Jew and Gentile. I can say to any man, irrespective of his condition, the grace of God can reach you. Is it broad enough? Yes, it was broad enough to take me in, bless His name, and broad enough to take you in. And if you have accepted the Saviour, you thank Him for His grace. It's broad enough in the purpose of God to bring you into the body of Christ and make you a joint heir with Him, a fellow-heir with Jew and Gentile. Wonderful thing! It's broad enough to bring you in and make you one with all the saints.

**Now the second thing** is the length of it. What is the length of the purpose of God? Now, have you got your Bibles? In chapter one, verse 4, it says that He chose us before the foundation of the world. Now you go to chapter 2, verse 7, “That in the ages to come He might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Is that long enough for you? He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that in the ages to come the very purpose of God was already worked out before there ever was a world. Before the

foundation of the world, He chose that everyone who should accept His Son would be holy and without blame.

**And then in chapter 2**, verse 7, in the ages to come He's going to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus. He saw us in past ages. He sees us in the ages to come, showing forth the riches of His grace.

Then, when you go to chapter three, verses 9 and 10, He's going to teach all created intelligences the wonderful wisdom of God. Is this long enough? He prays we may comprehend the length of the purpose and grace of God who can choose men away back in eternity to be holy and without blemish, and then He sees us in the ages to come, showing forth His grace and the revelation of His will.

**I tell you, my friend**, this just gets into my heart. Why should you and I be worry warts? Why should you and I worry about the next ten days or the next ten minutes or the next ten years? If you have put your trust in the Saviour, there's no room for worry. He saw you in past ages; He chose you to be holy and without blame. He sees you in the ages to come, showing forth the riches of His grace and the wonders of His wisdom. Who's He talking about? Those who put their trust in the Saviour.

Now, it doesn't say in Ephesians 1:4 that He chose you to be saved. Don't jump to the conclusion that this is—what shall I say—fatalism? If I'm elected to be saved, I'm going to be saved; and if I'm not elected to be saved, I'm not going to be saved.

You don't find that in your Bible. He's talking to those who put their trust in Christ. He's informing them that when God, way back in eternity, purposed a church made up of Jews and Gentiles, He purposed that every one who accepted His Son would be holy and without blame.

**And then He chose them** to be the revelation of His grace and His wisdom in the ages to come. God is not playing with this thing; God had a purpose. Could I couple with that a verse from the Psalms and then Hebrews chapter ten. In the 40th Psalm, verses 6-8, "In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."

You find the same thing repeated in Hebrews 10:7, "In the volume of the book it is written of me, I came to do thy will, O God." The purpose of God in redemption was chosen and was worked out before there ever was a world. If I might say it, the world was made that you and I might be born and might put our trust in the Saviour and be made holy and without blame through the precious blood of Christ and fitted for eternal glory.

I tell you, what a Saviour this is! What a purpose this is! You and I today ought to be filled with the revelation of this wonderful manifestation of His purpose and grace. Let us thank Him and give our life to Him. And may this be a day when you and I shall revel in this amazing fact that the gospel of the grace of God is sufficient to take anybody in, Jew or Gentile. It's broad enough to take us in. And bless God for the length of it way back in eternity and in

the ages to come. Can you make it any longer than that? From eternity to eternity!

**There are two more yet.** What is the depth? And what is the height? I suggest you read chapter two for they are found in chapter two. Do a little searching. Oh, today, won't you revel in His grace and revel in His glory?

We're dealing now with verse 18. He prays we

3:18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

3:19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

**Did you find the depth? Well, look at the first verse of chapter 2, the first three verses, "You hath He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins." You were children of wrath like the rest. You were controlled by the forces of hell. You had your living and your thinking in the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the mind, born in sin, dead in trespasses and sins.**

How much farther down can you go? How far down did God stoop to pick you and me up? We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were without life, without hope, without Christ, without God. We were afar off. We were Gentiles having nothing. How far down did God reach to pick you and me up? We were dead in sins, unrighteous, unholy, rebels, renegades, given up to sin, to uncleanness, with vile affections, with a reprobate mind, unrighteous. All

have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We were fit for hell, dead in sins, rebels.

**What did He do?** He made us alive together, Jew and Gentile. He made us alive together in Christ. My friend, the purpose of God, the grace of God, not only is long, eternity to eternity, but it reaches right down to where we were. How much farther down can you go? The depths. He went right down into the bowels of death to save you and me.

You realize that Jesus Christ became an accursed thing, “Cursed is everyone who hangeth on a tree.” He went down to the depths. He tasted death. He could cry out, “My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” When He bore your sins, when He took your place and my place, He went right down to the depths. There was no bottom to reach you, to reach me.

How far down is man? I don't care how far down he is under the grace and purpose of God, our Saviour went right down to the very depths. You and I who were dead in trespasses and sins, He's made us alive together with Christ. Is that deep enough?

**What about the height?** I read here in chapter two, “He raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” How much higher can you go? “In the heavenlies in Christ.”

My friend, you can't go any higher. He stooped to the lowest to bring us up to the highest. This is the purpose of God in Ephesians. He chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy; in the ages to come He sees us. The breadth of it? He takes in Jew

and Gentile, whoever you are, whatever you are; and the grace of God can reach you wherever you are. It's for everybody. How deep did He go to reach us? We were dead in trespasses and sins and He went to the depths to bring us up. And then He raised us up, Jew and Gentile together, and seated us together in the heavenlies in Christ. How much higher can you go to the very throne of God. We are accepted in the Beloved, standing in the presence of God just like His Son.

**Paul is praying here** we might know what is the breadth, what is the length, what is the depth and the height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Paul is praying.

Don't you think we should pray, too? That we should lay hold of these things, to be rooted and grounded in love, this fundamental grace? And then, to know the four dimensions of His purpose and His grace for you and for me, for everyone. And then after that, I'm to know the love of Christ which passeth all understanding, all knowledge.

**I'm going to read again** from verse 17, the middle of the verse to the end of the chapter. He writes,

3:17. That ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

3:18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

3:19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might filled with all the fulness of God.

3:20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

3:21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (unto the ages of the ages). Amen.

**Now we've been dealing**, first of all, with Paul's prayer for strength in verse 16, to be strengthened according to His riches in glory. And then in verse 17, he prayed for the intimate fellowship of Christ, that Christ may dwell down in our hearts by faith. And then in verses 17 to 19, he prays that everyone of us might be able to comprehend, to lay hold of the measureless purpose and grace of God.

The breadth would be Jew and Gentile, and the length from eternity to eternity, the depth would be He quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins, and then the height would be He raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Now Paul adds one further thing. He prays that we might know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, the immeasurable love of Christ. And again I say, the love of Christ is immeasurable. And I just love to think of this—it baffles all thought and description when you think of the love of our Saviour.

**You remember** in 1 John 3:1, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” In John 13:1, “Having loved His own who were in the

world, He loved them to the end.” In Jeremiah 31:3, “Behold I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” No wonder Paul could say in 2 Corinthians 5:14, “The love of Christ constraineth us (overmasters me).” And one could go along dealing with the immeasurable love of God.

Would to God, and I say this reverently, would, indeed, that we might experience what Paul said, that the love of Christ overmastered him, that we who were dead in sins could be called the children of God and that through eternal ages He’s going to show forth the riches of His grace and the wonders of His wisdom to all created intelligences. Even the holy angels of God have learned the grace of God and the wisdom of God through His people. I say it’s beyond all human comprehension. And to know the love of Christ that passes all understanding.

**Eternity will be too short** for us to realize to the full the marvelous, marvelous love of God. I tell you, my friend, it’s beyond all comprehension. Why should God save you and me? Why indeed? It is nothing else but His love. God couldn’t save us apart from love. This is the fundamental grace manifested in the very character of God. God is righteous; God is holy, but He’s also love.

One is very much tempted again to go over these wonderful verses. I’ll leave it with you. It’s beyond—it baffles all thought, it baffles all description, it baffles all research when you think of the love of God for His people. It is the measureless love of God. And how glad I am that all through eternity

you and I are going to experience more and more and more of the blessed love of God.

**Now he makes the final prayer**, the final request in verse 19, “That ye might be filled unto all (can I make the change in that word there) the fullness of God.” All the fullness of God. Do you remember Isaiah 66, “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where will you build a house where I may find my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made . . . but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite (humble) spirit (heart).” God wants that we might be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Personally, I'm of the persuasion that He's talking about a life here that is absolutely dominated by the Spirit of God. You remember in Colossians 2:9-10. “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” and you are filled full in Him. And here is a position. In Colossians 1:19, “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” In John 1:17, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Verse 16, “And of His fullness have all we received.” Here is the ultimate of a Spirit-filled life, where God who indwells us will fill us; and Paul prays that we might be filled unto all the fullness of God.

**There's a certain sense** in which we are filled unto all the fullness of God in our completeness in Christ. But this is a position. He's asking here for the realization of it in our own hearts and minds. I repeat it again. Oh, that we Christians might be able to un-

derstand something of the purpose of God through His people and be made to realize that God wants us to enjoy that now, not to wait until we get to heaven, but to enjoy it now.

Now the benediction. He's praying that this prayer might be realized in our lives. We think about being strengthened with His might. We talk about Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, being rooted and grounded in love and being able to comprehend all these things—to know the love of Christ which passes all knowledge, to be filled unto all the fullness of God.

You say, "How in the world can that be accomplished? How can that be realized?"

Now his answer, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Oh, the ability of God. Now unto Him that is able to work out what is already planned. Having chosen us, He will keep us. Having blessed us, He will succor us. And He can perform all our requests, according to the power that worketh in us.

You see, the instrument is by the Spirit of God who indwells us. The purpose of God is that He will be glorified through the church of Christ throughout eternity. And He's going to be able to perform it.

**I tell you, I wish in some way** I could impress upon your hearts to learn something of the ability of God. Now unto Him that is able—and you'll notice that Paul runs out of words. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think.

And how does He do it? According to the power of—it's limited to the power of the Spirit of God who lives in us. Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout the ages of the ages of the ages. Time would fail me to go into that.

My, what a benediction; that the one who planned our redemption, who wrought it out, is going to complete it. He has the ability. Remember 2 Timothy 1:12? "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." In Hebrews 2:18, He is able to succor us. In chapter 4:4-16 of Hebrews, He's able to make all grace abound toward us. He's able to save us to the uttermost. He's able, as Jude says, to keep us from falling. He's able—please never question or doubt the ability of God to do what He has purposed to do. And may I say, do not question the ability of God to meet your needs today.

Now unto Him, unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think. And the ability of God is to be done by the Spirit in you today.

**I tell you, my friend,** God's got a purpose for you, for every believer, even the weakest believer. He's got a distinct purpose for you and in you; and that purpose, my friend, I'm certain of one thing, that purpose is going to be accomplished. He may lead you in differing ways to get there. He may send affliction. He may send severe testing. I don't know how God will do it. But I know one thing—His pur-

pose for you individually is going to be wrought out. And your joy and your peace, your satisfaction come when you cooperate with God in that purpose. He's able to do it by the Spirit of God who indwells you.

Now you read that 20<sup>th</sup> verse and make it personal for you today—today. He is able to do what He wants to do which will give you joy and peace and satisfaction.

**My friends! My friends!** I tell you, it's a wonderful thing to be a Christian. It's a wonderful thing to belong to the Saviour.

Before I start in on chapter 4, where we have the walk of the believer in Christ, I would like to review for a second or two these first three chapters.

You remember in the first chapter we have the marvelous work of God in redemption. We have the work of the Father who blessed us and chose us and adopted us and accepted us in the Beloved. And then we have the work of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who redeemed us, who forgave us our sins, who brought us into fellowship with Himself and His purpose, who gives to us an eternal inheritance. And then we had the work of the Spirit in verses 13 and 14, where the Spirit of God seals us until the day of redemption. I say, what a marvelous plan this is—the redemption. The Father chooses us and the Son pays for us and the Spirit possesses the possession born. In other words, we belong to Him.

**And, my friend,** it's a wonderful thing, having put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, God guarantees that salvation, not only for time but for

eternity. And that is followed by the prayer of the Apostle Paul for knowledge. To know the call of God, to know the purpose of God, and to know the power of God is Paul's prayer in the first chapter.

Then we came to chapter two, and this chapter has to do with reconciliation. The only place where you'll find Jew and Gentile reconciled together is in Christ. This chapter begins with what we were in time past. We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were controlled by the prince of the power of the air. We were children of wrath like the rest; and we were without Christ, without hope. We were without God, without covenants; we were afar off. And our life, of course, paralleled our position. We walked in the desires and lusts of the flesh and of the mind.

**In other words**, we were without Christ. And then you have the marvelous revelation of the grace of God, that God is rich in mercy and great in love and that we become His workmanship. Think of it! He takes those who are dead in sins and begins a work in their hearts and their lives, which He'll not finish until we stand in His presence just like His Son.

Christian friend, did you ever stop to think of it, that when God manifested His mercy to you and redeemed you, He had a purpose; and that purpose is that you shall stand in the presence of God, looking just like His Son. And all the tests and trials of life through which we go are part of God's purpose in fitting us for His presence. And when God gets

through with us, I'll tell you, we're going to be just like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, again I repeat what I have said before. Please don't judge other Christians until God gets through with them. And when God gets through with them and when God gets through with you, you'll be perfected forever and be just like His Son. This is what the Apostle John said, this is what the Apostle Peter said, this is what the Apostle Paul said. Paul says, "We shall be conformed to the image of His Son." And John declares that when we see Him, we'll be just like Him. Quoting from Romans 8:29 and 1 John 3:2.

Now we come to chapter three. And when we come to chapter three, we have the revelation of the church, the body of Christ—something that was hidden in God from past ages.

The Old Testament says to you nothing of the church. This is a new revelation, given to the Apostle Paul to pass on to you and to me. In fact, the third chapter of Ephesians informs us that this is a mystery hidden in God from past ages and now made manifest through His New Testament apostles and prophets that the Jew and the Gentile shall be fellow heirs of the same body, partakers of His promise in Christ, having the same relationship, the same fellowship and the same standing in God, in Christ.

**What a wonderful thing**, this, that through this church, God is going to display His wisdom to all created intelligences in eternity come. God is going to take you and me who love the Saviour, and we

shall display His grace and display His wisdom to all created intelligences throughout all eternity.

And the third chapter ends with the prayer of the Apostle Paul. In chapter one, his prayer was for knowledge; in chapter three, his prayer is for strength and for fellowship “to be made strong by His Spirit in the inner man.”

Now, let's come to the end of chapter three, and then we'll begin in chapter four with the walk of the believer. How is God going to do all this?

3:20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

**How can these wonderful** things which Paul has been praying for be realized in our lives? Well, God is the one who is going to do it. God is the one who has purposed it, and God is the one who is going to carry it out. “Now unto Him”—the One who planned and wrought it out will do it.

Will you mark His ability. In chapter 1, verse 4, “He chose us to be holy” and He's going to keep us. Second Timothy 1:12 says, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him (to guard the deposit) until that day.” In chapter 1, verse 3, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places, and now He succors us day by day as Hebrews 2:18 says, “He is able to succor them that are tested.”

In Hebrews 4, “Let us come to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.” Hebrews 7:25, “He is able to save perfectly all those who come unto God by Him.” And in Jude 24, “He is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding great joy.”

**And now unto Him** that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He can perform everything we ask or even think. But mark you, He does it according to the power that worketh in us. That is, He does it according to the Spirit of God who indwells the believer. And in the last verse, you have the purpose of it all: “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”

You remember this division starts in chapter one, “That we might be to the praise of His glory,” unto the praise of His glory—over and over again. And now He ends this division, “Unto Him be glory in the church of Christ Jesus throughout the ages of the ages.” In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be glorified through the church throughout all eternity. And this is the ultimate purpose of all redemption; this is the purpose of God, that His Son should be glorified with the glory of God throughout all eternity.

**And the marvelous thing is**, you and I are going to share with Him in that. As John 17:22 says, “And the glory which Thou hast given me, I have given them.” My, what a wonderful thing. Colos-

sians 3:4 says, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory.” The ultimate purpose of it all is the glory of Christ; and marvel of marvels, you and I will share with Him in that glory.

And the Lord wonderfully bless you today for His name's sake.

## Chapter Four

I would like to read the first few verses in the book of Ephesians, chapter 4.

4:1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

4:2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

4:3. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4:4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

4:5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

4:6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

**Supposing I stop right there for a few moments.**

We have just finished the first three chapters on our position in Christ, and all of us love the marvelous truths that have been given us there. But this brings a responsibility. In chapters 1 to 3, we had what God is going to do for us; now starting at chapter 4, we have what we can do for God. Paul has just been talking about our being made powerfully strong by His Spirit in the inner man. He's been talking about our being able to comprehend with all the saints the wonderful length and breadth and height and depth of the purpose and grace of God. He prays

that we might be filled unto all the fullness of God, recognizing that He's able to do all these things for us and through us.

**But what does God expect of us? Our walk should correspond to our position. You see, we are a heavenly people. In chapter 2 we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies; and, if we are a heavenly people, we ought to have a heavenly walk. You remember in Colossians 2:6, we read, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." This is what He wants.**

**Now in chapter 4 down through chapter 6:9 we have the details of our walk in Christ—how I as a Christian should walk on the earth. And my walk, I repeat it, should correspond with my position. If I'm a child of one who is God, then I ought to walk and live as a child of God.**

So in chapters 4:1 through 6:9 we are to walk in the unity of the Spirit; we are to walk in a new creation. In chapter 5, we are to walk in love; we are to walk in light; we are to walk in wisdom; and we are to walk in submission. You see, I'm giving you a run-down from chapter 4:1 through 6:9.

Now in the first three verses, we have how we are to walk. And then in verses 4 to 6, we have the basis for such a walk and in verses 7 to 16, the result of such a walk. Now that makes it very simple.

I'd like to read the first three verses again,

4:1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

4:2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

4:3. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Now we are to walk “worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” You remember, in 1 John 2:6, John says that if we say we abide in Him, we ought to walk even as He walked. And how did He walk? In complete submission to His Father. In John 8:29, Jesus said, “I do always the things that please Him.”**

Now is it possible for us to walk with God today? Is it possible for us to walk even as Jesus walked in submission? My friend, that has always been true. If I were to go through the Old Testament and pick out the men who walked with God and see their surroundings, see their circumstances, I tell you, you and I have no excuse.

You take, for example, Enoch who walked with God in the midst of a violent world, an ungodly world. Noah walked with God in a world where the imaginations of the heart were evil continually. It was a violent, wicked world. Abraham walked with God in the midst of a pagan world. He was alone. “Look unto Abraham your father . . . for I called him alone,” quoting Isaiah 51:2 on that.

**And then you have Moses who walked with God in the midst of a stiff-necked people, a bunch**

**of murmurers; but he walked with God. Elijah walked with God in the midst of an apostate world. He could say to God, "I'm the only fellow you've got left on earth." And you remember, God said, "Wait a minute, Elijah, I have seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." But only God knew who they were. Even Elijah didn't know who they were. You and I are walking with God in the midst of a world that's lawless and rebellious. Yes, it's possible to walk with God today, even as Jesus walked.**

Now in verses 2 and 3, we've got five virtues given to us; and these cannot be imitated. They come to us from the Spirit of God. Now listen to what Paul says. How am I to walk in the vocation wherewith I am called?

4:2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

4:3. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Now look at these. Christ is the personification of all this—of lowliness, of meekness, of longsuffering, of forbearing in love, of walking in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Christ is the only one who ever lived like that.**

**Take that passage in 1 Corinthians 13 where love suffers long and is kind; love envies not; love never vaunts itself; love is never puffed up, never behaves itself unseemly, never seeks her own, is never easily provoked, never thinks any evil, al-**

**ways thinks of that which is good, forbears all things, believes all things, hopes all things. Love never fails. That's Christ, my friends. He cannot be imitated. But the Spirit of God who indwells us can reproduce that sort of a life in us.**

The Christian life is a supernatural life. That's why the Spirit of God indwells you. Oh, listen, Christian friend, today, why don't you and I just turn our life over to God and let Him run it?

It would be very interesting for me and possibly for you if we were to take up each one of these virtues. Again let me say that they cannot be imitated. The flesh can't do this. God has to do it. A great deal of our problems, divisions, strife one with the other is because of these very simple things. Look at them. We are to walk with all lowliness and meekness. Jesus said, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart." The only place you'll ever find this is in Christ and in the one who walks with Christ.

**As I look over my past experience with God's people through these many years, certain ones stand out as giants for God. These were not necessarily preachers and pastors, to be frank with you. Some of the men who stand out in my experience, in my thinking, were great men, big men, mighty men, men of authority and yet they manifested a lowliness and a meekness that just astounded me. You see, there's only one place to learn this; it is at the feet of Jesus.**

The only time He ever said to His disciples, "Learn of Me,"—he never said, "Learn of Me to be

great.” He never said, “Learn of Me to be mighty and powerful and brilliant.” What did He say?—“Learn of Me to be meek.” I tell you, the fruit of the Spirit is meekness as Galatians 5:23 says, “And with longsuffering,” not shortsuffering.

You know, many of us read that verse in Corinthians 13, “Love suffereth long”—and then we get angry. No, love suffereth long and is still kind, longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Not forbearing one another with a critical spirit; not forbearing one another and saying, “Well, I’ll forgive you this time. I’ll put up with you. I have to put up with you because you’re a Christian.”

No, no. There’s no joy in that. Forbearing one another in love and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, these bring joy. You remember in Romans 12:18 the Apostle Paul speaks of the fact, “As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

**But how often we’ll say, “Oh, well, I can’t have fellowship with him. He doesn’t believe just the way I believe.” And so the result is we become little pockets of believers. Here’s a little pocket of Baptist believers; there’s a little pocket of Methodist believers; over there is a little pocket of independent believers. We’re all in little pockets. We have fellowship with those who believe just as we believe and who belong to the same organization we do. But, oh, how we miss the riches of His grace. How we have missed the riches of fellowship.**

I remember one time when a young fellow coming to Multnomah School of the Bible said to me, "You know, Mr. Mitchell, I didn't know that there were Christians outside of our church. And here I came to Multnomah over the protest of our people, and I find you folk love the Savior just as much as we do."

**You know, this boy had been robbed of something. Now I believe we ought to be sticklers for doctrine. I'm not opposed to that. I'm a stickler for doctrine myself. But, when it comes to the question of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, God grant we'll endeavor to keep that unity.**

Now I know there are those who say, "There's only one church and that's our church." And they talk about their own individual local church, saying, "We are the church."

May I suggest to you, my friends, the Bible declares that every real believer in Christ is a member of the church, the body of Christ. The believers in Rome? They were Christians. The next book is the Corinthian church, carnal, worldly, full of frailty and weakness and failure; but he called them the temples of the Spirit of God. They belonged to the church of Christ. In fact, it was to the Corinthian church he gave a great deal of instruction about the church in chapters 12 through 14.

And then you have the Galatian church. Now the Galatian church was full of legalism, yet those people were the church of Christ. And then you

come to the Ephesian church, and those folks had lost their first love; but they were the church of Christ. Then you come to the Philippian church, the church in suffering, and they were the church of Christ. And you take the Colossian church; and there you have a lot of false philosophy and agnosticism. And Paul has to warn them about these various false asceticisms and false mysticisms and formalism and legality, but they were the church of Christ.

**And then when you come to the Thessalonian church, in the first book of Thessalonians, you have where they were waiting for His Son from heaven. They had turned to God from idols; but they had some problems and they were to walk worthy of their vocation. They were to be holy before God, and they were to be loving before the brethren. They were to be honest to those that were outside. They were the church of Christ.**

Likewise in 2 Thessalonians, and one could go on through the churches. Take the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chapters of Revelation. You've got the church at Ephesus, at Smyrna, at Pergamos, Thyatira, at Sardis, at Philadelphia, at Laodicea, and He calls them the churches. So when you say that your church is the only church, the only true church, you'd better take that with a big question mark. Now it may be that I don't agree with every believer. I may not have fellowship with every believer, but I should because we are all believers in Christ.

