

Ephesians

Sunday 6/19/2005

I. Introduction to Galatians and Ephesians

We are going to study the book of Ephesians, but if you know anything about last week, we skipped over Galatians chapter 5. So we are going to go back to Galatians 5, and it kind of worked out well once I saw it because Galatians, or the book of Galatians, really is a prelude to the book of Ephesians, and it has some great material in it, and to see one as the other.

You remember last week we began to talk about the book of Galatians, and I showed you how a problem had arisen in the church at Galatia. Somebody had come in and began to teach heresy and began to confuse the church. I told you this church was not like the church at Corinth. This was a good church. This was a church that really tried to do what was right.

You have to remember the time that we are in back here. Everything has just changed. Christianity has now been introduced. Some people are having a tougher time understanding it than others. We have just come out of a transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the nation of Israel to the body of Christ, and there are people who are having a tough time grasping all of this. As always, in any given situation within the Bible, you have people who take advantage of the situation, and heresy has crept into this church.

I showed you how in Galatians 1 and Galatians 2, Paul really lays down the authority of the gospel. He focuses on how the gospel was given to him, and he is the caretaker of it. That is why Paul refers to it as "my gospel." He takes two chapters and really lays out the authority of the gospel.

Then he takes the next two chapters, Galatians 3 and Galatians 4, and he lays out the superiority of the gospel. He shows how the gospel is superior, how it is everything that Christ is, and how Christ was the end of the law. He goes all through that.

Then when he comes to Galatians 5 and Galatians 6, he talks about the liberty in the law. Those two chapters are great chapters, and they are great gateway chapters to the book of Ephesians, because in Galatians 5 and Galatians 6, and we looked at Galatians 6 last week, but we did not get to Galatians 5. He begins to talk about the fact that now that we are in the New Testament, now that we are no longer under the law—and this is the point that he is trying to make to the church here—that once you are saved, allowing somebody or voluntarily going back under the law is absolutely ridiculous. It serves no purpose.

He starts out in Galatians 5:1 with a great verse, which simply says:

Galatians 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The verse says it all. The verse says, "Now that you are saved and you understand the gospel of Christ, stand in it. Do not let anybody take you or take it from you and put you back under the yoke of bondage," which would be the Old Testament law.

He goes on, and Galatians 5 simply teaches in the first part, verses 2, 3, and 4, and down through a little bit further on, that if you try to put yourself back under the law, or you subscribe to another gospel, which is what they were doing—somebody was showing up preaching another form of the gospel. He says when you put yourself under that, and you come to the point that you allow yourself to get back into that bondage, what you really do is you make the death of Christ on Calvary's cross of no effect in your life. He is saying, "If you have to go back under the law to be saved or stay saved, then what on earth did Christ's death on the cross do for you?"

I have used that argument many times in dealing with people who believe you have to be baptized to go to heaven. Many times somebody will say to me, "Well, you have to be baptized to go to heaven," and I will say, "Well, if that is true, then why on earth did Christ die on the cross? Why the agony? Why the pain? Why all that suffering that He went through? If that is the mode of salvation, and God makes you clean through some systematic sprinkling of water, why in the world did Christ have to go down and go through the agony of the cross? Why did not Jesus just say, 'Get baptized?'" The reason for that is baptism cannot save you, but that is the point that he is making here. If the law can save you or keep you saved, what is the point? Why did Christ even bother dying on the cross? Because the cross is now of no effect.

Then in Galatians 5:9, a great Bible principle and a great salient verse, it simply says:

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

That is something that you can take to the bank all day long, all week long, in every aspect of your life. That is why the Bible says when we get saved, we get separated from the world. That is why the Bible says we are a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away, all things become new. That is why the Bible says that once we get saved, we are to focus on the things of God to stay the way that God wants us to be, because we have now been separated from the world. Leaven in the Bible will always be a false doctrine. The aspect here is, if you let a little bit of false doctrine in, it will corrupt the whole system.

There are great lessons of that in history. I could walk you down through history and church history and show you example after example where men thought that they could get around that principle and could do it in spite of what the Word of God said. Of course, you cannot. Erasmus could not do it when he thought he could. The Southern Baptist Convention could not do it when they thought they could. Nobody down through history can do it because of that principle, because false doctrine is the number one thing that will destroy the body of Christ, and a little bit of leaven in time will leaven the whole lump.

Then he comes down in Galatians 5:22-23, a great passage. He says he is coming in to talk about the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Galatians 5:23

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:24

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Those two verses talk about the fruit of the Spirit. Notice there are nine fruits here, but the word "fruit" is not plural. It is only singular because all of this fruit comes from one source, and they are all connected together. As far as God is concerned, they are not one. That will end the debate and discussion forever that you get some of the fruits, not all of the fruits, or whatever. The bottom line is it is singular because you get everything that Christ has the moment you get saved. You may not know how to use it, and you may not know what to do with it, but you have it.