Now the basis for our walking in the unity of the Spirit is because of our unity in position, which you have in the next two or three verses.

4:4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

4:5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

4:6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

**Now here He is talking about the foundations for such a unity in the Spirit. And mark you, He's talking about all His people; He's talking about every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Let's look at the basis for our walk in the unity of the Spirit. There is one body; that's the church of Jesus Christ of which Paul has been speaking in chapters 1 and 3 of Ephesians, the one body, made up of all believers in Christ, one church. And there is one Spirit, and I believe he is speaking here of the Holy Spirit who unifies all believers in Christ.

You remember, we've been joined together by the Spirit of God in Christ. Our bodies have become the sanctuaries of the Holy Spirit, as you have in 1 Corinthians 6:19. And then there's one hope of our calling as you find in Romans 8:29. And what is that? That God is determined that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son. We have one hope; that's the coming of our Savior. Paul could say to Timothy, Christ Jesus, our hope. Then there's one Lord; and in this unity we recognize that we have one Lord Jesus Christ. He's Lord of lords and King

of kings. There is only one Lord over all believers. And there's one faith.

**You remember in Jude, we're informed, we're exhorted in verse 3, "To contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." There's one faith, one body of truth which has to do with the deity of our Savior, His sinless life, His redemptive work at the cross for men and women, His physical resurrection from the grave, His exaltation to God's right hand to be a Prince and a Savior. The book of Hebrews says He is Lord over all, having all authority as our High Priest.**

And so one goes on. There's one faith and there's one baptism. Oh-oh, now we're coming to something. One baptism—which one do you say it is?

You see, the New Testament deals with three baptisms. Did you know that?

Our Savior spoke to the disciples on the baptism of suffering. You remember one day the mother of James and John asked the Lord that her sons should be one on His right hand and one on His left hand when He came into His kingdom.

**And the Lord says, "I can't do that. That's in the hands of my Father." And then He made this statement, "Are you willing to be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptize with?"**

And they said, "We are able."

He said, "You will do so." This is the baptism He's talking about—His death, the baptism of suffering.

And then there is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and this is that which joins us together in the body of Christ. For example, in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul says we have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body and have all been made to drink of that self-same Spirit.

John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water; but He that cometh after me is preferred before me, and He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." In Matthew 3, and Mark 1, Luke 3, John 1, Acts 1 and 11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, all these mentions have to do with the baptism of the Spirit.

**And then there is the baptism by water, and John baptized them by water. The disciples baptized by water. In the book of Acts converts were baptized in water. And this is what man does. Man cannot baptize anybody by the Spirit; this is what God does. But man baptizes by water. So you have here, there is one baptism and which one is it?**

Paul is talking about the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We're to walk, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. And I, personally, believe that he is dealing here with the oneness of believers. We're to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit because there is one baptism; and that, of course, must be the baptism of the Spirit who unites all believers into one body.

This is the theme; this is what He's talking about. Paul is not talking about water baptism. He's talking to Christians who've been knitted together by the Spirit of God into one body called the church, and this is what he's dealing with. There's one Lord, one faith, one baptism and there's one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.

**In other words, there is just one family. Remember, you have this in Galatians 3:26—talking to Christians. We're "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." I know some take that verse and say, "Everybody on the earth is a Christian. We're all children of God because the Bible says so."**

Well now, what the Bible really says is we're all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Remember John 1:12, "To as many as received Him, to them He gives power (the right) to become the children of God." Or Romans 8:14 says, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." So you have here the basis for our walk. There must be the unity of the Spirit among God's people.

God wants us to be eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace because we're all one in Christ. So we have in verses 1 to 3, how we are to walk, and verses 4 to 6, the basis for such a walk is because of our unity and position in Christ.

**The Lord grant you today to see to it that you walk in the unity of the Spirit. I tell you, it's a**

**wonderful thing to be eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

Now the result of this walk in verses 7 to 16 will be unity in service.

4:7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

4:8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

And then in verse 11,

4:11. And He gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

What for?

4:12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

4:13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**Allow me to stop again right here. First of all, in verse 7 every believer is gifted for a purpose. “Unto every one of us (every Christian) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” God has given gifts unto men.**

Now, there is a certain sense, and I think I ought to say this, in which gifted men have been given for the encouragement of the church in its unity of Spirit and its unity of faith. And God has given to us gifted men for the perfecting of the saints for the work of

ministering, for the edifying of the body of Christ so that we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, a mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**My, what verses! Do you ever stop to think why God has given to the church pastors and evangelists and teachers? For the perfecting of the saints and for the work of ministering. I want to tell you very frankly and I speak from experience that it's much easier to run a machine shop, filled with men, than it is to be the pastor of a church where everybody sits down and expects their man to do the whole business.**

**And I want to say one of the reasons why the church of Christ doesn't grow more than it does is because the people in the pews do not do their job. I want to tell you, my friends, that, if you claim to be a Christian, you've got a special place in the body of Christ; and, when you do not function, you hinder the edification of the body.**

And our job as pastors and teachers is to prepare you, to fit you, for the work of the ministry—that is, to edify you and to build you up in the faith and doctrines of the church of Christ. Then you'll be able to minister to other Christians and to the unsaved and you will know what the gospel is and how you can reach them.

On the other hand, we must not forget that every believer in Christ is gifted for some purpose in the building up and the increasing of the body of Christ.

**You know, I have been thinking more and more of late that there are no two of us alike. We all have different gifts, different positions in the body of Christ, different personalities; and the Lord loves to have it that way. He doesn't make us all wholesale out of the same cloth. He made us with entirely different personalities because He wants us to glorify Him through eternity. I can't fathom this. I can't understand to the full why He made me the way He did—but He did. He has given me a personality. He's made me different from you, and He's made you different from me.**

And so He puts us in the body of Christ to do a particular job for the increase of the body, for the edifying of the body, for the glorifying of God through eternity.

**Do you ever stop to think of it? You—you—believer in Christ Jesus, child of God—you are a special object of His love and grace. He puts you in Christ to do a particular job, and He's gifted you to do it. And all the tests and trials of life are a part of God's purpose to fit you to do that job. So don't murmur. Don't balk. Just rejoice in the Lord.**

Now, it's so easy for us to dodge our responsibility. I know. I was a tool and die maker in a business when the Lord saved me. I was in my early 20s when the Lord got a hold of me and saved me. And then about a year after I was saved, he put upon my heart a yearning to go out and witness for Him on the prairies of Canada—Saskatchewan, to be exact. I

was in Calgary, Alberta, at the time; and I'd received an invitation to go down and hold some meetings. But I didn't know a thing about preaching or anything. I balked; I just bucked like a bucking mule.

**I told the Lord—I had all kinds of excuses. No reasons. Just excuses. You have no reasons, either, just excuses. I said, “Lord, I stutter and I can't preach, so it's no use asking me to preach because I stutter. And, anyhow, what can I say, I don't know anything.”**

Oh, I had all kinds of excuses and I thought they were very logical excuses. I wanted to be an evangelist, you know. That's what. Everybody loves an evangelist. You see, evangelists don't step on toes as preachers do. But you know how the Lord worked it out? For many years I have had the joy of leading a great many people to the Lord in preaching the gospel all over the prairies. And since then I've had a lot of people who have come to know the Savior. But I do not have what you would call the gift of an evangelist. All men are to do that. We're to do the work of an evangelist, but we may not have the evangelistic gift.

**And the Lord slowly drove me to the place of teaching the Word, of expounding the scriptures, which I love to do, by the way. I love to preach the gospel; and I love to lead souls to Christ. But God has given me a special place in the body of Christ to impart the truth as I see it.**

Now that doesn't mean I bring it out of the air. No. It means I've got to work. It's there for me. You

see, the jewels are there; the gold is there; the silver is there, but they've got to be mined. The servant of God must study, study, study.

Listen, friend, please, don't rob yourself of the joy of growth. I know of nothing that makes you grow in the things of Christ, in the knowledge of Christ, than to take a Sunday school class. It makes you get down into your Bible. And do use your helps, commentaries and study books. Men of God have poured a lifetime of study into their books. Use them. You'll grow so much faster. But you must also read and reread your Bible. Get to know the text; get into the Bible, and say, "Lord, I've got these boys. I've got these little girls in my class. Please give me something whereby I can impart the truth to their little minds and come right down to where they live so I might give to them the glories and the beauties of our Savior."

**Oh, listen, Christian friend, I'm pleading with you—we're living in the last days. There's not much time for us to bring the gospel to our generation. Do you know that there are tens of thousands of boys and girls who have never heard the real story of our wonderful Savior? Why don't you start a class in your neighborhood. Start a class in your home. Take a Sunday school class. Take a young people's meeting. Do something! Live for Christ before your children. Live for Christ in your home. Live for Christ among your neighbors. Do nothing that would dishonor Christ. Live to the praise of the glory of His grace.**

Now this is what God wants of every real believer in Christ.

You say, "Well, I haven't any gifts."

It may be your gift is administration. It may be your gift is just living a sweet, consistent Christian life. That'll do more to bring people to Christ than all the preachers in the world. Listen, allow me to plead with you. You belong to the Savior. You are a special object of Christ's love, and the Spirit of God who indwells you has all the gifts necessary to do the job that has to be done. It has pleased God to pick you up and redeem you and use you.

Won't you just yield yourself and then let God do the rest?

You say, "Well, if I yield myself to God, He'll send me overseas or He'll tell me to do something I don't want to do."

**How do you know that? You won't know what He wants you to do until you yield yourself to Him. Then He'll reveal Himself. Then He'll show you His purpose. Then He'll give you His will for your life. But He's not going to do this until you put yourself in His hands.**

And I'm pleading with you as a Christian to redeem the time, to buy up the opportunity of knowing the Word of God, to buy up the opportunity of knowing your Savior, to buy up the opportunity of witnessing for Him, to buy up the opportunity of going on with God. Be a real channel of blessing for God—and—start today!

Have you read the Word of God today? Go ahead, open it and read it. I don't care where you read; read it and reread it. Some way get the Word of God into your mind; and, as you go on doing your job at the office or the shop or at home, while you're washing dishes or wherever you are, my friend, you can do two things. You can meditate on the Word of God and be in touch with the Spirit, and you can sing. Listen, mother, while you're washing your dishes day by day, why don't you lift your heart up in song as you wash. Sing while you're working.

**If one wants to follow through on this question of the gifts, I would suggest you read Romans 12:3-8, and 1 Peter 4:10, 11, and 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14. Each one of us must function in the church, the body of Christ. And might I suggest in this same connection that God is sovereign in our position in the body of Christ. God is sovereign in the bestowal of gifts. All gifts are given for the edification of His people. God is sovereign in this. I can't tell God what gift I want. It's true, we are exhorted in 1 Corinthians 14 to desire the best gifts. But, after all, "The Spirit gives to each one severally, as He wills," not as we will.**

Now in verses 8 to 11 in Ephesians chapter 4, we have the source of the gift. And these are gifts to the church. Will you please notice this, the source of the gifts is from a risen Christ. I'm going to read these verses, if I may.

4:8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

4:9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

4:10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

4:11. And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

**The source of the gifts in verses 8 to 11 is the risen Christ. When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. And then Paul goes on in verses 9 and 10 to tell who it is. He was the One who first descended to the lower parts of the earth and then ascended up far above all the heavens that He might fill all things. And, as the risen Christ, He gave to the church certain gifts. When you come to Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, you'll notice these are gifts to the church. They go to each individual being gifted. But in this passage Paul is dealing especially with gifted men who do a specific job in the church of Christ.**

**Now some men are very, very gifted in giving out the gospel. They are gifted in leading people to Christ, and that's a God-given gift. Other men in the ministry are teachers. It's true that sometimes they may do the work of an evangelist in preaching the gospel, but their main ministry is teaching. And then I have some friends who are good pastors, but they're not good preachers.**

**They are wonderful pastors. They've got a heart of compassion, just like a nurse cherishing her children as 1 Thessalonians 2:7 says. They care for you, weeping over you night and day with tears because of their heart for God's people.**

And may I say, one of the greatest needs in our churches is for real pastors. The prerequisite for a shepherd is whole-hearted devotion to the person of Christ because, if he is not wholeheartedly devoted to the person of Christ, he will crack under the load. What keeps him up is his love for the Savior. If he is a real pastor, he will bear burdens that will crush him sometimes. If it were not for their love for the Savior, these dear men couldn't carry on. I speak to you people who belong to churches. Consider your pastor. He carries burdens of which you know nothing.

**It's a tremendous job to be a pastor. It takes compassion and tenderness. Don't expect too much from your pastor. He doesn't have all the gifts.**

Someone has well said, that the age, the gospel age, the church age, started with apostles and prophets and the age is going to end with pastors and teachers. Today there are not many great evangelists, there are not many great teachers, and there are not many great pastors.

I think we Christians ought to ask the Lord to raise up men who would be expositors of the Word of God, who will have compassion and tenderness for the people of God. And sometimes I think we don't have them because the people of God do not

pray for them. We expect too much from those whom God has set over us. And I just plead with you today to pray much for your pastor, for your teacher, for your evangelist, for your workers that God may be pleased to use them to the praise of the glory of His grace. And you have a responsibility to pray for them and encourage them in the gospel ministry.

**And again may I urge upon you, dear people who belong to churches, do not expect your pastor to have all the gifts of the Spirit. He may be a good gospel preacher, may be a teacher, may be a pastor, may be an administrator, but don't expect him to have everything.**

I know you want a man who's a good pulpiteer. He's got to be a good mixer and get along well with people. He's got to have brains so he can handle all the counseling he has to do. He's got to have the compassion and tenderness of the apostles in hospital visits for people in sorrow. You expect him to be able to do the whole business, but I repeat what I said earlier that God has not given to any one man all of the gifts. But these are gifted men, given to the church to do specific tasks.

Perhaps you can do what he cannot do. You might do his hospital visitation or you might be the evangelist or assist in church administration. Be a joint that supplies what is needed.

Let me just stop here a minute.

4:13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man (that

is, unto a full-grown man), unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**Remember Paul prayed in chapter three that we might be filled unto all the fullness of God. The yearning of the Apostle's heart and I believe the yearning of Christ's heart is that every believer should be filled unto all the fullness of God. We are to grow in the knowledge of Christ and become one in truth, one in belief, one in edifying each other till we come to the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of Christ. In other words, we are to be no longer babes in Christ, but to be men and women who will be able to give a reason for the hope within them.**

Now may the Lord take these few words and burn them into your heart, for God's great desire is that His people should be established in the faith and built up and edified.

And now we come down to verses 14 and 15.

4:14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

4:15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Here He guards us against false teachers. He guards us against being tossed about in verse 14. God has made us responsible to get into the Word of God. He's made the preachers and teachers and

evangelists all responsible to train the people of God for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, so that when these false teachers come along they will not deceive the people of God and they will not deceive your young people.

**Now what is the purpose of the gifts in verses 12 to 16? The purpose of the gifts is for the increase and edification of the body.**

4:12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

4:13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

4:14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

4:15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

4:16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

**What's he talking about? There are two things that we as Christians must do—recognize that every Christian is in the one body of Christ (the unity of the faith) and that every believer is to grow up in Him (in the knowledge of the Son of God).**

You are a joint in the body of Christ which is “fitly joined together. When a joint does not func-

tion, it affects the whole body. For example, if the joint in my knee didn't do its job of lubricating the leg, what would happen? I'd have a stiff leg and that would affect the whole body. I wouldn't be able to run. It would affect my walking.

Why doesn't a church grow as it ought to grow? Because we don't function. You see, my Christian friend, you have a particular place in the body of Christ. I do not know what place God has given to you, but I know you've got a twofold job in the sixteenth verse. One is for the increase of the body; that is, by witnessing you bring people to Christ, soul-winning. And the second thing is to edify those who are believers; that is, you build them up in Christ. Someone has well said, allow me to quote this, "The measure of our yieldedness is the measure of our usefulness to and for God."

**Am I talking to you? You've been a Christian for I don't know how many years and you haven't functioned. You've done nothing. You haven't prayed very much. You've criticized a lot. You've turned down opportunities of teaching in Sunday school. You've turned down opportunities of helping someone in need. You've turned down opportunities of bringing peace to a troubled heart or comfort to a sorrowful soul. You've missed the opportunities of doing things, little things, just little everyday things.**

Can't you and I live for God today?

You know, there are a lot of lonely people in the world today. There are a lot of discouraged people.

There are a lot of Christians who need a little encouragement. And, oh, just say a kind little word; do a little thing for them here and there; go out of your way to do something. Can't we as members of the body of Christ today edify each other? And then by our kindness, by our lives, by our witness bring people to Christ and bear testimony for Him. You see, there are some people you can reach that I can't reach. And it may be, I am sure, there are some people that I can reach that you can't reach.

**Bring to them something of the sweetness of Christ. That's just what they need.**

I challenge you today to do this, Christian friends. Look at verse 16 again. You might only be a joint. You might be the smallest part of the body, but you've got a special place to function. And today you lift up your heart to the Lord, walk in fellowship with Him, and in some way be used by Him in reaching somebody else for the Savior. Will you do that today? It's a wonderful thing to know that we have the Spirit of God to lead us and to guide us into all truth.

And now we come to the second aspect of the walk of a Christian. We are to walk in the light of a new creation and this runs from verse 17 down through verse 32. For example, you take in verse 17,

4:17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

4:18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

4:19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

4:20. But ye have not so learned Christ.

**In other words, we are to walk as new men and new women in Christ. And, if a Christian is a new man, then he must have a new walk, having a new life and being related to God. God expects him to walk differently from the man of the world. Indeed we are to show forth to the world the Savior to whom we have been joined.**

Now in verses 17 to 20 we have the seven ways the unsaved walk.

4:17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

4:18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

4:19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

4:20. But ye (you Christians) have not so learned Christ.

**Now we notice first of all in verses 17 and 18 they walk in the vanity of their mind. They have their understanding darkened. One is very much tempted to go into the book of Romans chapter 1 and 1 Corinthians chapter 1 where this is taken**

**up a little more in detail. But here he's saying that the reasoning faculty, the intellect of the unsaved man or woman, is blind to spiritual realities.**

**You see God doesn't reveal His wonderful truth to closed minds. I believe that wherever there is a heart that yearns to know the Lord of Glory, God will reveal Himself to that heart. But the trouble is men want their own religion. They want their own way. They don't want to give God the right to say how He can give eternal life to man. They want it on their own terms. And because they want it on their own terms, they don't get it. They just don't get it.**

**Now the unsaved man has not life. He's separated from the life of God, in verse 18, because of the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart. In other words, as Hebrews chapter 3 and 4 says, "Unbelief that is persisted in produces hardness."**

4:17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds;

4:18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

4:19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

4:20. But ye (you Christians) have not so learned Christ.

**Now, in verse 19 we have a terrible verse. And I find here insolent conduct, lust that knows no restraint, “to work all uncleanness with greediness.” It’s a terrible verse, speaking of the unsaved man and woman; and this, of course, is the general picture of the unregenerate world.**

Now, you read the first chapter of Romans from verse 19 to verse 32. I’ll not go into it except to point out that God gave men over to uncleanness and vile affections and to a reprobate mind.

You say, “Well, that’s paganism.”

**I might say, my friend, this is more or less the universal character of man throughout the whole world. One thinks of that verse in Ephesians chapter 2, where Paul says, “You hath he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins; where in time past ye walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had out manner of life in the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, like the rest.” In Galatians chapter 5 verse 19-21 I read, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these” (and he gives you quite a list of this terrible, outrageous conduct of the man).**

**You see, the attitude is, “I am everything. I live for myself. And God is nothing.” No wonder God demands a new creation! God can’t touch up this old thing. It’s so bad. It’s so corrupt. It’s so**

**rotten that God can't patch it up anymore. God demands a new creation.**

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). "If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It's a wonderful thing to know that God is doing as He is bringing into being a new race of people.

And as I read these Ephesians 4:17, 18, and 19, I can understand a little wee bit. God's got to do this. God's got to do this. The patching days of the old creation are over. What can you do with it? God's demands to make something entirely new. The old can be gilded over and powdered over and painted over. But, my friends, it's still the old thing. You can fix the outside up and you look like a wonderful person. But the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and who can know it (Jeremiah 17:9). But the thoughts and imaginations of the heart of man are evil continually (Genesis 6:5). And man today has given himself over to outrageous conduct, to a lust that knows no restraint, to uncleanness with greediness. God is entirely out of the picture.

**Now verse 20, "But you have not so learned Christ." You who have taken Christ as your own personal Savior, this hasn't a thing to do with your life. God forbid, and I say this solemnly, God forbid that any man who names the name of Christ should be living in verses 17, 18, or 19 of Ephe-**

**sians chapter 4. I say God forbid. These are the terrible things. And yet, I'm sorry to say that there are those who profess the name of Christ whose intellect has been blinded by the things of the world. They are separated from fellowship with God. They are ignorant of the ways of God, and they're given over sometimes to outrageous conduct.**

God forbid that you and I should make self everything, and God nothing. I say no wonder God demands a new creation. This new life in Christ brings a new experience. We are transformed, not reformed. We're not being reformed. We're not reformers, but transformers!

**And this works from the inside out. Remember in the book of Romans chapter 12 where Paul says, in verse 2, "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed, transfigured, by the renewing of your minds." We have a new life which brings to us a new experience. It's not so much to learn about Christ, but to know Christ Himself as the Apostle Paul could say in Philippians chapter 3, "I count all things but loss, just to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Or in Philippians chapter 1:20 and 21—Whether by life or by death, that Christ may be magnified in my body. For me to life is Christ, and to die is to be with Christ.**

**You see these things that characterize the unsaved should never characterize you and me.**

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, I agree with you, but you know I have a terrible time. I’m weak. I’m so weak and these things appeal to me so much.”

I know. But there’s one person who really understands you and is praying for you, and that is Jesus Christ. You remember Hebrews 7:25? “Wherefore he is able also to save perfectly all those who come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Do you remember Hebrews 2:18? He’s touched and He’s able to succor them that are tempted.

And chapter 4 verse 15 of Hebrews. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. He’s able to succor. He’s able to sympathize, and He’s able to keep you. Even though you may have some great temptations, physical, lustful temptations of the flesh, remember you belong to Him and you’re a child of God. He’s given you His Word. And He’s given you His Spirit so that you’ll not walk like the unsaved man on the street, but you will walk even as ye have received Christ—by faith. Again I suggest Colossians 2:6, “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”

**And I want to tell you it’s a wonderful thing that you and I today can live such lives that glorify God. And by the way don’t worry about tomorrow, live for God today. You know the Lord might come tonight. Live for Him today. Live in the fellowship of this wonderful Savior today.**

**And remember He knows all about you. And you remember, too, He that hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6) Now you walk with Him just for today, just for these next hours. Give yourself over to Him and let Him work out and live out His life through you.**

Now, in verses 20-24, we have the next thing in the passage. He talks about a new man in verse 21.

4:21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.

4:22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation (manner of life) the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

4:23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

4:24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

**You know, here we have a new life which is absolutely divorced from the old life. We are no longer related to the old Adam. We're related to Christ, the last Adam. The old Adam and the new Adam do not mix. Remember Paul said in Galatians chapter 6 verses 14 and 15, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." We're a new creature, for he goes on to say, "Being a Jew or be a Gentile profits nothing, but a new creation." And that's what Peter means in 1 Peter chapter 2 where we are lively stones in the building to show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness**

**into His marvelous light: (1 Peter 2:5a and 9b.)  
“And if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17).**

I say, we're no longer related to the old. We belong to Christ. Ours is a new life that is absolutely divorced from the old. And again I'm repeating some of these things. I want you to get into this. The old and the new do not mix. Hence, it calls for some action. And verse 22, “That ye put off concerning your former manner of life the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts:”

**Now, let's see what we're going to do here. We have to put off the old man with his deeds. All that we were in Adam talks about the old. In fact, in Romans chapter 6, the 6<sup>th</sup> verse says that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be rendered inactive. The death of Jesus Christ severed all relationships to the old nature. The life of the old was evidenced by corruption and by deceitful lusts as you have it in verse 22. We've put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, the deceitful tyrannies of the old.**

You see, deceit tyrannizes the old life. Truth guides and governs the new life. And in verse 24 we had to put on something. It's just like taking a coat off. We put off the old man with his deeds. We put off all that we were in Adam. All the past is put off. And the death of Christ has severed the relationship with the old life of sin, the old life of tyranny, the old life of

bondage, the old life of darkness. The old life was evidenced, as I said, by corruption and by deceitful lusts.

But now, in verse 24, we are to do something else, and I say this calls for the will to put on the new man. That is, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17) We've put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Now, the old life was evidenced by corruption and sinful lusts. The new man is evidenced by righteousness and holiness. The old man was corrupt; the new man is righteous.

**How then shall we walk? I wish in some way I could make this very clear to you. Before we accepted the Savior, our life was evidenced by sinful acts, by bad habits, by corrupt practices, by immorality of one kind or another. Of course, many of us would not, and I include you and me in all the rest of us, we wouldn't go out into the world in its unbroken reverie and drunkenness and sin, but we were in sin just the same. It may have had a different manifestation like envy and strife or private secret sins. Who knows? Who knows? God knew. God knew!**

But now we've accepted the Savior. We've put on the new man, and the new life is evidenced by righteousness and holiness. And if this is so, we as Christians ought to walk in the new life.

Righteousness and holiness are to characterize our lives. We should be able to do right in any given circumstance. We should be able always to do the right thing. Righteousness is evident by doing the right

thing, irrespective of circumstances. You know, many of us excuse ourselves by saying, “Well, I couldn’t do a thing about it. My circumstances hindered me.”

May I remind you of the first chapter of the book of Daniel where Daniel and his friends, these Jewish young men, were to eat what was set before them so that they would appear very well fed as they stood before the king. But we read that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s meat.

**He could have said, “Why I can’t help it. I’m the victim of circumstances. Why if I don’t eat this meat, I’ll lose my head.”**

How often we excuse our failures because of circumstances.

We say, “Well, what could I do? If I had done what I should have done, I would be standing out from the rest like a sore thumb.”

Well, you’d better stand out like a sore thumb to do the right thing. You see what God wants us to do is to live so pleasing to Him that our lives will manifest something of the righteousness of Christ.

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, that’s an impossible thing. My circumstances, where I work, and where I live, would never, never in the wide world encourage me to live right. I can’t do it under these circumstances.”

**Listen. I don’t know what your circumstances are, but I do know that God has made a provision whereby you can live and walk as a child of God in righteousness and true holiness. Now, don’t be**

**scared of that word “holy.” This word oftentimes has been given the wrong connotation. Sometimes people talk about holiness and it’s nothing to us but a “don’t do this, don’t do that and don’t do the other thing.” That isn’t being holy. Holiness is a matter of character. Holiness is a matter of walk and the fruitage of a walk with God, your fellowship with God.**

And if I am a child of God, then this is how I should walk. I should not walk in the lusts and the desires of the flesh, but I should walk after the new man in righteousness and true holiness. The old man was born in sin; the new man is born in righteousness. Hence, let us manifest this.

**And again I say, will you not live for Him today? Ask the Savior to live out His life through you, through me, just for today. Just for today let’s live unto His praise, unto His glory. And trust Him for tomorrow.**

And then in chapter four through chapter 6:9, we have the walk of the Christian, our walk in Christ. And in the first sixteen verses there is given to us, “We are to walk in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of truth.” And the fruitage of that walk and the basis for such a walk we followed through in those first sixteen verses.

And now, let me give a short review of what we have just covered. It is crucial.

In dealing with the new man we are to put off the old man and put on the new man. This calls for action. This calls for the will. The old man is evi-

denced by corruption and deceitful lusts. We have that in verse 22—that ye put off concerning the former manner of life, the old man. That is, when you speak of the old man, it's all that we had in Adam. We were born in sin; we have a sinful nature; we have lusts of the mind and lusts of the flesh and so on. And we find that the old man is absolutely corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. We put on the new man in verse 24, and the new man is evidenced by righteousness and true holiness.

**Remember the old man is corrupt, unrighteous, sinful. All that we have in the new man is righteousness. The first Adam brought sin and death and corruption into the human race. Christ, the new man, the last Adam, brings life and forgiveness and joy and righteousness and holiness. And having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, those of us who have done so, we are already translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son. No longer are we children of wrath, but children of God. No longer are we seen in Adam, but now we are seen in Christ. No longer are we under the bondage and penalty and power of sin, but now we are in the Savior who is righteous and true.**

So we are to put off the old and put on the new man. That's verse 24. We're created in righteousness and true holiness. And how should I walk? Under any circumstances, I'm to walk in fellowship with God.

**Now, I am not saying** that we will not be tested and tried. I'm not saying we won't fail. But what I'm

saying is that the pattern of our life ought to be the revelation of the Son of God in His character, in His love, in His grace, in His compassion for men. I believe that, and I say this very candidly, what the world needs is a revelation of the Son of God in His people. If I have declared that I am a Christian, that I'm joined to Christ, that He dwells in me and I'm in Him, then there ought to be manifested something of the graces of Christ in my life. There ought to be something of the character of Christ, of the love of Christ.

We need to learn to love each other, to manifest patience and understanding with each other. We want the other man to live and to walk the way we think he ought to live and walk. And apparently, we don't give God the opportunity of doing something with other Christians. We remember what they did ten to fifteen years ago. We remember what they did two years ago or last year. We fail to realize that God could do a work in their hearts. So let's be very charitable and understanding and gracious to other Christians even in their failures, that we might understand them, that we might be able to help them, that we might exalt the Savior.

So in verse 24 we're told to put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

**Now, in verses 25-29, he talks about what we should stop doing as new men in Christ. This is the walk of the Christian. How should I walk?**

4:25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

4:26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

4:27. Neither give place to the devil.

4:28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

4:29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

**Now you notice these wonderful words. These are the things we are to stop doing. For example, take verse 25. Because we belong to each other, let's put away lying. Let's put away deceit. We are created in righteousness and true holiness, and lying and half-truths have no place in a believer's life.**

You see, it's so easy to say the wrong thing. But our pride holds us back from stopping and saying, "Excuse me, I didn't mean to say that. I don't know why I said that." No, sir, we won't bring it back so we allow it to go on; and the other party passes it on to somebody else with a little change and first thing you know, it comes back to you entirely different from what you said.

And you say, "Well, I would never have believed that." Yet, you were the one who started the ball rolling. Let's be righteous. Let us be holy in our walk. Lie not one to the other, seeing you've put off the old man with his deeds. Wherefore put away ly-

ing; speak truth to your neighbor. Why? Because we're members one of another. We belong to each other. And you know it is so easy, so easy to deceive. May the Lord grant to you and to me the joy of living in fellowship with God. Only the Spirit of God can cause us to walk as we ought to walk.

**Let us keep short accounts with God and short accounts with people. Let's live today to magnify Him. Just for today, let's live to magnify Him; and what joy and what peace He will put in our heart.**

And then in verse 26,

4:26. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

4:27. Neither give place to the devil.

Now, here's a strange statement. What does he mean by "Be ye angry and sin not"? Isn't it a sin to be angry? I think the Apostle Paul here had in mind, "Don't lose control of yourself and don't let your indignation against others continue until you sin."

You remember in Matthew 23, where the Lord was indignant with the people of His day. Look at the language He used. "You generation of vipers! You whited sepulchers! You who rob widows houses!" These were scathing remarks. But He did this in righteousness. It was righteousness being indignant at the sinfulness and the deceit and the terribleness of the human heart. But Paul says here, "Be angry and sin not: Don't allow your indignation to continue un-

til you sin.” In other words, don’t lose control of yourself. The sin is in losing control of yourself.

**And then he goes on to say, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” What did he mean by that?**

Don’t bear a grudge. It’s not good for you and it’s not good for anybody else.

Quench all the sparks of anger. Be reconciled to your brother. Even go more than halfway. Go more than halfway. Don’t get the idea, “Well, nobody’s going to put anything over on me. I’m not going to be a doormat for anybody.” And the first thing you know, you’re not only angry, but you bear a grudge and sometimes you hold it for years. People say, “Well, brother, I’ll forgive you, but I’ll never forget what you’ve done.” Now, that’s not good. You know that. I’m glad the Lord doesn’t forgive like that.

We used to sing a little song one time,

“When God forgives He forgets,  
no more He remembers our sins.  
When God forgives He forgets.”

Or you have it in Hebrews chapter 10, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:17). How happy I am that the Lord of glory, when He forgives you and me our sins, they’re gone forever. He will remember them no more.

You know I was preaching on that one time on “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” And I was just reveling in the fact that all our sins

are gone and they're gone forever. And after the meeting was over, a dear man said to me, "How can God forget our sins? I can remember what I did years ago. Thank God He's forgiven me, but I can remember them. And although I've been cleansed, I remember them. How can God forget them?"

**My friend, here again** is the finite mind trying to fathom an infinite God. And when God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more, forever," I take God at His Word. I don't know how He does it. But when you and I get to glory, there'll never be the trace of any sin. Oh, what a wonderful salvation we have. What a wonderful Savior we have.

And then, "Give no place to the devil" in your life. Don't give him an opportunity to deceive you. You see, when you bear a grudge, when you nurse your anger, you open the door for the devil to do something to you. Don't give the devil any place in your life. Bury your grudge and lying. Losing control of yourself, nursing your anger along just opens the door for the devil to bring things into your life that will rob you of your joy and your peace, will rob you of your usefulness and will hinder the Spirit of God from doing what He wants to do in your life.

Let the past be past. Don't bring it up. I know some families are continually in trouble because the husband or the wife is always bringing up something that was done so many years ago or some months ago. They keep bringing it up and that brings more trouble and you have another fight. They throw it up

to each other and, the first thing you know, you've got another family row.

Why don't they just put their thing under the blood of Christ? Why don't they just talk to the Lord and confess it and ask the Lord to give them the grace to forget what has happened in the past. Let's live that kind of a life where peace and joy and blessings can be ours. May God grant that you have day to day blessings and peace and reveling in the loveliness in our Savior.

Let me read it again.

4:25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

4:26. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

4:27. Neither give place to the devil.

4:28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

4:29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

**“You mean to tell me that some of these Christians were stealing?”**

Yes, I'm afraid that's true. They were lying, getting angry; they were stealing.

“Why, I thought the New Testament Christians, the early Christians, were so wonderful.”

They were, but just like you and me they were still in bodies that were not yet redeemed; and they

had the same problems that you and I have. The human heart hasn't changed any. Only God can change us; and it's wonderful to know that we can obey the Word of God and not lie, not deceive, not get angry, not lose our temper, not bear a grudge, and not steal.

Of course, we're not thieves and robbers. But we may steal time. I'm going to be blunt about this because I've been working in machine shops a great deal. I worked in shipyards and railroad shops before the Lord picked me out. And I use that word correctly. The Lord picked me out to preach the Gospel. I used to be a machinist and a tool and die-maker. And I've met Christians who stole time from their boss. You know what I mean by that?

**Never be lazy. Let's never be lazy. We may not steal goods, but we certainly can steal time. "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor." And, as you work for somebody, you be the best man, the best woman that boss has ever had. If you're going to keep house for somebody, you keep it in a wonderful way. If you're working in a shop or a store, you just keep at it. You be a testimony for the Lord. Remember that, will you? And then you'll be able to give. You'll have more to give to the Lord's work and more to give to people who are in need. Remember.**

And then he goes on in verse 29.

4:29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

Let your speech be used for edification.

**You know in Colossians chapter four, verse six, the Apostle Paul there says, “Let your speech be seasoned with salt.” I think sometimes he should have said, “Let your speech be seasoned with salt and not with pepper.”**

You know there are some people that are kind of peppery. You know what I mean? Spit-fires. And sometimes the tongue will make a lot of trouble. I know you don't mean it, but you watch what you have to say and how you say it. Let your speech be used for edification.

Oh, God grant that we Christians might watch what we say and how we say it so that instead of our bringing trouble into people's lives, we might indeed bring joy and peace and blessing. So that when we speak, instead of our having a forked tongue like a serpent, we'll have words that bring blessing and joy.

Remember in Romans chapter 3 we have, “The poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness” (Romans 3:13b-14). Now, our having been saved, He's put a new song in our mouths. We've got new words to use. And instead of being bitter and bringing trouble and heartache to people, God grant that we will speak the things that will bring praise to the Lord and joy to others. That's what He's talking about. These are practical things. So you reread verses 25-29 about the things that we should not do as Christians.

**Now, I'm going to skip** by verse 30 for a moment and go down to verse 31 because he's still dealing with things we should stop doing. Notice verse 31:

4:31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

These are the things that grieve the Spirit of God. Notice what they are: "Let all bitterness . . ."

"Now what do you mean by that?"

**Well, the ability to be irritated, sour, bitter. You know there are some Christians who are always irritated and they're bitter and they're sour. And you wonder what in the world's gone wrong with them.**

Now there are reasons for that, and one of them is that they're out of fellowship with God. They're too occupied with themselves and occupied with the circumstances in which they live.

In fact, I've heard them say, "Well, sir, if you were living where I'm living or under the circumstances under which I'm living, you'd be bitter too!"

No! I don't care what the circumstances are, the Lord has made provision for you and me to live above circumstances and walk with God. And don't think for one moment, my friend, that you are the only one who is tested like that. This is human experience down through the centuries. And God has always had people who have lived under worse circumstances than you have. But yet they're sweet.

**I think of one dear little Scotch woman. She suffered for years and yet she was one of the sweetest saints I've ever met in my life.**

I think of Amy Carmichael of India who for nearly twenty years was an invalid. In fact, from the time she went out on the mission field—she first of all went to Japan but had to leave Japan because of physical health. She was going back to Ireland when she stopped in India and saw all those little girls, getting married to the terrible gods and most of them dying at a very early age because of the gross immorality of the priests. Her heart was burdened for them so she stayed in India and rescued and took care hundreds of kiddies. Yet most of her life she was in bed. She was a woman who lived life close to the Lord in spite of all her frailties.

**I have another missionary friend who for a long time was sick of cancer but who did a remarkable work in China. She wrote three or four books while she was sick, and she used to call them “the blessed cancer years.”**

Listen, friend, you're not the only one with tests and trials and troubles and afflictions and bad circumstances. Don't get bitter. Let all bitterness, irritability and sourness go. Let's get rid of it. I think Paul has in thought there, if I may change the word, “resentment.” Put away all resentment against people.

And oh, oh, I've met Christians—I'm sorry to say this—who resent other Christians, who wish they wouldn't come around, who wish they'd go to some other church, who resent their sweetness, their use-

fulness. They stand back in their pride and resent them because they live better or they're used more or they have a greater position.

If that describes you, my friend, get rid of that! Hostility robs you of joy and blessings. And with all of these words in verse 31, you're the one who suffers, not the other fellow. You're the one who suffers. If you're bitter, you're the one who loses the joy. And, when you have resentment, you have no joy and no peace. And when you're hostile to somebody, again you rob yourself of joy and blessing and fellowship with God's people and with God Himself. So please don't slander other Christians. Don't slander anybody.

I've heard people say, "I would rather not meet her, because she's always, always slandering somebody." It's a sad situation.

**And the last one especially, God deliver us from all malice, a vicious disposition. Just vicious. I say, these are the things which grieve the Spirit of God. And I don't care how much you testify or how much you claim you have this and that and the other with respect to your knowledge of Scripture. These things grieve the Spirit of God. In fact, I'll be bold to say that it's mostly these things that grieve and hinder the Spirit of God from working in your midst.**

You criticize, "Why doesn't the church do this and why doesn't it go on in this and why doesn't it have a revival and why aren't souls being saved?" And you blame the preacher when, oftentimes, it may be that you and some others are full of these

things—sourness, bitterness, resentment, hostility, foul slander, bad disposition. These are the things that grieve the Spirit of God.

And that's what you have in verse 30.

4:30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

**Now, again I'm going** to be frank with you. I'm glad I'm through these verses, 25-31. But I would like again to have you read and remember that in verse 22, you have "put off" the old man which is corrupt, evidenced by corruption. And you've "put on" in verse 24 the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. And when you put him on, you put off these other things. You put off lying and you put off grudges and you put off bitterness and you put off evil speaking and you put off the bad disposition and the slander and the hostility and the resentment. You want to glorify the Lord. May God keep you and me from being sour, bitter Christians. God give to us sweet dispositions, and you can have that by walking in fellowship with Him.

**Just today let's live sweetly before God. When your husband comes home and the children come home from school or your friends come in, they're going to see a woman or a man who's just so sweet. Why he's been walking with the Lord today. "Put off" calls for the will. You're going to put off all these things and ask the Lord to cleanse your life from the things that will hinder your joy's being filled full.**

Now I want to read the last three verses of chapter four.

4:30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

4:31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

4:32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Now look at verse 30 for a few moments.

**“And grieve not the Spirit of God whereby we are sealed until the day of redemption.”** Now we mentioned in the very first chapter of Ephesians—allow me to repeat it again—where you have three times in the New Testament this question of our being sealed by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption. The other passages are Ephesians 1:13-14, that on believing we “were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” and 2 Corinthians 1:22, “who hath also sealed us.”

And then will you notice this has to do with preservation. The moment a person accepts the Savior, the moment I have a real relationship to Christ, that very moment, I not only am redeemed as a child of God, but my body and your body become a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. He comes to indwell us. And we're baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. And we're born of the Spirit. These four things—to be sealed, to be baptized, to be indwelt, and to be born of the Spirit—are what God does.

**Now I'm talking about those who really accepted the Savior, who have put their trust in Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. They've found a real relationship with the Lord, a real transaction. As really, the best you knew how, you took Christ as your own personal Savior. That very moment, you were born of the Spirit, and that speaks of relationship. And then we were sealed by the Spirit and that speaks of preservation. And then we were baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, and that speaks of our union with Him.**

And then we are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Remember Jesus said in John 14:17-18 that the Spirit of God is with you and He shall be in you. . . . "I will not leave you comfortless (orphans)." In other words, our bodies become the temples of the Holy Spirit.

You find that in 1 Corinthians 6. And when we think of these things, this has to do with the revelation of the character of God in His people. This was the appeal of Paul to the Corinthian church because of their looseness in living. He reminded them that their bodies were the sanctuaries of God, that the Holy Spirit indwelt them. And this being so, then their lives ought to manifest something of the character, love and grace of God. So we have it here in Ephesians 4:30, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God." You see He's a person. The Spirit of God is not an influence. He's a real person, a real personality. He lives in you and He can be grieved. He can lead you in your life.

He can empower you as the Apostle Paul could say in Colossians 1:29, "I strive according to the working of Him who works in me mightily."

**Or take that passage in Ephesians chapter three, verse 20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." This is the Spirit of God who indwells the believer. He's a real personality and He can be grieved. He can empower you. He can guide us into all truth. He will show us "things to come" (John 16:13-15).**

In other words, when you and I yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, this one who indwells us will manifest through us something of the glory of Christ. So here in Ephesians 4:30, Paul talks about this wonderful fact of our having been preserved in Christ until the day of redemption.

**You remember the Apostle Paul speaks of this in Philippians 1:6, when he said, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." In Romans 13:11, Paul says, "It's high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:5 could say that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Take Romans chapter 8:18-25 where the whole passage speaks of the redemption of the body. We have been sealed by the Spirit of God until or unto the day of redemption.

And now, someone's going to say, "Well, Mr. Mitchell, aren't you redeemed already?"

**Yes. I am redeemed.** I've been redeemed from sin, from judgment, from death. And that word "redeemed" means to be set free because of the payment of a price. But it also includes my body. You see, when Christ died for you and for me, He died for the whole man. You take 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, where Paul says, "Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly and I pray God that your whole being, spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; faithful is he that calleth you who also will deliver." Again I declare to you today the marvel of it all. That when Christ died for you and me, He died for the whole man. And He will not be satisfied until you and I stand in His presence, conformed to His image. And that means that our very body is going to be redeemed.

Remember that you can live today in anticipation of the day when our Lord shall come and He may come today. Your body will be transformed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible. You'll be just like the Savior. My, what a prospect. Won't you live today in anticipation of that and enjoy Christ today in your own heart and life?

**I know friends of mine who talk about their great experiences with the Lord, but sometimes I begin to question if those experiences are really spiritual because I find in their lives these things that grieve the Spirit of God. It is folly to talk about being Spirit-filled or in control of the Spi-**

**rit, when these things are so evident in one's life. The filling of the Spirit of God is something that is a daily process for a believer living in the intimacy of God's fellowship.**

**When a Christian is walking in fellowship with God in His will, that believer is Spirit-filled. It's not necessarily true that he will always have some kind of great experience, though one could have great experiences. But one can, right in your house, you dear people at home, you can take care of your children. You can wash your dishes, care for your family and the home and be Spirit-filled. Indeed your kitchen can be the doorway of heaven to your own heart as you fellowship with the Savior and talk with Him. I would suggest to your own heart, even when you're working around the kitchen or whatever you're doing, talk to the Lord.**

Now I know some people can't get on their knees. It would be a wonderful thing if we could form the habit of being a continual confidant with the Savior. Bring Him into every avenue of your life. I know that the Spirit of God who indwells you can make these things real to you. I tell you it's a wonderful thing to not only be saved, but to be brought into the fellowship and the intimacy of the very heart of God Himself.

**I'm very much tempted here to digress and discuss a matter that's been upon my heart for so long. So few people realize the tremendous unity and union that there is between you, believer, and**

**the Lord Jesus Christ. As He said in John chapter 14 verse 20, “I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” The very union of the Son of God with His Father is the same union, and I say this reverently, it’s the same union that exists between the Son of God and us. Oh, if only this could get a hold of our hearts, if it could ever get into our thinking, into our minds. You and I mean so much to Him that He seals us by the Spirit of God until the day when we stand in the presence of God looking just like His Son.**

“Do you mean to tell me, sir, that when I accept the Savior that God’s purpose for me is that I shall stand in the presence of God, conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?”

**That’s what I’m saying, and that’s what the Bible teaches. Romans chapter 8:29 says that God hath determined that we should be “conformed to the image of His Son.” The Apostle John writes that, when we see Him, “we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2). And Paul could say in Philippians 3:20-21, “Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” who shall change our vile body (these bodies of our humiliation) and fashion them like unto his glorious body.**

My friends, let me tell you this, you’ll only be satisfied—as David put it in the 17<sup>th</sup> Psalm and the fifteenth verse: “I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.” This is the great yearning of Job, “I know that my redeemer liveth,” and His feet shall

stand upon the earth in the latter day and, though worms destroy my body, I shall in my flesh see God by my side; and, when I see Him, behold, He is not a stranger (Job 19:25-27).

**Oh, there's wonderful life in Christ, this union with Him. It's an indissoluble union with the Son of God. And to make your salvation real and eternal and perfect, the Spirit of God comes to indwell you and seal you until the day of redemption. This is what he's saying in verse 30.**

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption. Do you remember that verse in 2 Timothy 1:12 when Paul said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Or let me quote again from Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you shall perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." Or 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. "The God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole being, body, soul, spirit, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

And our Savior cried out, "It is finished." He'd finished the work of redemption. He was raised from the dead as a guarantee to you that the work was complete. And it's for you and me now to enjoy to the full our Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**I say it's a wonderful thing to know. We've been sealed by the Spirit of God until the day of**

**redemption. The day when these very bodies will be transformed. No longer in frailty, but in power. No longer weakness, but in the glory of God. I tell you what a prospect God has in store for us.**

Do you remember 1 Corinthians 15:51: “Behold I show you a mystery,” said the Apostle, “we shall not all sleep, (that is, we shall not all die) but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: For the trumpet shall sound: and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.”