This leads to much confusion today. I have found in dealing with Christians, there is a great, and on almost every subject in the Bible today, there is some form of bad teaching or bad connection or downright heresy with it. I have found that as you come through the Scriptures, you will find that there is a great controversy between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. We saw the gifts of the Spirit when we were in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. I told you that the gifts of the Spirit will always deal with the power of God. The fruit of the Spirit will always deal with the character of God.

Here is how it works, and it is real easy. God has a job for you and for me to do after we get saved. We have talked about it all the time. I do not know what that job is. Maybe if you are just a young Christian or you have just been saved a short time, you do not know what that job is. But I am telling you right now, God has a job for you to do after you get saved. Your ability to do that job is based on how you build your relationship with God. That is why it is so important to me as your pastor to make sure you have every opportunity of growth, that everything done is done in the right way, with the right motive, that you get everything you need to help your relationship with God. Of course, we are talking about the Word of God, which is His mind.

The fruit of the Spirit, as I said, always deals with the character of God. The gifts of the Spirit always deal with the power of God. Here it goes. When you build your personal relationship with Christ, you develop the characteristics of Christ in your life. You cannot help it. This is why discipleship is so important. This is why working one-on-one with you, helping you understand the Bible, cataloging the Bible, every time we meet together for whatever purpose, whether it is one-on-one, Sunday morning, or Thursday night, the goal is to have you a little better prepared in your relationship with God and to build a little more of Christ's character into your life.

As you develop those characters of Christ, that in time automatically develops into the power of God in your life, and now you are fit to do whatever God wants you to do. If you have the power of God, or think you have the power of God, without the character qualities of God, all you have is the flesh. The power of God and the character of God cannot be separated. One is connected to

the other. You do not get one, do you get the other one first? You have to have the character of God to be able to handle the power of God, and if you do not, you become a self-inflated Goodyear blimp who travels around the world thinking more highly of yourself than you really should, and that is the problem in Christianity today. So that is Galatians 5.

Then in Galatians 6, he continues with the liberty in Christ, and he basically says this, just to reiterate, and then moving into Ephesians. He simply says this. He says, "Even though you have liberty, you are not under the law, you have to be careful how you use your liberty." That is why we talked about one of the great verses last week about, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." So when you look at the book of Galatians and you break it down in that light, then the next book of Ephesians, which we are going to move into now, really begins to take on an identity that helps you understand it.

II. The Book of Ephesians: Its Uniqueness and Purpose

Because in the book of Ephesians, this is what he does: he just had a problem with the church in Galatia, and he has laid out and dealt with them along those lines about that problem of another gospel. Now he writes the book of Ephesians, and what he does in the book of Ephesians is he lays out the church and every aspect of the church unlike any other book that he writes. In other words, when you are done with the book of Ephesians, if you study it right and you get it right, there is no stone left unturned as far as the doctrine concerning the body of Christ and all the ramifications that go along with it.

I have said this many, many times, and you have heard me say it, that when it comes to the Bible, you need to know all the books of the Bible. That is our goal. I know we are in the process of that, but in time in your life as a child of God, that is how you live your life. You live your life by the principles, where you learn the principles by learning the Bible, building your relationship with God, and it all goes together. I say it all the time, that in time you should have a good working knowledge of all the books in the Bible.

But there are some books in the Bible, very frankly, that you just need to know backward and forward and upside down and inside out. We have talked about some of those books. Matthew is one of those. Acts is another. Hebrews is another. You could go to the Christian bookstore and buy the next 1500 volumes on Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews, and you would never find one commentator that will warn you about the danger of those books. Do you know why? Because they do not know the danger of them, and that is why there is so much heresy out there.

Then Romans is another one. We talked about Romans because Romans is obviously the handbook of Christian doctrine. Colossians, I believe, is another one in the New Testament, because it so firmly fits into the Laodicean church age. Then, of course, the book of Revelation. Along with that, certainly would be the book of Ephesians. I believe it is a key book in the New Testament. I think it is so important to understand the book of Ephesians.

In fact, I look at it this way. In the Old Testament, there is one book that is such an intimate book that tells you how to have a relationship with Christ in the Old Testament, better than any other book. That book is the Song of Solomon. We studied all this when we came through it, so I am

not giving anything new. But when we studied the book of Song of Solomon, we saw how that it breaks down into two aspects. It is one, Christ speaking about you and me as the bride, and talking to us about us. When we read that, we then pick up, really, and understand how Christ views us as the church. Then, the other part of the book is the church, the bride, speaking back to the bridegroom. This is all typified historically by Solomon and the virtuous woman that he finds out of the thousand wives that he has. He finds one, whose price is far above rubies. When he talks back to him, we find out what our attitude should be toward the Lord Jesus Christ, our bridegroom. In that sense, the book of Ephesians is the most intimate book for you and for me in all of the Old Testament.