**Isn't that wonderful! I tell you, people say to me, “Mitchell, I'm glad you're going to be changed.”**

And I say, “Yes, and I'm glad you're going to be changed.” Down here in frailty, weakness, 'tis true. But oh, the purpose of God as He gathers out a people for His name called the church, and every member of the church is going to stand in the presence of God just like Jesus.

And please, please remember, on the day of redemption when the Lord Jesus comes for His own, every believer will be taken to meet the Lord in the air. Do you know there are some people who teach only part of the church will be taken up, and the rest will go into the tribulation period under the judgment of God to be purged. In other words, they're talking about a Protestant purgatory. No, my friends!

**Second Thessalonians chapter 2:16 tells us, “it's the good hope through grace.” Christ is a perfect Savior of all His people, the weak ones as**

**well as the strong ones, babes in Christ as well as the mature are going to stand before God in all the merit of Christ. Not in Christ plus you, but upon His merit.**

As we said in the first chapter, each believer is accepted in the beloved One. And that's where we are—in Christ sealed by the Spirit of God. How long are we sealed? We are sealed until the day of redemption.

Now someone's going to say, "Wait a minute, Mr. Mitchell, but you can be lost."

Then you've got a different kind of a Savior than I, my friend. If you have really accepted Christ as your Savior, you're going to be there when the Lord comes.

You say, "Well, that's a terrible doctrine. It lets me go out and sin all I want to."

Not if you love the Savior. You won't want to. You won't want to.

**The other day I was at a conference and a preacher said, "Why, if we're not under the Law, then I can go out and do what I want to do."**

I said to him, "Do you have to have the club of the Law to make you behave?"

We love the Savior. There are a lot of things we can do. All things are lawful, all things are not expedient. But we don't do them. Why? Because we love Him! And let me tell you very bluntly, the more you see the grace and love of Christ for you, the perfection of His work, the more you want to magnify Him, the more you want to glorify Him. So don't

come along and tell me that if you're under the grace of God, you can do what you want to do.

Do you know what you want to do? You want to do that which pleases God. And if you say the other thing, my friend, it's because you've never seen the wonderful grace of God. Not only so, but you've never seen the proficiency of the work of Christ and the perfection of His work for men and women. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption."

**Now in the 32<sup>nd</sup> verse, here's the positive side. We've had a negative side, don't lie, don't do this and that. But now, verse 32.**

4:32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

We see the need for three wonderful things here—the need for kindness, for tenderness, the need for forgiveness. Now, these things do not grieve the Spirit of God. And if we are walking before the Lord, it's wonderful we'll be doing these things. These things manifest the Spirit of our Savior. "Be ye kind one to another."

You know it doesn't cost you anything to be kind, does it? This means don't be rude, don't be censorious. Be kind. You know, I think one of the greatest needs among God's people today is to be considerate, thoughtful, kind toward other believers. It's no sign of power or strength to be rude to other Christians, to lord it over other Christians. And if

you have come to know so much, you'll manifest it by being kind.

**The more you know the Savior, the more you realize that He was always kind. He was never rude. He was never censorious. He was kind. You know there is a need for that, don't you think so? And be ye kind one to another. Oh, that one could see among God's people that kindness, that consideration the one for the other. Kindness.**

My friend, listen, it doesn't cost you anything to be kind. God knows there are pitfalls enough outside in the world that will cut your conscience and cut your heart and cut your emotions. You come home bruised and, when you get home, what do you need? Some kindness. I tell you it's a wonderful thing to have somebody who's kind, tender-hearted, forgiving even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

**And what's the second one? Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted. Not hard-hearted, but tenderhearted. There are plenty of hard-hearted people today in the world. The world outside is pretty hard. Dear woman, when your husband's been out in the world and he comes home tired, he's been buffeted by the world, he comes home sore and he's bruised in his spirit, now, you be very tenderhearted. You be very understanding. You be kind, won't you? And dear man, dear husband, your wife has had a hard time today. She's had a headache, and the kids have been kind of upset all day and she hasn't had a chance to be alone, and she's frustrated, and you come**

**home. You've had an easy day out in the world. Things have gone just right for you, and you come home and you see her. Don't scold her. You be kind. You go out of your way to be kind and tenderhearted and understanding with her.**

**I'm talking about real Christianity. This is what Paul says. These are the things the Spirit of God wants you to do. There's plenty of the negative in life. You want to be positive. And hence this precious verse. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted." Oh, that we Christians might manifest this in our assemblies, in our churches, in our classes, wherever we are and especially in our homes.**

Oh, the need today for real Christian homes where father and mother and children are full of joy and love and they're tenderhearted the one with the other. Anybody can be crude and rough and censorious and critical. We need some kind people. Will you be that today? Won't you today? I don't know what your past has been. Never mind. It's past. It's gone. Won't you be tenderhearted? Kind today to somebody? To your children? Maybe they might be surprised, but you do that today. And the Lord make it real to you. He'll help you do it. He will.

**Now you might say to me, "Mr. Mitchell, this is not in my nature to be kind and tenderhearted and longsuffering and gentle. I was made with a temper, and I fly off the handle. And sometimes I'm kind of hard on my children and my wife and whoever it may be. And down at the shop I get**

**kind of cranky and irritable. And you know I was made this way.”**

Yes, I know, we were all made that way. That belongs to the old man which we've put off. And we've put on the new man who, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. And He has sealed us by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption. He has made our redemption real and sure, perfect and eternal.

Now how can I display this before men? How can I please the heart of God in my life? And this last verse, and I come back to it again, the 32<sup>nd</sup> verse of Ephesians four. In fact, I'm going to read verses 30 and 32. “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. And be kind one toward another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

**I left out verse 31. I connected verse 31 with the other verses preceding verse 31, things that grieve the Spirit of God, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, all malice. These things grieve the Spirit of God. Corrupt communication, stealing, not controlling yourself, lying, deceiving people—these things grieve the Spirit of God. And these other things in verse 32 are the delight of the heart of God when His people are kind one toward another—not rude or censorious, but kind, genuinely kind, understanding.**

You know as a pastor in a church here for 37 years, I've had occasion to council a great many

hundred families and people. And sometimes I wonder if part of our trouble is that we're just not kind. It's so easy to criticize and be rude and censorious, but just to be kind. Oh, to understand the other fellow. You know it's very easy for us to want people to live the way we think they should live and walk the way we think they should walk. That's not being kind. That's being proud. That's being proud. You're just trying to feel that you're above the other fellow and you want him to be where you are when he's never had the opportunity of the teaching you've had.

**Or he's a younger Christian. He has certain weaknesses which you may not have. So be kind, won't you? Oh, the need to be kind one to another, to be tenderhearted. Tenderhearted—that's not a sign of weakness, by the way. That's not a sign of weakness. To be tenderhearted one toward another.**

Do you remember in John chapter 11 how tender the Lord Jesus was with Mary and Martha? Their brother had died and they said to Him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Now, I'm afraid, if it had been I or you, we would have said to those two girls: "Now dry your tears and shut up because I'm going to raise up your brother again from the dead." Oh no! not Jesus! Oh, how tender He was, how tenderhearted. He stood by these two girls, Mary and Martha, and we read, "He wept with them." Even though He was going to raise their brother from the dead, He took the time out to weep

with Martha and Mary. He entered into their sorrows. He was very tender with them because their hearts were broken.

**And, my Christian friend, there are a great many broken hearts today. Oh, the bruised souls that need your help. I think of that verse, where is it, Luke 4:18, where Jesus said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to give deliverance to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Think of those things, will you?**

You say, "Well, that was Jesus."

Yes, but He lives in you. The Spirit of God indwells you. He seals you until the day of redemption.

**And if the same spirit which was upon Christ without measure lives in you and me, can't we do that? There are many broken-hearted people who need somebody with a tender heart. There are many crushed souls who need some little word of kindness and tenderness. Can't you and I be that today? Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, understanding what the other fellow goes through.**

And then what else does Paul say?

"Forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Remember in chapter 1, verse 7, he speaks of the fact that we are forgiven according to the riches of His grace. Now, here's another one. We are to forgive each other for Chr-

ist's sake. Upon what ground did God forgive you? On the ground of the riches of His grace God forgave you for Christ's sake. In 1 John 2:12 He forgave you for His name's sake. How often shall I forgive my brother? As often as God for Christ's sake has forgiven me. Colossians chapter 2 and chapter 3 speak of the same thing. "As Christ forgave you, forgive one another." (Colossians 3:13)

**You know, here's another wonderful thing. The spirit of forgiveness. You know, our attitude is sometimes something like this, "Well, brother, I'll forgive you this time, but never let it happen again."**

Now that's not really forgiveness. You're arrogant when you say that. And you pat yourself on the back when you say, "I forgive, but never let it happen again." Boy, you're going to see to that. Now, what you mean by that, I don't know. That you'll not forgive next time?

The Pharisees in Christ's time kind of gloried in the fact that they would forgive a man twice. And one day the Lord Jesus said to dear Peter, that commercial fisherman you remember, "Peter, how often shall I forgive my brother?"

Now Peter had been raised under the Law which had said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The Pharisees said, "I'll forgive a man twice." Peter had been with the Lord I don't know how long, maybe a few months, maybe a couple of years; and he said to Jesus, "Lord, I'll forgive my brother seven times." And Jesus said, "Peter, seven times? Forgive

him seventy times seven.” Seventy times seven (Matt. 18:21-22).

**You know, I remember a Sunday school teacher coming to me and saying, “Dr. Mitchell, we were talking about forgiveness today in class. And I mentioned the fact that we ought to forgive our brother 490 times, seventy times seven. And one little fellow said, ‘Teacher, well, what shall I do when I have forgiven my brother 490 times?’”**

The teacher asked, “Mr. Mitchell, what should I have said?”

“Well,” I said, “had it been me, I would have said, ‘OK sonny, when you have forgiven your brother 490 times, you come to me and I’ll tell you what to do next.’” You know, we don’t even measure up to dear old Peter. Peter says, “I’ll forgive him seven times.” And a good many, even Christians, will not even measure up to the Pharisaical side of twice. What do you do?

Do you say, “Well I’ll forgive you this time, but never let it happen again.”

Oh, no. This is not of the Spirit of God. You know that. You know that.

“Do you mean, I’ve got to forgive him every time he sins?”

That’s what Jesus said.

Or could I raise the issue, do you ever forgive them? Do you ever forgive them?

**I’ve heard people say, “As long as I live, I’ll never forgive him. And if I do forgive him, I’ll never forget it. And I’ll hold this against him all**

**his life.” So fellowships are ruined, lives are distorted and robbed of rich fellowship because of our pride.**

Listen, grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed until the day of redemption. And Paul goes on to say, “And be kind one to another,” kind, not rude, not censorious, tenderhearted, just like Jesus. Forgiving one another even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us.

Oh, what a wonderful Savior to make it possible for you and me to do something like this.

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, you’re asking the impossible. It’s not possible to do that.”

**I say, “I know that.” I’m well aware of that fact. But now you have a new nature. You’re talking about the old nature. The old man in us doesn’t do it, that’s right. But now, you’re being made a new man, a new woman in Christ; and the Spirit of God indwells you to make this thing possible. Be kind, won’t you? Be kind one to another. Be tenderhearted. And forgive one another.**

It may be I’m talking to some who have borne a grudge against somebody, maybe in your own family. And your pride forbids you even mentioning the fact of forgiveness.

May I suggest to you, won’t you be forgiving, be kind, tenderhearted? And remember that God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you every sin. Can’t we manifest a little of that forgiveness for somebody else?

Do you know, it may surprise you, the reaction upon that. It may surprise you that some folk whom you thought were bitter against you, have just been yearning for you to come to them and ask their forgiveness or they may be willing to ask your forgiveness.

**And always be ready to forgive, not with the idea that I'll never do it again, I'll not forgive you again, but rather, come with that tenderness and that sweetness of spirit. And you can be like that, you know. You can be sweet and tender and loving, can't you? It will bring joy and blessing into so many hearts.**

And may your life be filled with sweetness today, just for today. Let's do it today. If you've got something against somebody, you go to them. You go to them. The Lord will give you the grace and the power to do this. And think of the joy that will be yours and the joy that will be theirs! And instead of having an enemy, behold, you've got a real, genuine friend.

Do that today and the Lord wonderfully bless you.

## Chapter Five

**N**ow we come to chapter five and we have the third exhortation on a Christian's walk before God. We are to walk in love. Now let's connect these two chapters together, chapter 4 and chapter 5. He has just spoken in the last verse of chapter 4,

4:32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

5:1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.

And if we are followers of God, then we will forgive others for Christ's sake and because of His love for us. You see, we are to be followers of God Himself.

You remember in the epistle of John chapter 4, verses 8 and 16, we read that God is love. In the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, it profits me nothing." And then in 14:1, we are told to follow after love, to chase after love.

In 1 John 3:1 we read, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

**We are God's beloved children. Hence we are to express His character, and that character is to be expressed and evidenced by love. It's a love that sacrifices. It's a love that loves the unlovely. It's a love that loves even those who reprove us. This is a supernatural thing. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).**

5:1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

5:2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

**A lack of love among God's people reveals the fact that we're not real disciples of the Lord Jesus. You remember in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." God is love. And if I claim that He is my Father and that I am His child, then there ought to be evidence in my life and in your life of His love, His divine love even for the unlovely. Walk in love.**

You know, some years ago at a Bible conference at Winona Lake, I met a gentleman who for some years was the superintendent of the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago. He told me this incident which had actually transformed his life.

He was at the mission when one night a company of young people from the Moody Bible Institute came to conduct a meeting. During the course of the meeting the Lord moved upon some of these men,

many of them derelicts from the street. The young man who was in charge of this service made an appeal for these men to accept Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. And one after the other, men came forward to go to the prayer room. And as each one came forward someone on the gospel team from the Institute would go right along with him into the prayer room to counsel him, encourage him, show him the way of salvation and to pray for him.

**And then a man stood** up with long hair and a beard. He looked to be an elderly man, dirty, filthy; and it was very noticeable that, as he sat in the mission on the bench, there was nobody sitting near him. They would get up and move away from him because of his filth, his smell and the vermin that was upon him. They left him alone. But this man got up and went forward and instead of going to the prayer room, he dropped on his knees right at the platform. And this dear superintendent looked around to see if somebody would go and kneel alongside the old man. And, behold, there was no one left on the platform.

So the superintendent **asked the Lord. He said, “Lord, give me love. In some way undertake for me as I kneel with this man.”**

And he said, “As I went to kneel alongside of him, the love of God just overshadowed me. He just overwhelmed me. And I put my arm around him and as my arm was around him and I was talking to him about the Savior, the vermin was running up my sleeve from off his clothes.

And then he took the old man and said, "I want you to come home with me tonight." Something he had never done before.

And he took the old man to his home and he said to his wife, "Dear, can you find a suit of my clothes so I can give them to this gentleman?" And he gave him his razor and so on and put him in the bathroom and said, "Now, when you get through with your bath, just put your clothes outside, just slip the door open and slip your clothes outside and have your bath and I have some fresh clothes for you."

And he said, **"I went and got the tongs from the fireplace and picked up his clothes, and carried them and put them into the furnace. Then I gave him a new set of clothes and so forth and so on. Then I went downstairs to be with my wife, waiting for him to come down. And when he came down I was amazed at the transformation. And I found that this man had been a very brilliant doctor. And because of drink and what have you, he had lost his family, lost his business, his profession, and he was down in the very dregs. He couldn't go any farther down in the dregs of sin and drink in Chicago. But he was a man absolutely transformed."**

And this fellow told me, he said, "Mr. Mitchell, I have never in my life had such an experience where the love of God has overwhelmed me as I put my arm around that old man. I found out that he wasn't as old as I thought he was. Afterwards he was reconciled to his family, went back into his practice and

became a wonderful Christian man with a testimony for the Savior and His wonderful deliverance from sin.”

Now this is the love of God. I don't care how far down a man may be, I want to tell you, my friends, that God's love can reach him. You see, in the epistle of John, God is revealed first of all as One who is holy. He is light. Then, secondly, at the end of chapter two and the beginning of three, God is righteous. And then in chapter four, God is love.

When I say God is light, I mean that God is absolute in holiness. When I say that God is righteous, I mean that God is right in everything He does. And when I say that God is love, I'm talking about the very energy of His nature toward man. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us” and “sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:10 and 9). And then he adds—that he might “be the propitiation for our sins.”

He came to put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. As I've oftentimes said, what righteousness could not do, love has done in making the provision to satisfy the righteous character of God and in making it possible for God to pick up men and women like you and me and transform us into the children of God. No wonder, no wonder the writer says, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”

God grant that, today, the love of God will so work in your heart that there will be a revelation of the character of God to you.

5:1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;  
5:2. And walk in love.

Walk in love today. It's a supernatural thing. I recognize that. But remember, the love of God has been shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto you.

**We know so little, so little, of the marvelous revelation of God to His people. I wish in some way I could put into words just the way I feel about this. When I meet with Christians from all over the country—and I have this blessed privilege of doing so in Bible conference work and preaching the Gospel—I would like to present to them the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that they will all fall in love with Him.**

Oh, to fall in love with Him so that His heart and your heart and my heart will be so knitted together that there will be a revelation of the living God in you and in me. And this is what is the desire of the Apostle Paul in his book of Ephesians, chapter five.

**We were speaking earlier on the fact that God is love and he who dwells in love, dwells in God and God in him. The very energy of the nature of God toward man is love. His very righteous and His holy character have been satisfied through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary's cross and guaranteed in His resurrection. Now**

**this God who is holy and righteous is free, free to pour upon us men and women His wonderful, wonderful love, His divine love—something which you and I have a hard time understanding.**

As we were saying at the end of Ephesians 4, we are to be tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. That divine love is not only able to forgive us, but also to forget the very sins that we have committed. This is beyond me, beyond you. This is divine. This is divine. And yet, in some way I believe the Spirit of God would love to make real to us this relationship with Himself. Now look at chapter five, the first two verses again.

5:1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

5:2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

**Be ye therefore, may I change a word? Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children, and walk in love.**

Now, you say to me, "Mr. Mitchell, how can I imitate God? How can I be a real follower of God? He's divine. He's God."

Yes, but you are His child, having become a partaker, as 2 Peter 1:4 says, Having become "partakers of the divine nature." We belong to a new race of people. And it is possible for you and for me to walk in a love that sacrifices, a love that loves the unlovely, a love that expresses the very character of God.

As a Jewish lawyer **once said, “What we Jews want to see are real disciples of Jesus who walk in love.”**

See, the world outside knows nothing about this. The world outside loves only those who love them. But we're supposed to be different. We're Christians. We're the children of One who is God, a new race of people, born of God. We are to love those who persecute us. We are to love those who are ornery. We are to love those who repel us.

“Now you're asking the impossible,” you say.

Why, of course. That's a supernatural thing. That's true. That's true. I'm not denying that. But, my friend, Romans 5:5 says, talking about us who love the Savior, the very “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” The Spirit of God in the believer not only seals us, but He indwells us. It's what Jesus said in the book of John chapter 14, you remember. The Spirit of God is with you and shall be in you. (John 14:17) What for? For the purpose of revealing the very character of God.

And I would suggest **as you think of this, that you yield yourself to the Spirit of God and walk in love even as Christ also hath loved us. So when we come to the second verse of this passage of Ephesians 5, we have the pattern as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us an offering, a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.**

Paul sees Christ in the burnt offering which is wholly for God. You remember there are five offer-

ings in the first seven chapters of Leviticus; and one of them is called the burnt offering, that sweet sacrifice which satisfied God Himself. It is wholly for God.

Now how was our Savior's love manifested? He has given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. Do you know how the Lord Jesus Christ became a sweet-smelling savor to His Father? His love perfectly satisfied God because He was always obedient to His Father, and His blood satisfied God's demand that without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins, that blood must be shed for the atonement of souls.

You remember in John 4:34, **He could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me;"** in John 5:30, **I came not to do mine own will, "but the will of the Father which hath sent me;"** and in John 8:29, **"I do always the things that please Him."** In Hebrews chapter 10:5-10, it is written in the volume of the book, **"I come to do thy will, O God."** And in Matthew chapter three and chapter 17, God said concerning Jesus, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** What did He mean? Not only does love sacrifice, but if I love God, I'll manifest my love by obedience.

Listen to it. I'm reading verse 31 of the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. **"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."** That the world may know that I love the Father, I obey His Word. **Obedience is the measure of our love for God.**

**And sacrifice is the measure of our love for each other. May I repeat that? The measure of my love for God is my obedience to His Word. And the measure of my love for the people of God or for one another is sacrifice.**

My friend, listen, love is always evidenced by sacrifice, sacrifice for the one who is the object of our love. I get greatly disturbed sometimes with men and sometimes with women who talk about their love, but there's no sacrifice. It's a selfish thing when it ought to be a sacrificial thing. Real genuine love is evidenced by sacrifice. And I'm to walk in love, even as Jesus Christ loved me and gave Himself as a sacrifice for me.

**You have this in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 25, where Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. In Romans 5:8, "God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."**

In 1 John 3:16, you have the same thing. He manifests His love by sacrifice. And if I say that I love somebody and I'm not willing to sacrifice for him, my friend, I don't love. Those are just empty words. If there is genuine love, it always means sacrifice. And it's a joy to sacrifice. Our Lord could say in Hebrews 12:2, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Who for the joy that was set before Him was willing to sacrifice Himself. What was the joy? Of bringing you and me to Himself, of redeeming us

from sin and making us a child of the One who is God, of granting to us eternal life, of guaranteeing eternal glory. And He went through it just because He loved us. He saw beyond the cross.

And we read in Isaiah, **“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11). The great example for us is Jesus Christ Himself. He loved us and He gave Himself for us.**

May I repeat it, my friend. A love that is not willing to sacrifice for the object of that love is not genuine love. Oh, what a need, what a need even among God’s people, even in Christian families, for genuineness in our love the one for the other that is willing to sacrifice that God might be magnified in our lives.

My friend, I ask you **the question, how much do you love Him? I’m not surprised that, when you come to the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of John, the Lord said to Peter, “Simon, son of Jona, do you love Me more than these? That’s all I ask you, Do you really love Me? Am I really the object of your love and, if I am, then I’ll give you a job to shepherd My sheep, to feed My lambs.” You see, this is the thing that delights the heart of God.**

What was wrong with the Ephesian church? They left their first love, that fervency of love for the Savior. I’m sorry to say that most of us have lost that fervency of love for Christ, that freshness of love. God grant to you and to me the joy today of experiencing something of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

And now, back again to the third exhortation **with which we started this chapter. In the first seven verses of chapter five, we are to walk in love. Permit me again to read these first two verses:**

5:1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

5:2. And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

These are amazing truths, amazing facts. “Be ye therefore followers of God.” As the children of God, we are to follow Him and God is love, as we found in 1 John chapter 4, verses 8 and 16.

Now we’re following a pattern **in verse 2. Christ Jesus is given to us as the pattern of our love for each other. We are to walk in love as Christ, even as Christ also hath loved us. I know when we come to the question—and I’ll be coming to this pretty soon when we get down to the end of the chapter—of the relationship between husbands and wives and then parents and children and servants and masters, I want to spend some time on this because my heart is very heavy as I realize the lack of love in so many Christian families. It just seems today that we’re living a life of self-will and selfishness. And, my friend, genuine love is willing to sacrifice. I needn’t say any more here, except verse 2.**

So may I bring it down to us today then? The measure of my love for God is my obedience to His

Word. But the trouble is, people don't read the Word. "If a man love me," Jesus said, "he will keep my words." That's John 14:23. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). But when it comes to each other, our love for each other is manifested by sacrifice. I want to get that truth into your heart.

First of all, **concerning our Savior, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (John 14:31). The world knows the love of Christ for the Father by His obedience to the Word of His Father. I delight to do thy will, oh my God, for Thy Word is in my heart (Psalm 40:8). And He manifested His love for us by sacrifice.**

I ask you the question, **my friend, how much do you love God? How much do you, how much do I, love God?**

You know, we talk quite glibly about the fact that we love God. How is this love evidenced? By obedience to the Word of God. That calls for some diligence in reading the Word of God, otherwise how can I know what He wants me to do? And one of the sad lacks among most of us Christians is the fact that we do not take the time to read the Word of God. And hence, we're not obedient children. We live in rebellion and lawlessness. We run hither and yon, perfectly willing to accept the word of men but not the Word of God.

How can you know the Word of God, **how can you be obedient to that Word if you don't read it?**

**How can I know the purpose of God? How can I know the character of God? How can I know the depths of the love of God? I must go to His Word. It must be as Psalm 1:2 says concerning our Savior. "And in his word doth he meditate day and night." This is the sad lack among most Christians. This is why people go off on tangents, the reason why so many professing Christians fall for the false doctrines of the day, the false movements of the day. They do not know the Word of God. And if I say I love Christ, I love God, then it will be evident by my obedience to His Word. How can I know what He wants me to do if I do not read His Word?**

**And then secondly, I manifest my love for each other, my love for Christians, my love for my family. By what? By sacrifice. And it says here to do it as Christ loved us and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. Oh, I wish I could put into words this one thing. And I'm staying here because I feel it's one of the greatest needs of the day for Christians to be obedient to God and to love their brothers.**

Do you know one of the reasons why there are so many broken homes? Do you know why there are so many lives that are empty, crushed, bruised, even in some Christian homes? Because of a lack of genuine love the one for the other. And if I say nothing else and if you get nothing else, I hope you get this. Our love for God is revealed by our obedience to His

Word. And our love for God's people and for our family and for men and women everywhere is evidenced by sacrifice. Am I willing to sacrifice for the ones who are the objects of my love?

**The Word of God is** a complete revelation of God to His people. And if I want to know what He wants me to do, if I want to know His character, if I want to know the desire of His heart, I must stay in the Word of God. And by the way, when you stay in the Word of God, then your life is cleansed and not only so, but you enter into a vista of truth, into a vista of living that you never thought was possible. Your life will feel cleansed as you read the Word of God and then obey it. And when you do that, it will be easy to love your brothers. It will be easier to love those that are unlovely. Love makes it simple, makes it easy.

Now, today, you revel **in the love of God by obedience and then manifest your love for others by sacrifice. There will be great joy in this. Instead of being on the receiving end, you're on the giving end. My, what a thing it would be if all Christian families, where the father and mother profess to be the children of God, would manifest this genuine love one for the other by sacrifice, by not living in self-will and selfishness. A selfish life always is an unhappy life. Selfish people are not happy people at all. In fact, selfishness leads to death.**

Let us pour out our lives for others because we love them. Let us be willing to give up our personal desires in order that others might come to know Chr-

ist. Let us live life for others so that even in sacrifice, they may know something of that wonderful love of Christ, that divine love which has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us.

So we have in chapter 5, **we are to walk in love. And allow me again to read those two first verses and then pass along.**

5:1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.

5:2. And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

In verses 3 down to verse 7, **Paul gives us a warning. And notice how he keeps contrasting the unsaved with the saved. We had this in chapter two, you remember. In times past you did certain things. Now that you are children of God, you are no longer children of wrath. When you were a child of wrath, you were afar off and you lived in the lusts of the mind and of the flesh. Now that you're a child of God, living in the heavenlies in Christ, your life ought to be different.**

We had it in chapter four from verses 25 to the end. We had the marks of the unregenerate, of the old man. And then we had the marks of the saved man. Well, we have it again in chapter five from verse three down through verse 6. Here is the habitual life of the children of disobedience.

5:3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, all covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

5:4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient but rather the giving of thanks.

And verse 6,

5:6. For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

**The habitual life of the unsaved is filled with these things. A believer may be weak and sometimes do these things, but his life is not characterized by them. In other words, sin characterizes the children of disobedience, whereas the pattern of love should characterize the children of God. And Paul makes a contrast between the two.**

Notice these are corrupt things. The wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience. You see, the measure of wrath is determined by sinfulness. The destination of a person is determined by his disobedience to the gospel. Second Thessalonians 1:8 says that God is going to come in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. And they manifest their unbelief by habitually practicing these various things. This is the pattern of their life. The sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mire and the dog back to his vomit (2 Peter 2:22).

**May I suggest** to you that God never calls His people dogs or pigs. A lamb or a sheep may get his feet dirty in some part of a field, but he always heads for the high spot again. That's the character of the sheep. But a hog on the high part of the hill gets on down to that mud

and wallows in it and lies in it and stays in it. That's the difference between a sheep and a hog.

When we became the children of God, we became members of the sheepfold. We belong to the fold of God, the flock of God.

So if you take these words in chapter five, verses 3 and 4 and 5 and 6, you'll notice that these are the unclean, corrupt things of the human heart. The measure of wrath is determined by sinfulness; the destination of any soul is determined by obedience or disobedience to the gospel.

And now as the saints of God, let none of these things even be mentioned in our lives. May our speech always be seasoned with salt and be glorifying to God.

**Now, it may be that you're in frailty and you feel unable to get out of the mud. You turn to the Lord. He'll deliver you from these things. If you love the Savior, He has deliverance for you. Even should these things be in your life, you today can walk in the love of Christ by obedience to Him and by a sacrificial love for His people. And may God grant to you today the joy of revealing in your life something of the character of our Savior.**

What a delight, what a joy it is to know that we belong to the Lord. What a real joy to know that God in His wonderful grace and love has made the provision whereby men and women can be transformed into children of God.

And as we've had in these first seven verses, we are to walk in love even as God loved us and even as Christ loved us and gave Himself as a sacrifice for us.

May I just suggest **that there are certain sins in the Bible in the life of men that seem to merit more than any other sin the wrath of God. The measure of the wrath of God upon the unregenerate is determined by their sinfulness—and especially these sins of moral corruption.**

I wonder if we Christians realize the awfulness of moral corruption in the sight of God. You start at the book of Genesis and read through your whole Bible. It just seems as if these sins are particularly obnoxious to God. You see, God made man and woman not only for the propagation of the race but also for manifesting the relationship, the wonderful relationship, that there can be between people of the opposite sex, revealing this union that is between Christ and His people.

And then we come to verse 7, the call for Christians to come into separation, separation from these things. Indeed, I would suggest to you that the very first step in a walk with God is separation.

You go back into the book of Genesis and follow through the life of this man Abram. First, he received a call to leave his country, his kindred, his father's house. Then he was asked to leave Lot. Then he was asked to give up Ishmael. Then eventually, he was asked to give up Isaac. The very first step in a walk with God is separation. And how can we who are the beloved children of God live as the children of dis-

obedience? We are not to be partakers with the lawless sinners in their deeds. But rather let us be imitators of God and walk in love.

Now we come to the fourth **exhortation for the walk of the Christian. In chapter four we are to walk in unity, in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace, the first 16 verses. Then we are to walk in the new creation. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;” old things are passed away, all are become new. And then Paul picks up the things we shouldn’t do and the things we should do.**

Separation is not a very nice thing to talk about. Nobody loves separation. But I tell you, my friend, if you’re going to be pleasing to God in your life, then you must separate yourself from that which is very offensive to God. And these sins which he mentions from verse 3 down to verse 6 are offensive to God—for which things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience. Be ye not partakers with them.

Shall we go on? **From verses 8 to 14, we are to walk in the light. Allow me to read. As a child of God I walk in love. Now as a child of God I’m to walk in light.**

5:8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

5:9. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

5:10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

5:11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

5:12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

5:13. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

5:14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Now let us look at this **for a few moments. As children of God who is love, we are to walk in love. And now, as children of light, we are asked to walk in light. We once were in darkness (verse 8). This is a position that we have, just as we have in verse one. We are children of God in verse one and children of light in verse 8. Not only are we in the light, but we are to walk in the light.**

Do you ever stop to think that this is a revelation of the character of God? In 1 John chapter one, verses 5-7, This is the message that we “declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” If we say that we are in the light and walk in darkness, we are liars. “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

You remember in John **chapter 13:30 after Jesus had given the sop to Judas Iscariot, we read that Judas went out from the presence of Jesus and it was night. It was night. Judas went out into the darkness having turned his back on the Son of God who was light. There was nothing left but darkness.**

You know, I've oftentimes wondered if for the unsaved their eternal destination is eternal darkness. You remember in Psalm 49:19b we read, "They shall never see light." God is light as well as love. There are those who believe that God is love and know nothing of the fact that God is light, that is, that God is absolute in holiness and righteousness. How can a person unredeemed and a child of wrath, a child of the night having spurned the one who is light, how could he stand the presence of an eternal God who is light? Heaven would not be heaven to him.

**You see, he'd be glad to get away from the presence of God. They shall go out and they shall never see light. It's an astounding thing. It's a terrible thing. It concerns a great many friends of yours and mine who have never accepted the Savior. They laugh and spurn Jesus Christ and His wonderful love for them. They ridicule what He did on the cross. They spurn the gospel, unbelieving—unbelieving and yet in darkness. And they shall never see light.**

I wish in some way I could put upon your heart and may I add upon my own heart the terribleness of a man or a woman going out into eternity without Christ. They shall never see light! It's what we have here. But to be in union with Him means life. That's why when you come to 1 Corinthians 2:14, the natural man, the unsaved man knows nothing of the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness unto him. He cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned.

But for those of us **who have accepted the Savior, a new element has come into our lives—not only love, genuine love, but light. And if Christ is the light of the world, if He Himself is light as God is light, then this new element has come into our lives. We're no longer in the dark. We're no longer in the place where there is no light. But we've been joined to Him. Hence, our walk should be in harmony with our transformation. We've been transformed, translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13).**

Now in verses 9-12 we have the evidence of walking in the light. "The fruit of the Spirit" or if I could change the words, "the fruit of the light" is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. You remember it says in Galatians chapter 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. And we prove what we are by walking in the light, even as He is in the light. We prove what we are in what we do. We prove "what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:10).

You remember in Romans **chapter 12 the first two verses where Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind that**

**ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

**You see, we prove what we are not by society, but by the light. We're tested by the light. And what pleases Christ is the Christian's highest duty. You remember 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 9, if I can give you the revised text there, where Paul says, “Being ambitious to be found pleasing to Him.” And, if I am a child of light, I will prove that I am a child of light not by what pleases me, but what pleases God. And he goes on to say,**

5:11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,

5:12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

**I'm to have nothing to do with the works of darkness. These are unfruitful. They're passing and they can never stand the light. And by all means, let us reprove those things that are done in secret. In other words, as you and I walk in the light, our lives become a reproach. We rebuke and reprove the works of darkness by walking in the light.**

You don't have to shout from the housetops. When you and I walk in the light of His Word, my friend, the man of the world will walk away from you. I know whereof I speak. When we first accepted the Savior, we were in love with Him and we wanted everybody else to love Him. Our very actions and our very words revealed the fact we did not belong to the world.

The man of the world is rebuked and reprovved not so much by our preaching, but by the way we live. And if I'm a child of God who is love and if I'm a child of God who is light, then I ought to walk in the light and I ought to walk in love. I will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. These are passing things. It's even a shame to speak of these things which they do in secret.

Now we have that, remember, in Romans 13:11-14: "It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off (throw off) the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness (outbroken sins of society), not in chambering and wantonness (secret sins of society), not in strife and envying (these are sins of the heart). But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

**Those things belong** to the darkness. I'm a child of light. I'm a child of God who is love. I don't belong to the night. Now this is the standing of God's people. If you've accepted the Savior, that's where you are. You're a child of God who is love. You're a child of God who is light and should have nothing to do with the works of darkness. But rather reprove them. How do I do that? By living pleasing to Him, by separating myself from the unfruitful works of darkness.

Now I know it's difficult sometimes to live and walk in the light and to have this life of separation from the sins of society. And yet, my friend, if I'm a child of God, this is where I must walk. If I'm a child of light, I must walk in the light. And when you and I fall in love with the Savior, love makes it easy. The Spirit of God indwells you, and the Word of God which you have in your hand will be used by God to cleanse your life from these things. Live pleasing to Him. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. And he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." And may this be a day when you'll just rejoice in the fact that you belong to Him.

Now the purpose of light, **we find in verses 13 and 14.**

5:13. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

5:14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

**The purpose of light is to dispel darkness. Darkness is never dispelled by argument, but by light shining. You can argue with the unsaved all you want to, but it never, never dispels their darkness. The scriptures say, "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130).**

My friend, don't judge the unsaved. They don't know any better. And all the argument that you can give them is not going to change them. Having been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into

the kingdom of God through His Son, can't we be so in fellowship with God who is love, so in fellowship with God who is light that we shall reveal something of the wonderful character of God to the unsaved? Just as the Savior walked among men as the light of the world and as the bread of life, so we too are to shine as lights and hold forth the word of life.

**We have been left down here so that these who are in the darkness might be delivered from their darkness and be brought into the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ.**

It is a wonderful thing, is it not, to start the day with the Word of God and to know something of the glorious relationship there is between the believer in Christ and God Himself. This marvelous union is between you and Him. God is love and we are to follow Him and “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us” (Ephesians 5:2) and gave himself a sacrifice for us. And as we've been saying, we repeat it again—we manifest our love for God by our obedience to His Word, and we manifest our love for each other by sacrifice just as Christ did. And then we are to walk in light, starting in at verse 8 of chapter 5 of Ephesians.

**Now we come the fifth exhortation of the apostle Paul for Christians. We are now to walk in wisdom. And this portion runs from verse 15 down through verse 21. We are to walk in wisdom. Allow me to please repeat again that we walk in unity of spirit, we walk in a new creation, we walk in love, we walk in light, and now we are**

**to walk in wisdom. We are to be wise Christians, not foolish. As Paul wrote to Titus in chapter 2, verse 10, We are to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” Now on down through these verses we have four aspects or four evidences of a wise Christian.**

The first one is in verse 15.

5:15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

5:16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

5:17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

5:18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

Now here we have **the evidences of a wise Christian. Let's take them up one by one. In verse 15, may I change the word? “See to it then, that you walk correctly.” The world is full of pitfalls and quick sands and what have you. It's so easy to fall in. It is so easy to get caught in the mud and quagmire of this world. Don't let your life be soiled with the filth of the world. Be wise Christians! Walk correctly. Walk straight! Walk carefully!**

You know I find Christians who are very careless about their walk. They're very careless about what they say, very careless what they do, very careless where they go. And the result is that they bring reproach upon the name of Christ; and, furthermore, they walk as foolish ones.

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, that means I’ve got to walk the narrow life.”

Oh no! Oh no! Not necessarily. The life with Christ is not a narrow one.

“Well, if I walk the straight and narrow path, I’ve got to give this up and that up.”

Listen, my friend, **your Christian life is not one of subtraction. It’s one of addition. It’s not a life of joy killing. It’s a life of joy. It’s a full life. It’s not a restricted life. It’s a life living on earth as a child of one who is God. And He wants us to be wise. He doesn’t want us to be foolish. I repeat it, the world is full of pitfalls. We’re surrounded by sinful things. We’re surrounded by corruption, and the god of this world, the god of this age, is leading people astray.**

My friend, I say this very frankly. We are living in days when we’re surrounded by false teachers. We’ve been talking in chapter five here about the children of darkness and what characterizes them—the moral corruption and the filth.

And remember that in 2 Timothy 3, for example in the first 5 verses, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents . . . heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

These are evil days. **And as Peter writes in 2 Peter 2:1, “There were false prophets also among**

**the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.” We find the same thing in the book of Romans chapter 13:11-14 and Jude verses 4 and 11 where he talks about the doctrines and the life of the ecclesiastical leaders of the last days. So we are to walk in wisdom. Let us not be foolish Christians, but wise Christians walking carefully, walking correctly and buying up the opportunities.**

In 2 Timothy chapter 3:13 Paul says, “Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” He also warns us that in the last days there shall be an apostasy. Men shall give themselves over to the doctrines of demons. In other words, their minds are controlled by demonic influences and powers.

Do you realize that most **of the leaders of the world today are evil men, corrupt men?**

Will you please, Christian friends, will you redeem the time and pray that our country might be delivered from evil men, evil leaders? And pray that there shall be given to us men of character, and I sincerely hope some men who really know the Lord. Will you pray for those legislators in Congress who are Christians who meet for prayer? Won't you help them by prayer? That God may give to us in this land, men of character, men who really know God.

Am I a foolish person because I live a straight life, pleasing to God? Or because I want to please the

One who is love, the One who is light and the One who has given His life for me? Certainly not! Be wise. Walk carefully.

Now, that's the first evidence.

The second evidence of the wise Christian is in verse 16. **“Redeeming the time because the days are evil.” Make the most of every opportunity because time goes by fast and you can't recall it. Redeem the time. Buy up every opportunity of growing up in Christ, of knowing Him, of witnessing for Him, of walking with Him. Why? Because the days are evil. We're living in very, very evil days.**

May we as Christians redeem the time, buy up every opportunity of walking with God. Buy up every opportunity of knowing Him. Time goes by very fast. Oh, how quickly it goes by. And you can't reclaim it. You can't bring it back. And the hours and the days and months go by.

How much time do you **and I waste? God's given us this time to be used for His glory. How much time of that do we waste? How much of the Bible do you know? How much of Christ do you know? How much of the purpose of God do you know? How much of the will of God do you know? How often do you witness for Him? How many of your friends know the Savior? Oh, how we've wasted God's time.**

And may I suggest, time spent out of the Word of God is wasted time. Every minute spent out of the will of God is wasted time.

You remember Abraham was thirteen years out of fellowship with God between chapters 16 and 17 of the book of Genesis. Abraham was playing with Ishmael and for thirteen years you've got a silence. No revelation. Nothing at all, just silence. Wasted years. And then God in sovereign grace and love appealed to him and said, "Abraham, I'm El Shadai; walk before me and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). You see, it was a rebuke because he had gone so long without being in fellowship with God.

How many years, how many months, how many days have you and I walked out of fellowship with God? Wasted time. Just wasted time. May the Lord grant to you and to me to be wise Christians to redeem the time, to see to it that we make the most out of every opportunity of knowing Christ, of growing up in Him, of witnessing for Him, and of having a blessed daily relationship with Him.

Let us not be foolish. Whatever the past may have been, however much time you have wasted in the past, will you start today to redeem the time? Will you not be a wise Christian today? Get to know the work of Christ. Get to know the person of Christ. Walk in fellowship with Christ. Witness for Christ. Live for Christ. Be pleasing to Christ. May He be the center, not only of your love and devotion, but the center of all that you are. Oh, to live as a wise Christian, walking carefully, redeeming the time because these are evil days. And may the Lord wonderfully bless you now and may He be glorified in your life.

Now, the third evidence of a wise Christian you read in verse 17. Maybe we better read from verse 15.

5:15. See then that ye walk circumspectly (carefully), not as fools, but as wise,

5:16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

5:17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Do not be unwise. Do not be foolish but be wise, understanding the will of the Lord. So many Christians are ignorant of the will of God. We are to understand the will of the Lord. Do you know what the will of the Lord for your life is? Do you know what the will of God for the church is? Do you know what the will of God is for the nation Israel? Do you know what God's will is for the nations of the earth? What do you know about His will? Let's be wise Christians. Let us not be ignorant.

You remember in 1 Corinthians 6, verses 2 and 3, Paul asks, "Don't you know that the saints shall judge the world? Don't you know that we shall judge angels?" Don't you know that certain things, certain people can't inherit the kingdom of God? Don't you know that your body is a member of Christ? (6:15). Don't you know that your body is a sanctuary of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit which ye have of God and you are not your own. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (6:19-20). "Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

Now that doesn't mean **that you pull things out of the air. It doesn't mean just going to church and listening to somebody preach or teach once a week. It means we must give time to the Word of God. It means work. May I say that quite a few people pat themselves on the back. They go to church once a week, and they feel they've done their duty. But they don't know a thing about walking with God. They don't know a thing about knowing the will of God or the work of God. Some don't even open their Bibles from one week to the next. They go to church to hear somebody else read it.**

I wish in some way we meant business with God. How in the world can we know the will of God, how will God be able to show it to us if we do not get into His Book? Remember Jesus said in John 7:17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine (of the teaching), whether it be of God or not."

The whole thing is, do I mean business with God? Do you mean business with God? Let us not be ignorant Christians. Let's be wise Christians. To walk in the will of God is to walk wisely. But I again raise the issue. How can I know the will of God? How can I know what He wants me to do if I do not mean business and if I do not get into the Word of God?

Now we come to the fourth evidence, **the fourth evidence is verses 18-20 of chapter 5.**

5:18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

Keep on being filled with the Spirit.

5:19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

5:20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

5:21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Now I say, my friend, **this is a command of God. And if we are wise Christians, we will be Spirit-filled Christians. This is imperative. A Spirit-filled life very simply is a continual enjoyment of divine life. Normal Christianity is to be habitually filled. Keep on being filled with the Spirit of God. Paul says here, "Do not be drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." May I just stop here for a few moments. You pardon my doing this, but I'd like to make it very, very clear to you.**

There is so much uncertainty and division among God's people with respect to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I've often wondered why preachers and Bible teachers don't study every verse in the Bible on the Holy Spirit. Why don't they take every verse, for example, on the filling of the Spirit, every verse on the baptism of the Spirit, on the sealing of the Spirit and being born of the Spirit. And there are not too many of them, really. It wouldn't take you

long to do this either. Actually the ministry of the Spirit of God to the believer is very simple.

The moment you and I **accepted the Savior, as we were seeing in the first and fourth chapters, we were sealed. Remember, Paul said, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption."** We have just three verses on the sealing (Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30, and 2 Corinthians 1:22), and they speak of **preservation.**

And then there's the question of the baptism of the Spirit. This is an act of God. It is not an experience. It's an act of God, taking believers and joining them together in the body of Christ. It speaks of union with Christ and with each other.

To be born of the Spirit speaks of relationship as you have in John chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, and chapter 3 of John.

And then you have the question of the indwelling Spirit for the purpose of revealing the character of God.

Now these four things **are true of all believers. But the sad thing is that all believers are not Spirit-filled. A Spirit filled life is a life lived in fellowship with God.**

Now, that's a very simple statement and you say, "Mr. Mitchell, it means more than that."

No, my friend, it doesn't mean more than that. You're going to tell me that, if I were Spirit-filled, I'd have certain experiences. That's not true. I may have experiences that you don't have. And you may

have experiences that I don't have. When people are filled with the Spirit of God, they're walking in fellowship with God in His will. And it is only when you're walking in fellowship with God in His will that you are Spirit-filled. Don't tell me that when you're Spirit-filled you're going to do this or do that and do the other thing. I challenge you on that. I'll let you bring the Word of God and prove to me what you say is true.

**You see, I took the time to take up every verse in the Bible on being Spirit-filled. And, when I got through, I was simply amazed. Do you know except for this verse in Ephesians chapter 5 there's only one man in the whole New Testament who talks about being Spirit-filled. Luke in his gospel talks about being Spirit-filled. Ten times in the book of Acts he talks about being Spirit-filled. And, if you read them through, you'll find that there's a connection between them.**

I've had people tell me—I've even had preachers tell me—that if I were Spirit-filled I would have a certain experience. If I were baptized with the Spirit, I'd have a certain experience. If I were sealed with the Spirit, I'd have a certain experience. If I were born of the Spirit, I'd have a certain experience. You don't find that in the scriptures. God does four wonderful things the moment we accept the Savior.

**Every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit otherwise he wouldn't be a Christian. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8:29) And in John 7, Jesus said, "He**

**that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:38-39). The indwelling Spirit became the experience, the portion of every Christian after Pentecost.**

Now regarding the filling of the Spirit of God, may I put it this way. The filling of the Spirit of God is the right of every Christian. Even babes in Christ can be Spirit-filled just as men and women in Christ can be Spirit-filled. The very babe in Christ, the one who has just been saved, can experience being filled with the Spirit. In fact, sometimes I wonder if some of these new-born babes in Christ know more about being Spirit-filled than some of these folk who have been saved for 50 or 60 years. It's been years since they've walked in fellowship with God. And their minds have become dull of hearing as Paul could say to the Hebrew Christians in Hebrews 5:11.

**What does it mean** to be Spirit-filled? And why does Paul bring it in here? This is the only time he ever mentions it in his epistles. There's a reason for it. The highest experience of any believer is to walk in fellowship with Christ in His will. And if that believer is not Spirit-filled as He walks in fellowship with Christ, will you please tell me, when he will be filled? It is impossible to be filled with the Spirit of God with a heart that is out of fellowship with Christ.

It is imperative that you and I be filled. The command is just as clear, just as simple, just as real as the commandment in the preceding chapter which told us not to lie or to steal. A normal Christian is one whose life, the pattern of his life, is to be habitually filled with the Spirit of God. In fact, I want to make the statement, my Christian friends, that, if you are not Spirit-filled, you're not living a normal Christian life. That's pretty strong language, isn't it?

You see, we have so much distortion given to us on this matter of the ministry of the Spirit in our lives. Let me just again very simply say this that as long as a believer in Jesus Christ walks in fellowship with God in His will, that believer is Spirit-filled. The moment that something comes into your life to break your fellowship, and I do not care how wonderful your experiences may be, if you are not in fellowship with Christ, you are not Spirit-filled. That's a strong statement.

Let's be honest; let's be real. **It's possible for a woman taking care of her family, washing the dishes, taking care of the husband and the home to live a consistent Christian Spirit-filled life. A Spirit-filled life is an enjoyment of divine life. And the wonder of it is that you and I can have that. This is why He saved us. This is why He joined us to Himself.**

You remember in John chapter 3 we read that the Spirit of God was upon Jesus without measure (John 3:34). In Luke chapter 4:18 Jesus could say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath

anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor” and so on. And it’s within the right of every Christian to be Spirit-filled.

Now I made this statement earlier that Luke is the only one who speaks of the experience of being Spirit-filled, except for this one passage here in Ephesians 5:18. This is the only time Paul mentions it,

5:18. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

5:19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

5:20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

5:21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

This, by the way, is **the evidence of the Spirit-filled life! Now, turn to Colossians chapter 3. I’m reading verses 16 and 17. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”**

You’ll notice the similarities of **the evidence of being Spirit-filled and having the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, only with this difference. If you notice in Ephesians chapter 5 nothing is said about teaching the word of God; whereas in Co-**

**lossians 3 we read, “In all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another.”**

Now I've changed the punctuation, by the way. The King James Version has punctuated that a little differently. It says here in the King James Version, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms...” Now you don't teach and admonish in psalms and hymns. You sing in psalms and hymns. And you teach in all wisdom. So let me read it this way, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

**A babe in Christ can do that, but a babe in Christ can't teach. This only comes when the Word of Christ dwells in one richly in all wisdom. When does that happen? When he is a prayerful student of the Word and when he's walking in fellowship with God in His will so that he enjoys normal Christianity. He enjoys divine life. There's a love for the Book and there's a joy there that comes from God Himself. There is something about Bible study that delights one's heart.**

And I just pray that today you may experience this. You see, the man of the world, the ideal man of the world is a self-sufficient man. But the ideal man of God is the yielded man. So as one yields himself to God, the Spirit of God takes over. We walk in fellowship with God and the Word becomes precious.

Or sometimes I've put it **this way**. **The greatest experience you will ever have in heaven will be fellowship with Christ face to face. I know you are going to be changed and made like the Savior. I know you are going to live forever in the presence of the Lord, but the great purpose of it all is this intimacy of fellowship. And let me suggest that the more you know of Christ in this world, the deeper will be your fellowship with Him in heaven.**

The more you stay in the Word of God, the more you obey Him. The more you stay in the Word of God, the more you know Him. Let us not be ignorant Christians, but wise Christians, understanding the will of the Lord. And as I yield myself to Him in fellowship with God, I'm Spirit-filled.

Now don't say, "Well, if I'm Spirit-filled, I'll have some great, tremendous experiences."

I'm not concerned about experiences. It's nice to have them. But the thing I'm concerned about is that we walk in the fellowship of God in His will. And I can only know the will of God as I stay in the Word of God. And you have a Teacher. The Spirit of God will lead you and guide you into all truth. All He wants you to do is to take the Word of God, ask Him to direct you, and then to meditate upon the scriptures, read and reread them so that you'll know something about your Savior and the way He deals with men. Be a Spirit-filled Christian, one enjoying the divine life and living each day to show forth something of the praises of our God.

Now may the Lord bless you today and if your fellowship with God is broken, you confess your sins very simply and humbly before Him. He's promised to forgive you and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. And this is what you should do.

Now let's get back **to this question of being Spirit-filled. This is a command. Keep on being filled. It's not an act once for all. This is a continual thing.**

Again may I remind you to be born of the Spirit is an act once for all.

To be baptized by the Spirit is an act once for all.

To be sealed is an act once for all.

To be indwelt by the Spirit is an act that God does the moment you accept the Savior.

This is what God does. But the filling of the Spirit of God depends upon you and me. And a Christian is not Spirit-filled unless that believer is walking in fellowship with God in His will. I know I'm going over this. I want it very clearly understood. I find hungry Christians, people who are hungry for spirituality and they are looking for some shortcuts. So other people come along and offer them shortcuts, like a preacher said to me not too long ago here in my office. He said, "Mitchell, if you only had this, my, what a preacher you would be!"

Well, he was talking about an experience. I could have said to him, "Well, brother, if you've had this experience, what a Christian—you—would be."

But why get occupied **with experiences? Experiences are a dime a dozen. Now I like experiences. But let's get down to business. The important thing is not your experience. The important thing is obedience to the Word of God, to live in the Word of God. And the Spirit-filled Christian is a person who is walking in fellowship with God. I have met people who talk about being Spirit-filled, but their lives are just the opposite.**

The great yearning of the heart of God and of the early Church apostles was that every believer should be Spirit-filled. It's within the province and right of every Christian to be Spirit-filled. It's imperative that we be Spirit-filled, walking in fellowship with God.

I noticed in following **this thing through that the Gospel of Luke is the only gospel that speaks about being filled with the Spirit. John speaks about the indwelling Spirit, but he is dealing with the fact that our bodies become the temples of God, that the Spirit of God comes in to abide forever, and so on.**

But Luke is not dealing with that. Luke is dealing with the filling of the Spirit of God. You take chapters 1 and 2, for example, in the gospel of Luke. You have Zacharias, who was the father of John the Baptist, filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:67). And what did he do? He prophesied. You have John the Baptist filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15). And Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit. What did she do? She prophesied (Luke 1:41). You take Mary. She's filled with the Spirit, and she sang the "Magni-

ficat” and prophesied. And when you come to chapter 2 you find Simeon, the old man in the temple. What’s he doing? He’s spirit-filled (Luke 2:25-27). And He’s Spirit-taught, and he’s Spirit-led. The Spirit was upon him. He was taught by the Spirit, and he was led by the Spirit.

**When you come to chapter 4**, the very first verse speaks of our Savior. Our Lord was filled with the Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. In verse 14 of chapter 4, He returned from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit. In verse 18 He said, “And the Spirit of the Lord is upon me to do certain things.” And it’s not mentioned again in the whole gospel through Luke on the filling of the Spirit.

In chapter 11, the Spirit of God is brought in with respect to the question of praying. And in the end of chapter 24, the last chapter of Luke, our Savior told the disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. In the book of Acts chapter 1, verse 8, the last words of our Savior were, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.”

**And then ten times in the book of Acts we read of someone being Spirit-filled. And when they were Spirit-filled, with great boldness gave the apostles witness of the death and resurrection of our Savior.**

You see, what I’m after here is this question of being Spirit-filled. I’m not dealing with the other as-

pects of it, just this one thing. And these are all the passages that have to do with being Spirit-filled.

Now when you come to Ephesians chapter 5, the wise Christian is the Spirit-filled Christian. He not only walks carefully, he not only buys up the opportunity, he not only understands the will of the Lord, but he's Spirit-filled. And may I say to you, if you love the Savior, you can be Spirit-filled right where you are today, right where you are in your office, in your car, in your kitchen. Don't wait for some experience. You come into deeper fellowship with Christ.

**But I also suggest that the moment that your fellowship with Christ is broken, either through your self-occupation or through something you do, you're no longer Spirit-filled. But the moment you are in fellowship with God in His will, there is no higher experience for a Christian. This is the place of blessing. This is the place of power. This is the place of joy. This is the place of peace.**

Ah, to walk in fellowship with God in His will. He's made provision for this. I've got a Savior in heaven praying for me. The Word of God has been given to me. The indwelling Spirit is there. All are cooperating in one thing—that you and I might enjoy the very life of God Himself, day by day, hour by hour. Oh, what a life this Christian life is. What a life, but the world outside sees so little of it because most of us Christians know so little of it.

**You know, it would be a tremendous thing in the world if all of us Christians just lived a quiet, wonderful life of walking in fellowship with God,**

**radiating something of the love and tenderness and compassion of Christ.**

Oh, listen, friends, there are so many broken hearts, so many crushed lives, so many bruised souls all around us. How are we going to reach them? It's those walking in fellowship with God that He finds usable to reach these hearts. We're not to come at them and club them, but to come in with the tenderness and love and compassion of the Spirit of God.

**Friend, this is what** the world needs, what the Church of Christ needs—Spirit-filled Christians, men and women who are walking in fellowship with God who is love and in fellowship with God who is light. Then Christ will be glorified through us. We won't be doleful, sober-looking people. We will be happy, joyful, full of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord as we shall see in these next two or three verses.

You say, "Why, Mr. Mitchell, does that mean I've got to go around singing all the time?"

Well, he says here "singing **and making melody in your heart to the Lord.**" **May I tell you, when your heart sings, it isn't very long before your mouth will be singing too. Isn't that right?**

You say, "Well, I can't even carry a tune."

Well, what of it? What of it! You know it's an amazing thing that God listens to the joy and the praise and worship of the heart, not so much of what comes out of the mouth. Sometimes a person may have a wonderful voice, but God takes no notice of it. Yet there might be some dear old saint with a

cracked voice, but a heart rejoicing in him. The Lord takes note of that.

You see, the Lord looks upon the heart. Man looks on the outward appearance. We love to hear somebody with a wonderful voice. But too often, that wonderful voice is not dedicated to the Lord. And along comes somebody with her eyes closed and her mouth open, singing God's praise. Sometimes she doesn't even keep in tune. But it's real worship to the Lord. This is what the Lord loves.

When we are Spirit-filled **in fellowship with God, our heart is full of praise and thanksgiving and worship. These are the things that are vital. These are the things that are real. There may not be any outward show, but there's that worship, that satisfaction of being in the will of God. It causes your heart to bubble up with joy and thanksgiving to Him. Sometimes it comes out in a song from your lips. You might even hum a tune. I don't know what it is; but there's a joy, there's a blessing there; and you're full of thanksgiving to the Lord.**

5:20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“You mean thanking God for everything?”

Yes! Because sometimes the very test of life, the very afflictions of life, are the things that God uses to draw us close to Himself.

You know I've been **in conference work all summer and I've met Christians from all differ-**

ent parts. I've met some who have been going through very deep waters. I think of one precious young woman who has four children. She has gone through very deep sadness. She said to me, "You know, Mr. Mitchell, it's done one thing to me. It's drawn me so close to the Lord that I'm willing to go through anything just so I can glorify Him. It's changed my whole life. Instead of being bitter, sour, you know, I have joy. It's given me blessing. And I thank him for every test and every trial."

One dear little woman in a sanitarium told me, "I'd go through this whole thing again. These last three weeks I've suffered a great deal. But I'd go through it again if I thought I would have the same experience with God that I had before."

**You see, the Lord permits trials, and He permits circumstances. Even though they're hard, you can live above them and see the hand of God through them. And when you're Spirit-filled, walking in fellowship with God, it is simply wonderful.**

I remember the testimony of a dear Bible teacher who was very sick. And when his daughter came in to see him, she said, "Daddy, how are you?"

And he said, "You know, dear, my eyes are so that I can't see. I can't even read my Bible. And I'm so weak I can't even pray."

Was he bitter? Oh no!

He said, "You know what I'm doing? I've just laid my head on the Lord's bosom and I'm just enjoying Him for Himself."

**Ah, this is the place to be! It's a place of real joy irrespective of circumstances. This is the life of faith. This is the Spirit-filled life. Not a lot of hoopla, but joyous, joyous, blessing of coming into the presence of God and enjoying Christ for Himself. This is the place of real fellowship, thanksgiving, worship, praise. And this is what God has for you. This is the Spirit-filled life.**

Now, let me again repeat briefly. We have here four evidences of a wise Christian. We are to walk carefully. We are to redeem the time, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. We are to understand the will of the Lord, and this comes through staying in the Word of God. He wants us to walk wisely in His will. And fourth, we are to be Spirit-filled. It would be a wonderful thing if everyone who is reading this would come to that place of being in intimate fellowship with the Lord.

**Isn't it a marvelous thing that you and I can come into the presence of God and have fellowship with Him? I say, my friend, there is no life comparable to it. The world can have its baubles, have its gold and its silver. These are the things that are passing, just transient. And the blessing that you may have with them is a passing blessing. But whatever comes into your life, whatever the circumstances, whatever the afflictions, the joys, the sorrows, you live in the presence of the One**

**who said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).**

Therefore we can boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13:6).

Now, we come to this **last one, the sixth thing. We are to walk in submission, chapter 5:22 to 6:9. And this has to do with relationship one to the other—for example, the relationships of husbands and wives, relationships between parents and children, relationships between masters and servants. Walking in submission is one of the purposes that the Spirit of God wants us to recognize. It’s true we may have different positions in the body of Christ, but nevertheless we are in Christ and we are here to walk in submission. Before I take it up, I think it might be well for me to suggest something here from verse 22 where it says:**

5:22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord,

5:23. For the husband is the head of the wife. . . .

5:25. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.

In Ephesians, the Church is looked upon from a different angle with respect to its relationship to Christ. For example, in chapter 1 the Church is looked upon as the body of Christ. And that speaks of life. In chapter 2, the Church is looked upon as a temple. And that speaks of worship. And then the Church is looked upon as a new man. And that speaks of a new

life and a new race of people. And then the Church is looked upon as the bride of Christ. You find that in Corinthians and you find that here in the relationship between the husband and the wife in chapter 5.

Paul speaks of the bride. **He's talking about the relationship and the affections between Christ and His people. Will you keep that in mind now as we come to chapter 5 of Ephesians with respect to husbands and wives, reading from verse 22 through verse 33. He's talking about the relationship between husbands and wives. I believe he's talking here, of course, of Christians. You have a Christian husband and a Christian wife. If one or the other is not saved, then I wouldn't come to Ephesians 5. I would go to 1 Corinthians chapter 7. But here we have in verses 22 to the end of the passage in chapter 5 the case of a Christian husband and a Christian wife. What is to be their relationship, the one to the other?**

I would like to ask you to turn to 1 Peter chapter 3:1-9 and Colossians chapter 3, verses 18 and 19. And I want you to notice that each believer has a particular place in the body of Christ. Remember this, will you? Each one has a particular place in the family, the husband and the wife. And may I suggest that when the husband takes his place and the wife takes her place, then you've got a time of real joy and real blessing.

And it's a sad thing that I find Christian families where the husband takes a certain attitude and the wife takes an attitude and you've got trouble, trouble

galore. And the poor kiddies are the ones who suffer. Now there's no reason why, in Christian families, you can't have a foretaste of heaven on earth. I know I'm living in a day when there's an awful lot of looseness. And a lot of, shall I say, false ideas about this question of the relationship between a husband and a wife.

**I had a lady in my home yesterday telling me that her whole life is ruined. The whole family is ruined because the husband is cruel. He claims to be a Christian. He's supposed to be a Christian leader; and he's not only bossy, but he's cruel. And there's no place for this in the Bible. No place for this in the Bible! God wants us to be happy, and He's made provision for us to be happy. But both husband and wife have a responsibility.**

I want you to read this over and over together with 1 Peter chapter 3, the first nine verses. The husband has a particular place in the family, and nobody can take his place. And the wife has a particular place, and nobody can take her place. And then Peter goes on to speak of the relationship between parents, especially the father and the children. The father has the place of responsibility. This is what headship means. He's not the boss. He's not the pope. He's not an autocrat. He's the one who is responsible to God for his family. God does not hold the mother responsible. God holds the father responsible.

**Now I'm talking to Christian parents. And, my friend, if you take your place of responsibility be-**

**fore God concerning your family, I don't think you'll have any trouble with any of them. And I'm sure that God will make it a wonderful place of joy, of blessing between the husband and the wife and the children, so that people will know here indeed is a Christian family. And if ever we needed Christian families, it's today. Wherever we live, in your neighborhood, among your friends, we have a tremendous need for Christian families living in a place of peace and joy and of blessing. And as we take up these verses in Ephesians 5 I pray that the Lord will make it very, very precious to us.**

I know some of you are not going to like it. I'm going to say some things I'm sure you won't like. But let's be real about it. Let's be honest about it. What says the Scriptures? Never mind what I say. What does the Bible say? I know that Christ said He wants your joy filled full (John 15:11). And how can your joy be filled full when you're fighting and spitting and not taking your place? I tell you, my Christian friend, if ever there was a need for Christian families, for Christian homes, where the Lord is magnified and where love is manifested, it's today! It's today!

**First of all, each one has a particular place in the family. The husband shouldn't be the boss, and the wife shouldn't be the boss. No bosses.**

“Well, what do you mean by headship?”

Let's read it. In verse 22 and 23.

5:22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

And you husbands remember that, will you? They submit themselves unto you as unto the Lord. And husbands: “

5:23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

5:24. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

5:25. Husbands, love your wives.

**Now Christ is not the head of the family. Christ is the head of the church. The husband is the head of the family. And headship means responsibility. In other words, God holds the husband responsible for the family. He is not to be a domestic tyrant, but he is to reign in love.**

I've had husbands say, “My wife should submit herself to me in everything.”

Wait a minute. Submission does not mean servitude. The wife is not a chattel. She's the wife. And you're the husband. And God holds you responsible for all your family.

And I repeat, there's no place for either one to be a domestic tyrant. But you are to reign in love. Submission does not mean servitude. I'm pressing that because I've had so many men, through these years of being a pastor, who have insisted that they're the head of the house, that they're the lord over the house, and that they can demand their wives to sub-

mit to them in everything. This is absolutely unscriptural. Headship means responsibility.

**This is autocratic.** This is not love. This is being a boss. And I maintain the Bible doesn't teach such a thing. The husband is to love his wife even as himself. And the wife, when her husband loves her as he loves himself, would be very glad indeed to submit herself to him. You see, it's a combination. It's team work. The husband has his place; the wife has her place. But you work together; you are one in Christ.

Now let's come to the wife. **The wife has the place of honor. You find that in 1 Peter chapter 3, the seventh verse. And may I say, it is very easy for the wife to submit herself to her husband as unto the Lord, if the husband obeys verse 25.**

5:25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.

And I'm going to insist on this. Let me inject this. Do you know why family prayers are not answered? Do you know why family prayers are hindered? It's because you do not submit the one to the other. You don't take your place. You remember it says in Peter, turn to 1 Peter chapter 3, reading from verse 7.

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”

And one of the reasons **why people have the trouble in their families and why their prayers are not answered is because neither one or the other knows his or her rightful place in the family. You know this is very deep-seated thing. Paul had this problem in the early Church. We have it today.**

Now, let me repeat it. The husband has the place of responsibility, that's the headship. That doesn't mean servitude. That doesn't mean he is the boss. Neither one is the boss. And the woman is not chattel. They're one. And wife has been given the place of honor because she is the weaker vessel. May I repeat it, it is very easy for the wife to submit to her husband if the husband obeys verse 25, which is,

5:25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

5:26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

Now the illustration **given to us is in chapter 5 reading from verse 25 to verse 30. The illustration of relationship. Christ's love for the church is revealed in His sacrifice for her.**

You remember in the preceding chapter I said that my love for God is revealed by obedience. And my love for other people is revealed by sacrifice. When we take this into the church, into the family of

God, we say, "That's right." Now, let's take it into the family between husband and wife.

Just as Jesus Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might cleanse the church and sanctify the church and might present to Himself a glorious church. . . .

5:28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

5:29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord loved the church:

5:30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

5:31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

5:32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

You see, there is more said about the husband than there is about the wife. Listen, "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church." How did Christ manifest His love for the church? By giving his life for the church. So how is a husband to manifest his love for his wife? By sacrifice, by giving his life for his wife.

Now, you've got no argument **with me. This is what it says, for the purpose that Christ might bring the church to Himself, a holy church having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing (v. 27). So the husband loves the wife and you remember that no man ever yet hates his own flesh.**

**A man doesn't hate himself. And he's to love his wife even as he loves himself. And his love for his wife is so keen, so real that he's willing to leave his father and his mother and be joined to her. I'm talking about the husband. I sometimes think the husband needs instruction more than the wife because we've got sort of a distorted idea about this.**

**It says here that this is a great mystery (v. 32). It is! Here is a man who has been raised by a father and a mother who have spent all their love and sometimes all their money on that fellow and made him a real man. One day he sees a girl, falls in love with her, and he's willing, perfectly willing, to leave his father and mother who raised him, who wept over him, nursed him and everything else, to leave them because of his love for his wife. You see, now, having gotten his wife, having been married to this girl, he must love her as himself. And that love is going to be evidenced by sacrifice for her.**

Now, then, let's come again to the woman.

5:22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

5:23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

5:24. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Go down to verse 33.

5:33. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular (you husbands) so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

**And I repeat it**, when you husbands take your place of loving your wife as yourself with a love that is willing to sacrifice for the love and joy and blessing of the wife, it will be very easy for the wife to take her place of submission of reverencing her husband.

Now the illustration given to us, as I say, is the relationship between Christ and the church. How much did Christ love the church? He loved the church so much that He was willing to lay down His life for the church. Husbands are to lay down their lives, if need be, for their wives because they love them. It was in love that the Lord Jesus gave Himself for us—

5:27. That He might present it (the church) to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

**I tell you, my friend**, it's an amazing thing. This question of relationship is a tremendous thing. In fact, I again come back to what I said in the preceding lesson. The prayers of God's people are oftentimes hindered because either one or the other does not take his/her place before God and before each other.

I'm emphasizing this fact because the great illustration given to us is with respect to Christ and His love for the church.

The love of Christ for the church was revealed in sacrifice. He has given everything, all that He had for the church, the church that He loves. His past work is mentioned in verse 25. He gave Himself for the church that He might remove the barriers that were between the church and God.

He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. And He appeared once in the end of the age to put away sins (Hebrews 9:26). Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). This man by one sacrifice for sins forever sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12). This is what He did in the past. His love was evidenced by sacrifice.

Now, our Lord's present work,

5:26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word.

This is His present ministry. He wants to keep us clean. And how does He do it? By His Word. As you have it in John 15:3 when He said, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;" and in 1 John 1, verse 9, through chapter 2, verse 2, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and in Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost (perfectly) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." He cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word. That's what you have in the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm, you remember, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy Word" (Psalm 119:9).

And then you have His future work, His future joy in verse 27.

5:27. That he might present it (the church) to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Here is his future joy. **He's going to present the church to Himself a spotless church, a holy church. This is the future. In the book of Jude, verse 24, you remember, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and honor and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." In Colossians chapter 1, verse 22, God not only reconciles us, but He's going to present us "holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight."**

You see, you have the past work of Christ because He loved us, He died for us and removed the barrier of sin. His present work, because of His love for us, is revealed in that He is our Representative, our Intercessor, our Advocate. And He keeps us clean by the Word of God. And if He did all this because He loves us. How then should we love each other? How then should we love each other? We are to love each other even as Christ loved the church.

I come back again to this statement that I made at the beginning of chapter 5. We manifest our love for God by obedience to His Word, and we manifest our love for each other by sacrifice.

Mr. or Mrs. Whoever-You-Are, **if you really love each other, if your love for each other is genuine, you'll be willing to sacrifice for the joy and the blessing of each other. There's no joy in being a boss. There's no joy in being an autocrat. There's no joy in lording it over other people by saying "This is my position!" I've seen men and women driven from their mate over this!**

Marriage is a combination. It is a union, a union—the husband having his place, the wife having her place. And look at the joy for your children. Instead of seeing father and mother at odds with each other and scrapping and not talking to each other, here they have blessed communion together, blessed joy and love. And it radiates through the children. The kids begin to love each other. I'm talking about a practical thing. The Word of God is practical. And again, may I say, God wants you to be happy. He wants you to be filled with joy and He has laid down instructions for how our families can be happy, joyous families.

Oh, my friends, may the Lord **make these things very precious and very clear to you. And in these coming days in your house, in your family, may you husbands take your place and you wives take your place; and, my, what a combination of love this will bring. Remember we manifest our love for God by obedience to His Word. We manifest our love for each other by sacrifice even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.**

Now may the Lord wonderfully bless you. I just pray that God will make your family, your home, one of the sweetest homes in the neighborhood because of the love you have not only for the Lord, but the love you have for each other.

Remember, love, genuine love, is always willing to sacrifice.

Now may the Lord make the Word very precious to your heart. Read it and reread it and reread it, and get your mind filled with the text.

*And the Lord wonderfully bless you now for His name's sake.*

## Chapter Six

**W**e come now to the last chapter of this amazing epistle. We've been dealing with the walk of the believer in the unity of the Spirit. We are to walk in the power of a new creation. We are to walk in love even as He loved us. We are to walk in the light because God is light, and then we are to walk in wisdom. And you remember that the wise believer is the one who understands the will of the Lord, who walks carefully, who redeems the time, and who is Spirit-filled. **And then we walk in submission.**

And we were dealing in our last lesson with the relationship between husbands and wives in chapter 5.

Now we continue this question of relationship.

**I would like to read from verse one down through verse nine—those first nine verses where we have the relationship manifested between parents and children and between masters and servants.**

6:1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

6:2. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

6:3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

6:4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

6:5. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6:6. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

6:7. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

6:8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

6:9. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

**Now we come to this question of the relationship between parents and children. The division of this portion from chapter 5:22 to 6:9 is dealing with the believer walking in submission. And hence, when we come to parents and children, it's very obvious that the Spirit of God has laid down the relationship between the two.**

He takes up children first of all. Children are to obey their parents in the Lord for this is right. Under the law of Moses, the one who honored father and mother was blessed of the Lord and lived long on the earth. It was the first commandment given to them that had any promise.

**I often think of that when I think of our Savior. You remember in the gospel of Luke, chapter 2, Joseph and Mary had gone up to Jerusalem with Jesus when He was a boy, 12 years of age.**

**The time had come when He must stand upon His own feet under the Law of Moses, recognized as a son of the Law. And you remember they went back and left Him in Jerusalem. They thought He was somewhere in the crowd with their friends and relatives. But they couldn't find Him so they went back to Jerusalem. And they found Him sitting in the midst of the doctors in the temple, asking and answering questions, which by the way was a common thing.**

The elders of Israel would sit, and they were asked questions and they would answer the questions. Our Lord as a boy 12 years of age went in there and asked questions and answered questions. And He astounded them with His knowledge of the things of God.

**You remember how Mary rebuked her son for this and how He said, "Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). And then the amazing statement was that He went back to Nazareth with them and was subject unto them (Luke 2:51).**

Did you ever stop to think of this? That the Savior who had just astounded the doctors of the law in Israel went down with them to Nazareth and was subject unto them. And you remember, if I may quote from that verse, "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (verses 51-52 of Luke 2). Obedience always brings its reward.

**I've often thought about this. Sometimes the boys and girls of this generation have the attitude that they know more about things than their fathers and mothers. Yet our Savior, a boy of 12 years of age, was subject unto Joseph and Mary and was until He was thirty years of age. You hear nothing more of Him until He's 30 years of age when He came out and was baptized by John and went into His public ministry. He was subject to His parents.**

As I said a moment ago, obedience always brings its reward. I am sure of one thing that if we Christian parents were to instruct our children on this question of obedience, it would always bring a reward. God will see to that. And the exhortation is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father. Honor your mother. This is the first commandment with promise."

**We said in Ephesians 5 that the father, the husband, is the head of the family. He's the head of the wife. He's in the place of responsibility. And God holds the father responsible for the family with children that are obedient unto their parents. They are to honor their parents because of who they are and because of what they are.**

Now he says a word about the fathers.

6:4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

**In other words, don't stir them up; don't rile them. And may I suggest something, and I've seen this so often, please don't take your anger out upon your child. Someone has well said that a parent should not chasten the child in anger because you go beyond that which you originally planned to do. Chastisement is very needful; there's no question about this. One only needs to read the book of Proverbs to realize that this is so. God expects us to chasten our children, but not to do it in anger and not to stir them up, not to rile them.**

I've thanked the Lord numbers of times that I had a father and a mother who chastened me. I often times told my mother later on in years that she raised me on the end of her slipper. And she could give me a crack with that slipper and have it back on her foot before the first yell got out. Of course, practice makes perfect. It never did me any harm. It was a good thing for me. I'm sure it's good for your children.

**So we have this relationship between parents and children. For a child to obey the parents in the Lord is right, and it brings great reward. And remember the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, when He took His place in the human family, was subject unto His father and mother. And let me say again, I believe right on down through His teen years, from 12 years of age on, He was subject to His parents.**

Oh, in some way I wish I could bring this into the hearts of our young people and into the hearts of our parents. I think sometimes the parents are responsible for the disobedience of the children. And I do believe that we have a tremendous responsibility as parents before God to train our children. As somebody has well said, "Count ten before you strike them first." My mother didn't get a chance to count ten.

**Then you have in verse 5 through 9, servants and masters. And this is a rather remarkable thing. In verses 5-8, you'll notice how much time he gives to the servants.**

6:5. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6:6. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

6:7. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

6:8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

**Just a word here about this. I think it's apropos at this time. It's no honor to the Lord when Christians do not serve correctly, do not give their all to the job they have. I tell the students at Multnomah School of the Bible, that if they have a job, they should be the best, the best fellows and the best girls that man has ever had. And if you don't like your wages, then quit your job. But if**

**you take a job, you give your time. They tell you what the wages are, and then you give the best for those wages. You do it as unto the Lord.**

Now here's a new motive for service. You serve the Lord Christ primarily even in the jobs you do.

You say, "I don't like my job."

**That's neither here nor there. You've got a job. You do it as unto the Lord, and the new motive is that God will repay you. It says here that "the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (verse 8). In other words, the Lord will take care of the rewards of it if you do it as unto the Lord.**

Now I tell you, my friend. Even though they may not give you what you think you should to get for the job you are doing, if you're doing it as unto the Lord, you'll have joy in doing it. You'll have blessing in doing it. And you'll receive praise from men because you've done a good job. And even though they do not pay you enough, God will see to it that your reward will be there if you are doing it as unto the Lord.

You see, there are more rewards than just dollars and cents. There's the real thrill of doing a good job. I know what I'm talking about. I spent many of my early days in a machine shop. I was a tool and die maker in a machinist business. There was a real thrill, real joy, real fellowship in doing a good job and doing it right. There's pleasure to this. Now if I was worrying about my wages and worrying about the job, there's no joy in that. It

**would become a chore. But if I do my job unto the Lord, irrespective of how much I think I should get, the Lord will take care of me and will reward me.**

Now what about the boss? Well, in verse nine, Paul talks about those who are masters, and those of you who hire people.

6:9. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening.

**Don't you threaten them. Remember, when Paul wrote this, the master as a rule had bond slaves. And the danger was when a man had slaves, he could be very rough with them and sometimes abuse them. To Christian masters, he's saying "Now let's be different from everybody else. Let's be different from the other bosses." Don't threaten them, knowing that "your master also is in heaven." You also have a Master and you serve the Lord Christ, too. And if God has put you in the place of being a master or a leader or an executive or a boss, remember that you also are to do your job as unto the Lord. And there's no respect of persons with Him.**

**You think you might be superior to the one who works for you? Before God there is no difference. You have a Master in heaven and there's no respect of persons with Him. And if the one who works for you is faithful to God and faithful to you, then you are to be faithful to the Lord and faithful to those who work for you.**

You see, Paul is talking here about a kind of a life with different motives. And the great motive is to serve the Lord Christ, to bring glory and to bring honor to Him. Now this is what we have here in Ephesians 6—the relationship in the beginning of the chapter between parents and children and now between masters and servants.

**Starting in at verse 10 and running through to the end of the chapter, we have the third great division of the book of Ephesians.**

Now I would like to review for you this whole business of Ephesians chapter 1 through chapter 6 verse 9. I would like to refresh your memory of the wonderful way in which the Spirit of God talks to us and instructs us through His servant Paul.

In the first three chapters, you remember, we had our position in Christ. And sometimes I feel like going back over these chapters verse by verse because of the tremendous, tremendous revelation there is.

**First of all, concerning the God whom we worship and the God whom we trust, the Savior who has bought us for Himself, let us rehearse the relationship we have to Him and then the relationship we have to each other.**

You remember in the first chapter we had our position in Christ as being redeemed. The Father chose us before the foundation of the world. He chose us to be holy and He blessed us. He adopted us as His sons, and He accepted us in the Beloved. The Lord Jesus purchased us with His own blood. He

forgave us every sin. He brought us into fellowship with Himself, with His purpose and plans, and made us coheirs with Him in the inheritance. And then the Spirit of God came and He sealed us in Christ. The Father chose us, the Son paid for us, and the Spirit of God possessed the possession bought.

**Isn't that wonderful? And that was followed by the prayer of Paul, a prayer for knowledge.**

Then in chapter two, we have this great doctrine of reconciliation, of how God took those of us who were dead in trespasses and sins. We were children of wrath like the rest. And then together with the Jewish people, for he's dealing here with Jew and Gentile, He reconciled us both together in Christ, proving that God was rich in mercy and great in love. And, when we were dead in sins, He raised us up and made us sit together, Jew and Gentile, in the heavenlies in Christ. And then we see God's purpose in the ages to come—to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus. And the ground for that is from verse 14 on through.

**Then in chapter 3, we have the great revelation of the church, the body of Christ. This was something that was purposed by God away back in eternity. It was hidden from everybody, from all principalities. It was hidden in the heart of God that, when God sent His Son into the human family, it was to bring into being a new people, a new race of people called the Church, joined to Him, made one with the Son of God. Think of it.**

**Think of it! Made one with the Son of God in a relationship that's eternal and perfect. And then this is followed by the second prayer of Paul, a prayer for power and for the intimacy of fellowship.**

Then starting in chapter four down through chapter 6 verse 9, we have our walk in Christ in a new creation. God has no confidence in the old creation. God expects nothing from the old creation. It's incurably bad. So He brought us into a new creation, and He made us one in the unity of the Spirit. We're told to walk in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

**The second thing is He seals us by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption. Then He tells us how we can grieve the Spirit and how not to grieve the Spirit.**

And then in chapter five, that amazing chapter, we are to walk in love, just as Christ loved us and manifested His love for us by sacrifice. We manifest our love for God by our obedience to His Word, and we manifest our love for each other by our sacrifice the one for the other.

Can I repeat that? We manifest our love for God by obedience to His Word (John 14:21 and 23). And we manifest our love for each other by sacrifice. You find this in 1 John chapter 3:16 and 17. And then we have to walk in light. And remember that God is light. This is where we walk. And you remember what the Apostle John says that if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one

with the other (1 John 1:7). And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:9).

**Then we walk in wisdom. There are four aspects of walking in wisdom. We walk carefully, we redeem the times, we understand the will of the Lord, and we are filled with the Spirit. And then we walk in submission. And here we have this amazing relationship presented to us, the relationship between husband and wife. The husband has the place of headship. That means responsibility. The woman has the place of honor, being the weaker vessel. When both take their place, you have a foretaste of heaven on earth, each one having a place of responsibility before God—no bosses, no popes, but equally filling their place before God.**

**And then you have the children in relationship to parents in chapter six. The parents are to take care of the children and the children are to be obedient to their parents. And then the servants have their part—a new motive for service—to serve the Lord and not just men. Masters are to recognize their servants and treat them right because they too have a Master in heaven.**

What God expects of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants is faithfulness to Him and faithfulness to each other. Indeed, we manifest our love for each other by our faithfulness to each other and by our sacrifices for each other. Children, for example, manifest their love for their parents by obedience. And parents manifest

their love for their children by sacrifice. It's very simple, isn't it? It's just wonderful.

Well, you say, "Mr. Mitchell, that's a supernatural life. You don't know my circumstances."

**No, I don't need to know them. A Christian life is a supernatural life. And the wonderful thing is that God has made provision whereby you and I can hold onto the resources of God. They're for us to use in our lives so we may show forth His love, His grace, His mercy. It's a wonderful thing to be a Christian, and it's a wonderful thing to act like one in our relationship the one to the other. I prove what I am to God by how I treat my fellow brother. Remember that! It is a folly for me to talk about the Savior if I don't love His people, and that love for His people is to be by sacrifice.**

Isn't it wonderful that you and I can sit down together and hear and meditate and think about the Word of God and the wonderful revelation He has given to us in the scriptures. How glad I am that God has not left us to our own ingenuity or to our own mentality. God has given to us the Spirit of God and the Word of God. The revelation of His person and His purpose is given to us in the scriptures. The Spirit of God has come to lead us and guide us into all truth. And so it's a real joy to me—I get a real blessing just sitting down here talking to you about the wonderful things of Christ.

**You know I received a card the other day, and it kind of tickles me in a way. I'm going to**

report this to you. A dear brother who wrote to me said, "You must have one foot already in heaven." I'm glad he didn't say one foot already in the grave. But one foot already in heaven. Well, it may be so. I know I'm bound for heaven. I know what the Lord has in store for us for all eternity, and He's revealed this to us in the Word of God. I just trust that your heart is full of love for Him, your Savior and your Lord.

Now we come to the last great division of the book of Ephesians. The book of Ephesians chapter six, and I'm going to take the time to read from verse 10 through verse 18. Here you have our warfare.

Did you know that the Christian is in a warfare? He's always at war. As long as we're on earth, we have three implacable enemies. We have a real war going on. And believe me, it's a real war. But I'll tell to you too the war's going to be won. He's guaranteed that. We might lose one or two battles. But the war's going to be won, and we're going to be victorious. As Paul could say in Romans chapter 8:37, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Now, let me read Ephesians chapter 6.

6:10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

6:11. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

6:12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of

the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

6:13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

6:14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

6:15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

6:16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

6:17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

6:18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

**Let me just stop here where you have this great picture of our warfare. I would suggest the 27<sup>th</sup> Psalm to your thinking. When you read this sixth chapter of Ephesians, read the 27<sup>th</sup> Psalm and 2 Timothy chapter two, verses 3-4. You remember, it says we are to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” No man goes to warfare at his own charges, and a man who goes to war is a separated man. He’s obedient. He’s a marked-out man, and victory is guaranteed. Who wouldn’t want to be a soldier of Jesus Christ? Enduring hardness. That means the path may be rough. We’ve got to be strengthened and fitted for the task of warfare.**

I’m afraid in these days that too many Christians are just lying down on the job. They’re not facing the warfare that’s before them. And the result is they’re

not taking a stand for the Savior. They claim it costs too much. No, my friend. It costs you more not to take a stand for the Savior. Hence, endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And a good soldier is an obedient soldier. That's one of the first lessons to learn when you go out to boot camp. Learn to be obedient. That's what boot camp is for. When you go to war and the government calls you up, you've got to go to boot camp. You learn to be hard, physically hard. You learn to be obedient. You don't question your officers. You obey them when they speak.

**And if I'm a good soldier of Jesus Christ, I'll be an obedient soldier.**

And then a soldier is a separated man. He's one who leaves his home. He leaves his job. He leaves his family, and he goes into the armed forces of our country. He's a separated man. He's leaves the path and goes into a new way of living.

I tell you, my friends, would to God that we had some real soldiers of Jesus Christ today—separated men unto God, men of God filled with the Word of God, obedient men, men who know something about the path that's rough, who face up to the issues of the day, who face up to the antagonisms and the wiles of the devil and are able to stand in the world that has no place for Him—obedient, separated, separated men.

**And if I were to go back to the Old Testament, you remember the very first step in a walk with God is separation unto Him. It is a strange thing in this day that Christians are afraid of the**

**word “separation.” Yet, my friend, it is impossible for a Christian to go on with God without separation. You go to the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Genesis (verses 2-4) or Acts chapter 7:2-4 where the God of glory appeared unto Abraham and said, “Get out.” And he got out. He obeyed, not knowing where he went.**

If you follow through every part of the life of this man Abraham or the life of Moses or the life of David or the life of Elijah, of Jeremiah and follow it through to Paul, Peter, all of them, the very first step with God was a step of separation. And until I'm separated unto God, I'll not be found very useful. In fact, we need to hold ourselves available to God that he might find us useable.

**So I say, a good soldier is one who is a separated man. He's a marked- out man. You see a marine going down the street in his dress uniform, you don't question what he is. He's a marine. If he belongs to the air corps, he's got that which marks him out as a man who's a pilot or who works with the air corps. Or, if he's a sailor, he wears a special uniform and you know he belongs to the Navy.**

Why shouldn't we as Christians be marked men and marked women?

**I remember one. Mr. Harvey Farmer of Africa had come home, and he was in Great Britain. He was going down the streets in the strand of London, and they have there what they call “Pork Shops” where you go in and order a hamburger.**

**It wouldn't be a hamburger, but a hot sandwich where you get either roast beef or roast pork.**

And standing outside, looking in the window with steam rolling up from these big pork and beef roasts, was a little ragamuffin boy from the streets. Dirty, ragged, hungry, he had his face up against the window just looking at the wonderful bones and meat.

And Mr. Farmer, as he saw this little fellow, came to him and said, "Sonny, would you like one of those sandwiches?"

He said, "Oh, governor, would I! Would I!"

He said, "Come on in."

**And he took the little fellow in and said to the man, "I want you to give him the biggest bun you've got. Dip it well in the gravy. And you put, not only a little bit of beef, but you put some beef in it and a good slice of pork and you give it to this boy and I'll pay for the extra."**

So the little fellow stood with his eyes bulging as this man cut off meat and put it between the bun and handed it over to the boy. And before the little fellow took a bite of that wonderful sandwich, he turned and looked up to Mr. Farmer with the tears running down his cheeks and he said, "Governor, be you God?"

My, I couldn't help but think of that.

**This little fellow had been used to being smitten and buffeted and kicked, living in the streets, living in the gutter and here a man comes and does a little sweet favor for him and he thought he was God.**

Oh, that we had Christians today, as we walk among men and women, who will manifest that we belong to the Savior. We're good soldiers, marked-out men and women for God. Among your neighbors, with your family, wherever you are, where you work, do they know you belong to the Savior? Are you a marked-out man?

Now I like this word of Paul's in 2 Timothy 2—therefore be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. and no man who goes to war goes of his own charges. Of course not.

**If I might be allowed, I just feel like reading you that verse. “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (2 Timothy 2:3-5). Paul also says, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead” (verse 8).**

Ah, the captain is Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. Man's greatest and last enemy has been defeated. Victory is guaranteed. Of course it is. The captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, hath not only put away our sins, but he has also defeated Satan and he has defeated death and the grave. He guarantees eternal, resurrected life to those who put their trust in Him. Now in view of that, let us be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

**Do you know we've got power, we have an enemy, we have armor, and we have some resources. God hasn't left us to our ingenuity. Oh, no. He has made the provision for all that we need—for personal victory, for personal deliverance. My, what a Savior we have! He's the captain of our salvation. In that amazing 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm, God is our refuge and strength, a great help in time of trouble; therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed and the mountains be removed and cast into the sea. Do you ever think that we have a God who is sufficient for us? Look at this verse 10.**

6:10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

**It doesn't say, "Be strong in yourself."**

The man of the world today, if he has some temptation or if he has something he's fighting against, will set his jaw and put his will to it. He is sufficient unto himself. He's the captain of his own soul. Well, that's good bravado. But, my friends, I tell you, I can speak here of men who have taken that stand; and the very thing they thought they were strong against became the straw that broke the camel's back.

You know, there's only one place where Christians can be strong. That's in the Lord and in the power of His might. The Lord is not only sufficient for our joy, but we are to rejoice in the Lord. He's not only sufficient for our peace of mind and peace

of heart, but the Lord is also sufficient for all our enemies. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

**You remember Hebrews chapter 2, verses 9 and 10. “We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” In Hebrews 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith and finisher of our faith (the captain of our salvation).” All that I need to stand against the enemy is found in Christ.**

**Why is it, Christian friend, we try everything under heaven except Him? And when we get desperate and we see no way out, we run to the Savior. This is true of all of us. We’ve got an idea in our own minds that we’re self-sufficient. We say, “I don’t need the Lord, you know, for these small things. The Lord takes care of the big things, I’ll take care of the little things.”**

But, my friend, listen. It’s not the big things that really bother you. It’s the little things. That’s where you fail. If I’m faithful in the little, I’ll be faithful in the much. I need God for the great, I need God for the little. I just need Him period. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. And why? Because we have terrible enemies.

**I wonder if this was in the mind of the Lord in John chapter 17, verse 18, when Jesus said, “Father, as thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through truth.” Jesus Christ today is not occupied so much with keeping the universe running in its order. He just speaks a word about that. Hebrews 1 says He upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). Colossians 1:17 says, “By Him are all things held together.”**

What is the great job the Savior is doing today? He’s caring for you and for me. He’s praying for us. You see, the Lord Jesus knows what the world is like. He knows the power of the devil. He knows the insidiousness of people being under the bondage of sin.

**You see, our Captain’s been ahead of us, and He knows the world in which we are. He knows its subtleties; he knows its power. And He says, “Because I know what’s in the world, Father, for their sakes I sanctify myself.” The trouble is that we Christians fail to realize the enemies that we have. We have a three-fold enemy: the world, the flesh and the devil.**

**Now notice in this 11<sup>th</sup> verse.**

6:11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

6:12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood (things that you can see, feel, and handle), but against principal-

ties, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

**Please never underestimate your enemy. The devil hates Christ and the devil hates you and me, if you're in Christ. The Apostle Paul could say, "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). James says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). I suggest 1 Peter 5:8 and 9. Believe me, Satan is a subtle one.**

You take Genesis chapter 3, the first few verses when the devil came to our foreparents, Adam and Eve. He came with subtlety, with deceit. You know what he said to Eve, if I could put into my own words? "Eve, do you really believe God loves you? If He really loved you, He wouldn't withhold the fruit of that tree from you. Why can't you eat the fruit of that tree if God loves you? Love withholds nothing."

You see, the first thing that he did was to get Eve occupied with Eve. Because the very next statement shows that when she said, "Oh, God says, if we eat of it, we'll die."

**And Satan raised the issue, "You think God really meant that? Did God really say you would die? Why, if God loves you and you are His creature, You'll not die. He loves you too much for that. You won't die."**

Just like men say today, when they hear the gospel of Christ, "I don't need a Savior. I can save myself." That's the devil's lie. And Satan not only de-

ceived Eve after the grace of God and deceived Eve after the Word of God, but he also said, "Why God knows that if you eat of the fruit of that tree, you'll be like God. You'll be like God."

**Just think of the subtlety of it. He not only attacked the grace of God and the Word of God, but he attacked the person of God. And Eve was so occupied with Eve, "I'll just be like God," that she went and took the fruit of the tree and gave it to her husband and he also did eat. And sin came into the human race. Through what? Through the subtlety of Satan.**

My friend, don't you for one moment underestimate the subtlety and the power of Satan. I'm talking about a great subject here. He doesn't come with horns and hooves and long tails. If you want to know what he's like, you read the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah and the 28<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ezekiel. He's perfect in beauty. He's full of wisdom. He's powerful. He ascribes to be just like God. The great passion of Satan's heart is to be worshiped. That's what he wants men to do. And men follow suit. Men today worship themselves instead of God. They worship men instead of the Savior. They're being caught up in the trap of Satanic subtlety.

**My Christian friend, you and I have no wisdom, no power against such authority. Hence, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Don't you underestimate the enemy. Don't you be ignorant of his devices. If I were to take the book of Exodus, you remember, Satan opposed the**

**command of God through Moses. First of all, through violence and then by imitation and then by compromise. This is Satan's tactic. We're not ignorant of his devices.**

You take the history of the Christian church from the first century, A.D. He tried to defeat the purpose of God in the church through the martyrs by violence and persecution. And then he did it through the centuries by imitation. They took pagan temples and made them Christian churches by imitation. And then Satan comes along and does it by compromise.

**And today, in our country we have so compromised the gospel and so compromised the things of God that even Christians don't know the difference between the real gospel and the perverted gospel. It's high time we believers got down to our Bibles. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. We wrestle against principalities and the wiles of the devil.**

Oh, my Christian friends, let's not be ignorant of Satan nor of his devices. May I repeat it, he always attacks the grace of God first and then the Word of God. Is the Word of God to be trusted? Then he attacks the person of God. Is He worthy of worship? And he comes against you first of all with violence and then with imitation and then with compromise. This is the day in which we live.

**And when I think of these things and the number of souls that have been led astray, I plead with you Christians to get down to business with**

**God. Get down into the Word of God. Know what God's Word has to say. Know His purposes. Know the Savior you're trusting. And then be a good soldier for Jesus Christ. I plead with you to get to know your Bible and to walk in fellowship with your Savior. And the Lord make it very, very real to you today for His name's sake.**

And may I again read from verses 10 down through verse 13.

6:10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

6:11. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

6:12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

6:13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

**And now we come to verse 12, and not only do we have the devil to contend with, but we wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, wicked spirits, demons. Remember this. And I oftentimes say, it is a good thing that we can't see some of our enemies. We'd be scared stiff.**

On the other hand, for your comfort may I suggest the last verse of Hebrews chapter 1 where we

read that holy angels have been sent forth to minister unto us who are the heirs of salvation.

There are two real kingdoms. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. And just as we have the Lord of glory with his heavenly hosts, righteous, holy, obedient, we have the kingdom of darkness ruled over by the devil and his hosts and principalities and powers and wicked spirits. And just as God uses men for His glory and the exaltation of His Son, so Satan uses men to thwart the purpose of God, to defeat the will of God, and to bring men into subjection to sin and darkness and hell and despair.

**Look at this. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities.” Oh, that we might have eyes to see and to look out for these fifth columnists who come as angels of light. Let me read a verse to you.**

Paul says, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

**God uses men and women today as channels for the display of His character, for the display of His grace and love. As God is working out a plan in the gathering out of a people for His name called the Church, as God is redeeming men and women and fitting them for eternal glory, you have Satan using men and women to thwart the**

**purpose of God, to defeat God's plan in the human race.**

I repeat it, we have two great armies, two great kingdoms. And my Christian friend, you belong to Christ. Stand therefore with your loins girt about with truth. Don't run away because of principalities and powers, but take unto you the whole armor of God and having done all to stand. Don't run away. Stand!

**Too often today, Christians are running away from the battle. They're running away from the enemy instead of standing with God. When I think today of the fast moving of the enemy of our souls in this land and in the world, we see evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Timothy 3:13). We see men being lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, being religious, but having no power (2 Timothy 3:4-5), no gospel. We see ecclesiastical leaders, denying the deity of our Savior and His wonderful love and grace for men and women, denying the work of Christ on the cross, denying the physical resurrection from the dead, denying His exaltation.**

My, how Satan is doing a work. He knows that his time is short. And the more we see this, the more we believe we ought to stand for God and for His Word and for His Son. Take unto you the whole armor of God because we have implacable enemies, wicked spirits, rulers of this darkness. And they come with subtlety; they come with trickery. They

come as ministers of righteousness. They come as preachers.

**You remember in Matthew chapter 7 our Lord said that many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? have we not done many wonderful works in Your name, have we not even cast out demons in Your name? And Jesus will say to them, Depart from me you workers of iniquity! I never knew you. You don't belong to me (Matthew 7:21-23).**

Is it possible that a person can be a preacher and be full of good works, be very, very religious and not be in the kingdom of God? Yes, yes! I read to you a moment ago from 2 Corinthians in which the Apostle Paul says, In that day (I think he's talking about today) Satan's ministers will come as ministers of righteousness. For what purpose? That they might deceive the elect of God, that they might deceive God's people. He's always come with deception. He's called the deceiver. He's called the serpent. He's also called a dragon.

**And God would that we Christians may not be ignorant, but rather that we might know the subtlety of Satan, that we might not be ignorant of his devices as he seeks to thwart the purpose of God in the world and he seeks to thwart God's purpose in you. Why, you remember in Matthew chapter 16, our Savior for the first time in His public ministry reported to the disciples that He**

**was going to suffer and die and be raised again from the dead.**

Then Peter said, “This be far from thee, Lord. Get this idea out of your head.”

And Jesus said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21-23).

**Now Peter was not Satan. But Satan was using Peter to thwart God’s purpose in His Son. I say this was the first time in the New Testament where the Lord Jesus declared and revealed to His disciples why He came. He’s going to build a church. That’s His purpose. Then He reveals His program—how He’s going to carry out that purpose. He’s going to suffer and die. And He’s going to be raised again.**

And back in Peter’s mind you can see Peter saying, “Well, Lord, I’ve just declared that you are the Christ, the Son of God. You can’t die. You’re going to reign.”

“No,” said Jesus. “Get thee behind me.”

**You see, the very moment that the purpose of God was revealed in His Son, you have Satanic, devilish opposition. When the purpose of God is revealed in your life and my life, we’re going to expect Satanic opposition. Quite often, when young men and women dedicate their lives to the Lord, as young Christians, and they feel led by the Spirit of God to give themselves, to make themselves available to God for a job to be done,**

**possibly right after that they will often have hard times, some very critical tests and trials. Why is that? It is Satan's seeking to thwart the purpose of God in that young man, in that young woman.**

**Let me remind you that Satan never goes to sleep. Neither he nor his cohorts sleep. They don't go on vacations. They're always on the job, trying to thwart the purpose of God in Christ and in His people.**

So it is here. You have Satan and his cohorts. Believe me, my friend, this is no fiction of the imagination. We have a real enemy. It was a real devil who came and tested our Savior in the wilderness. And he tested our Savior on the grace of God, the Word of God, and the person of God. You take those three temptations of Adam and Eve in the garden and you have the same three temptations of Christ in the wilderness. They epitomize the opposition of the devil to God's people and to God Himself.

**I wish in some way I could put it in words the way I feel about this. The scripture is very clear that we are in a warfare. But God hasn't left us helpless. He has given us the privilege of His resources. It is a wonderful thing, is it not, that you and I can pull on the resources of God in our warfare against the enemy. Let me read from verse 13.**

6:13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

6:14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

6:15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

6:16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

6:17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

6:18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

**Now I've read that portion because He tells us how we can stand. You'll notice as you read these verses that there is no armor for the back. Now from verses 13 unto 17 we have the armor given to us, and it's all for defensive warfare. When you come to the end of verse 17 and into verse 18, then we have some aggressive weapons. We not only have armor, but we have weapons. Now will you please notice our armor.**

6:13. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God.

**And may I say, my Christian friend, you can't afford to be without any of it. It is not enough to have a helmet or a breastplate. You need the whole business. Otherwise it wouldn't be in the Book.**

Now you'd better come on into the armory of God and be shod with the armor of God. You remember *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and Christian in his fight with Apollyon, the enemy of

our soul. He had his armor on. They equipped him. And God has for us our equipment so that we can stand against all the wiles of the devil.

Let's look at verse 14.

6:14. Stand therefore.

Don't run! Don't run! As the Apostle says, "Resist the devil and then he will flee" (James 4:7). It does not say, "Resist the devil and then run to beat the band." No, no. You stand and he runs. Listen to it.

6:14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.

**Your loins, your tender parts, your vital parts, girded about with truth. You see, we need truth. When a person is grounded in the truth of God, the enemy hasn't got a possibility of reaching his very vitals. It's because God's people have not been grounded in the truth of God that they fall victims to the subtleties of Satan.**

You take all the various cults of the day with their false doctrines. They don't feed upon pagans. They feed upon untaught Christians. They feed upon those who possibly have made a profession of salvation. They come along with their subtleties and they lead the lambs after the fables, the doctrines of men, the philosophies of men.

**Read Colossians chapter 2:8 where the Apostle warns the Colossian church of the vain philos-**

**ophies and words of vain deceit of men, the folly of legalism and false mysticism and asceticism and traditions that are not after Christ. Your loins must be girded about with truth. You remember, we're to have our loins girded and our lamps shining (Luke 12:35). Our vitals are to be guarded with truth.**

The enemy is wily, and he's very slick. And believe me, I'm scared for God's people these days. Do you know why? Because they do not get into the Word of God. And the tragedy is that in too many of our churches our preachers are not feeding God's people upon the Word of God.

And here you have in 2 Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 8, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." God wants us to be full of the truth—so that, when the enemy comes along with his subtleties and his false doctrines, we'd be able to say, "This is what God says. This is what the Book says"—and thus be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

**Read Paul and read Peter and John and even our Savior in Luke chapter 12. They continually warn us about these things—let your loins be girded and your lamps shining. And our loins have got to be girded about with truth.**

The very innermost recesses, the very vital parts of our being, must be girded with truth. And Jesus Christ said, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). He could say, "I am the truth" (John 14:6). But He also said, "Thy Word is truth." And when you and I fill our minds and our hearts and our lives with the truth

of God, then there is less possibility of our failing when the enemy comes in like a flood.

**Now the second thing also is not only to have your loins girded about with truth but also to have on the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate of righteousness. You know Paul speaks of this in Philippians 3:9 when he says, I'm going to "be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."**

The breastplate guards the heart and guards other vital parts of our body or in this case, spiritualizing, guarding our very souls. We need to be covered with the very righteousness of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 6:6-7, the Apostle Paul speaks again of this very thing when he says, "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

**May I repeat that verse, verse 7 of 2 Corinthians 6. Paul is talking here about all that he went through, his sufferings for the Savior and how he lived. And then he goes on to say, "By the Word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." This is how he approved himself as the minister of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. It's an amazing thing, this.**

And I think it has a lot to do with practical righteousness. You remember Titus 2, starting at verse 11, the grace of God which hath appeared unto us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for our Savior.

See, it's a heart occupation with Christ. We must have right motives if we are to defeat the enemy of our souls. We're to have our loins girded about with truth and have on the breastplate of righteousness. That right motive of life is a heart occupation with Christ and occupation with the righteousness of God.

**I tell you, you can hardly go down the streets today and not see things that are offensive to God. Everything is an appeal to the sexual emotions of men and women. I say you can't go down the street without seeing it. You see it in pictures; you see it in magazines. God cover us with His righteousness. How Satan has caught so many professing Christians in the swirl of an unclean, corrupt generation. And instead of standing out as Christians with righteousness manifested in our lives, so many have been caught in the subtlety of it.**

I know what I'm talking about because I'm dealing with people continually. I haven't been a pastor for 37 years in the city of Portland without realizing this. And it's becoming worse year after year after year. The whole trend of our society is toward moral corruption. And the only thing that can cause a

Christian to stand in these days for God is to put on the breastplate of righteousness.

**I'd appeal to you young people. Saturate your mind with the Word of God. Have your loins girt about with truth. Put on the breastplate of righteousness—not only imparted and imputed righteousness, but a practical righteousness in your own life where your motives and your very life will be led and directed and guarded by the Spirit of God through the Word of God. I would plead with you today.**

**I would plead with you Christians, you parents. Oh, if you value the life of your boys and your girls, surround them with right living. Surround them with the wonderful teaching of the person and work of Christ. Let them see something of the beauty and the pureness and the sinlessness and the righteousness of your Savior, so that when they go out into the world and see the corruption, they see the contrast. Remind them that there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of God where righteousness reigns and the kingdom of darkness where death and hell reign. And you can't straddle the fence.**

May God grant to those of us who are supposedly mature Christians to have that patience and tenderness, that desire, that yearning and that passion and hunger for our young people to walk before God in holiness.

Let your loins be girt about with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness and may your day be

one filled with the joy of His presence and the joy of His fellowship for His name's sake.

**And then, the third thing. I ought to have my feet, in verse 15 shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. You remember in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10, we have that wonderful verse, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We're His workmanship. Let's prove it!**

In Romans chapter 10, verse 15, Paul says, "How beautiful (blessed) are the feet of them that . . . bring glad tidings." We carry to the world the gospel of peace, and our feet are to be shod with the preparation. They are to be ready. Our lives should correspond with our message.

**I take it, my Christian friend, if you and I love the Savior and testify what the Lord can do for us and what He has done for us, that the practice in our lives will correspond with what we teach, with what we say, with what we profess. And let our feet always be ready. May our lives always be useable. May we be available to God to bring the gospel of good news of peace to men who are under such affliction, such deceit and such sin.**

The amazing thing to me is that God should trust us with the gospel of His wonderful grace, which is, of course, the gospel of peace. You remember in Ephesians chapter 2 from verses 14 through 18, we read that our Lord is our peace, that He made peace

for sinners, that He preached peace; and the moment a man accepts the Savior, he has peace with God as he walks with the Savior. He enjoys the peace of God. And now our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

**In other words, we are to be God's messengers to bring the blessed message to others. And you know, the more righteousness that is practiced in our lives and the more we bring the gospel of peace to men, the less possibility there is for us to fail God because our heart is being occupied with our Savior. And what we have in Christ will keep us from being occupied with sin.**

I confess to you that everything on the outside world tends to pull us down, to thwart God's purpose, to make us unclean in our thinking, unclean in our speech, unclean in our action. What can hold me back from this? Again I repeat, the Christian life is a supernatural life. But God has made provision for that to be wrought out in us. So let your loins be girded about with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, and let your feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

**Now that you've got your loins girded, your breastplate of righteousness on, and your feet shod, what else do you need?**

6:16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Ah, here it is. Take the shield of faith. I think I can't do better than go to Matthew chapter 4 and

show how the Savior Himself, as a Man in the midst of men, met the attack of Satan in the wilderness. What did He do? He just put up the shield of faith. He believed what the Bible said was true, and He used the Bible as His shield. "It is written." "It is written." We'll use this in a few moments when we come to the sword of the Spirit. But He used the shield of faith.

You see, this is one of the things young Christians are to have. At first, they're full of the joy over what they have in Christ; and then one day they fail God. They didn't intend to fail, but they failed God. They're still in the flesh and they failed God.

**Immediately Satan comes along and says, "Huh, I thought you were a Christian. I thought you were redeemed. I thought you were forgiven. Christians don't act this way. Christians don't act this way. So you see you're not a Christian after all. You're just deceived."**

Listen, you stand upon the Word of God which is a shield of faith. Take the Word of God and say, "This is what God says. This is what God says. This is what God says." I don't care what Satan says. He is a liar, a liar from the beginning. You take what God says. Comfort your heart and take the Word of God. This is what God says. Take the shield of faith.

**The Word of God says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). Believe it! Take the shield of faith and when**

**Satan says, “You’re not a Christian,” tell him what the Book says, what God says. You take the shield of faith and believe God, not the devil.**

And then Paul says in verse 17, “And take the helmet of salvation.” Have your mind covered with the assurance of salvation. This again comes through the Word. You see, salvation is a matter of relationship. Did you hear what I said? Salvation is a matter of relationship. But assurance is the matter of knowledge. This comes through the mind. And the more you know the Word of God, the more sure you are that you are saved.

**Why are so many Christians full of doubts. It’s because they need to put on the helmet of salvation. They need to have their minds clear on what Christ has done for them. You know, if Christians were established in what Christ has done for them on the cross, they wouldn’t have any doubts about their salvation at all.**

I’ve had men say to me, “Why, Mitchell, you talk as though you really know you’re saved.”

I say, “I am saved!”

“Well, that’s taking too much for granted.”

**Oh, no. Oh, no. I’m just** believing what God says. I’m believing what God says. I have assurance of salvation because of my knowledge of the Word. You see, in 2 Peter where we have false teachers brought before us, the guard against false teachers is the Word of God, to get to know the Word of God, knowledge. How do they get the knowledge of the Word of God? Through the mind, through the head. That’s what God

has given you a head for, to know things. To know things. I'm not saved by my emotions. I'm not opposed to emotions. I'm not saved by my experiences. I'm saved by my putting my trust in the Savior. And the more I see this, the more sure I am that I belong to Him. Put on the helmet of salvation.

My friend, have you got these things? Have you got your armor on? Look at it again: "Have your loins girded about with truth, have on the breastplate of righteousness, have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Take the shield of faith wherewith you can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation."

**The helmet of salvation** means assurance, the certainty of redemption in Christ. I tell you it's a wonderful thing to be saved. And it's a glorious thing to know that you're saved and that you are sure of it.

You say, "Mr. Mitchell, you're talking about security."

I'm talking about assurance. If Christ died for me, then He died for the whole man. He knew what I was before He saved me. He saved me with a perfect, eternal salvation; and He guarantees it to me in resurrection. He makes it sure to me personally by the Spirit of God.

**Oh, the marvelous provision that God has made for all men and women worldwide to be saved. And, oh, the treasures that God has stored up for every believer in His Son. Aren't you glad you're a Christian, friend? Isn't it wonderful to know Christ is your Savior. And also isn't it mar-**

**velous that God has made provision for you in the midst of a world that is corrupt? in the midst of a world that is under the sentence of death? in the midst of a world where Satan, the devil, rules and reigns in the hearts and lives of men? Isn't it wonderful that you and I can know the Savior and then can be fitted to stand against the world, the flesh and the devil?**

6:17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Now here we're dealing in verses 17 and 18 with the Word of God and prayer. Here are our weapons, our aggressive weapons. Now we come to our aggressive weapons.

6:17b. And (take) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

6:18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

**My, what a combination of tools or weapons God's given to us! The Word of God and prayer are the two weapons that we have to defeat the enemy. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. And I'm reminded of what the Apostle Paul could say in 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 3-5, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."**

Oh, I tell you, Christian friend, let us not be defeated believers. Let us be victorious, delivered believers, available to God to be used by Him.

**You see, the trouble is we're not acquainted with our sword. I confess again to you I'm appalled at the ignorance of the people of God who are living in the world and are not able to use the sword of the Spirit. I am amazed that they do not know a thing about the helmet of salvation. They know so little about the breastplate of righteousness. They do not gird their loins with truth, and they are absolutely defenseless when it comes to the usage of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

You remember, and I come back to this passage in Matthew chapter 4, and by the way this account is written in the three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John doesn't record the temptations of our Savior. You remember, John is the gospel of God manifest in the flesh and God is not a man that can be tested. But in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you have Him where He is tempted by the devil—and how did He defeat the devil?

**How did He use the sword? He just said, "It is written" three times. It is written. It is written. And the devil left Him. The devil did the running, not Jesus. Why didn't Jesus say, "As the Son of God, I rebuke thee!" Why didn't He call for a legion of angels? Why didn't He call for Michael, the archangel?**

No, no, no, no! As a man in the midst of men, He did what you and I can do or ought to do. It is to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. He just said, "It is written." He didn't say, "If you understand the Word of God." He just said, "It is written, it is written, it is written."

Satan says, "You're not a Christian. You wouldn't do that if you were a Christian."

You can say, "It is written that the man who puts his trust in the Savior is a child of God."

May I plead with your heart, Christian friend? The more corrupt the world becomes, the more you and I should get into this blessed Book and know it.

Can you give a reason for the hope within you?

Can you say the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty through God?

Can you take the sword of the Spirit and wield it and use it and defeat the powers of hell? I plead with your heart to get to know the Word of God.

You say, "Mr. Mitchell, I'm an old man. I'm an old woman, and my mind doesn't retain things."

**That doesn't hinder you if you can read at all. Read the Word of God. I didn't ask you to understand it. Read it and read it and read it and read it, and it will do something more than you realize. Read the Word of God. Didn't David say, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). He didn't say the understanding of the Word of God is going to clean you and cleanse you. It's the word of God itself.**

I don't understand the power of the Word of God. It's beyond me. It's so powerful. It's so mighty. It so cleanses the life. I just plead with you, my friend. And young people, start now to fill your minds and saturate your life with the Word of God. Be able to wield the sword of the Spirit in this generation that is already under the control of hell. Satan comes in the garments of righteousness to deceive. Take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. Learn to wield it and to use it.

And then verse 18 you have your resources.

6:18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Oh, listen, friends, praying and watching, these are our resources. It's like a sentry on duty. It's warfare. Paul uses a military term. Watch, be on the watch. Sentry duty. Be on the alert. We have an enemy. Don't fall asleep. Be vigilant.

**This is what Colossians 4:2 says. This is what 1 Thessalonians 5:6 says. This is what 1 Peter 4:7 says. Praying and watching. With all perseverance. Oh, my, it's so easy, it's so easy to give up. It's so easy to fall asleep. I know. I know what I'm talking about. Just like dear old Peter. He was a good sleeper. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching, guarding thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Why? Because we're all at battle.**

**Just like when all our men went overseas. Those that were at home were at war, too. We were at war, too. We were praying for our boys. We were giving for our boys. We were giving for the national defense, and so all had a part in the war. You just didn't get away from it. In one way or another it affected you. So it is in spiritual warfare. We need to pray for each other—not to damn each other, not to criticize each other—but praying always with all prayer with perseverance and supplication for all saints.**

6:19. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

6:20. For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

**Even Paul yearned for the saints of God to pray for him that he might be bold in the midst of an enemy world to proclaim the gospel of peace. People say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, what should we pray for?”**

Listen. You could spend two hours on your knees and not get through praying for God's people or the world outside and its sin or your missionaries in every part of the world. One of the reasons why the world doesn't know the Savior is because the Church of Christ has ceased praying.

You remember Matthew 9 where Jesus said at the end of the chapter, He had compassion on the people for they were sheep having no shepherd

(verse 36). And then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38). There is a harvest to be reaped and the lack is for laborers. So why don't we pray?

**May I say to those of you** who are shut in, you older ones who are shut in and who can't go very far. While you're shut in on your backs possibly, won't you enter the ministry of prayer and supplication for missionaries? Won't you pray for the church of Christ? Won't you pray for God's people? Won't you pray for the young people? Won't you pray that God will send forth laborers into His harvest?

Oh, grant that you may do this. The sword of the Spirit, the word of God, praying always with all prayer, these are your resources in a mighty and eternal God. Even Paul needed the prayers of God's people.

**Won't you pray for all who read this book? Won't you pray for every believer, every pastor, every Bible teacher, every minister of the Word of God, every missionary, every Christian teacher? Oh, friends, let's not stop praying! Help us by prayer that in some way we might reach our generation with the Word of life.**

Now, we've come to the end of Ephesians. And at the end of Ephesians you've got the salutations, and I won't take any time on them. This closes our study in the book of Ephesians.

And the Lord wonderfully bless you.