Now, the most intimate book for you and I in the New Testament is the book of Ephesians. In fact, the book of Ephesians is in the New Testament what the Song of Solomon is in the Old Testament, because it explains in every detail, every intimate detail. If you want one word that categorizes the book of Ephesians as the book of Song of Solomon, it is the word intimacy. It is the word intimacy. In that book, Paul explains every detail. I understand why it falls in the order after the book of Galatians. Because in Galatians, they are having a problem. The reason why they are having a problem, Galatians 5 and Galatians 6, which we just reviewed, is because they really do not understand it. There is a lot of misunderstanding about the body of Christ today in the church. I will tell you the reason why, is because God's people today do not understand the book of Ephesians as Paul lays it out. Because there is nothing left to your imagination once you get through with the book of Ephesians. It deals with the church.

There are a number of different names connected with the church, and they all mean the same thing even though they may have a different reference. For instance, the church is called the body of Christ. We live in the church age. That church age is called the body mystery. It is also called the dispensation of the grace of God. You will find all these great theological terms, if we can use that word properly here, defining and laying out these great concepts. The book of Ephesians, without a doubt, is probably the deepest book in the New Testament. It is such a book of depth, because it reveals so many intimate things about the body of Christ to us, that it is an incredible book to spend the rest of your life coming through.

III. Heresies and Doctrinal Distinctions

Consequently, because of that, you will find out that that book is kind of like a hangout zone of the deeper life crowd. The deeper life crowd are people who really do not accept all of the Bible in its form, but they just go after the deeper things. Sometimes you hear them referred to as hyper-Calvinists. A hyper-Calvinist is someone who believes that God did not die for everybody, that He died for certain people. They will take their doctrine for that out of the book of Ephesians, basically in Ephesians 1, because Ephesians 1 is a great depth chapter.

Then you will find another group called the hyper-dispensationalists. They are so hyper, they have cut the Bible up to the place where they tell you and me that the only writings in the Bible that are even for us are the things that Paul writes. They do not even preach out of the other books of the Bible. No Old Testament, no Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, no Hebrews, no James, no 1st and 2nd Peter. The only book... You have a book that you spend a lot of money for,

a lot of books that you do not need, because the only books that are profitable for you that you should even read and study that they will ever preach out of is what Paul wrote. Why? Because they believe that the church started with Paul, which it did not. So they take that and they say because he is the revealer of the body mystery, which he is, that then only his writings apply to the church and everything else you should not study. Of course, that is not true.

In the book of Romans, when we studied Romans, we saw the great concept, peace with God. We learned that the concept, and you find it in the Bible where it says, "peace with God" will always deal with salvation. The day you got saved, you made peace with God. In the book of Ephesians, we will see another term. We will see the term "peace from God." Where the "peace with God" deals with salvation, the "peace from God" deals with your day-to-day walk in your fellowship and your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Ephesians as a Prison Epistle and the Concept of "In Christ"

Another thing you want to remember, this is all kind of like introduction here, is the book of Ephesians. It is a prison epistle. That is why you will find that when Paul, this is the first thing that he writes, the first time he is in jail, probably around Acts 28 somewhere. It is a great concept for the church. Because Paul takes the position not only that he is in jail physically, but he relates the fact that you and I as Christians should look of ourselves as prisoners. Someone who does not have the right to go where we want to go. Someone who has severe limitations in our lives. All of the area that fits into our lives as Christians. That is why he talks in Ephesians 3 when he opens up that great chapter. He says, "Paul, a prisoner." When he says in Ephesians 4, he says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord." He puts himself not only physically in prison, but he puts himself in the aspect that as a Christian, we do not have any rights and we should look at ourselves the same way. Just another way to study the Christian life. A bondsman is another one. We have talked about all those before.

Now when you come through Ephesians 1, you are going to find that in Ephesians 1, and we can spend a lot of time in Ephesians 1, we are not going to, I am just going to kind of brief it. There will be some point at some time when we will have to come through the book of Ephesians almost word by word together. But I want you, even before we do that at some distant time, I want you to have the outline down and see what this book is about. You are going to find in the first chapter seven great doctrinal teachings. These doctrinal teachings are really about the spiritual blessings that you and I have in our lives. They are incredible concepts. They are concepts that are not understood today. Consequently, the body of Christ is all confused, does not have any insight into it. This is where heresy begins to creep in because people do not understand this today and all the ramifications that go along with it.

The first thing you find is the great doctrine of Ephesians 1:4, which lays out the fact that you and I were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. I want you to ponder these things for a second. The great spiritual concept that before the foundation of the world, you and I were chosen by God. Now how did that happen? Who did He choose? Was everybody chosen? When

you take that, if you do not stay with the book of Ephesians and follow it out, you can come up with every bad teaching you want. They do.

In Ephesians 1:5, you find the word predestination. We have already seen the word predestination when we studied the book of Romans. In fact, you find predestination four times in the Bible, two times in Ephesians, two times in Romans. You find out what it means in the book of Ephesians to be predestinated. Of course, again, if you do not take the Bible and stay with it, you can make predestination everything that you want. That is exactly what they do. That is why you have some of the conceited brethren today who are teaching, "Because I am standing here teaching you, teaching others, that before the foundation of the world, God looked down and He chose this side to go to heaven, this side to go to hell. Nothing you can do about it. If you happen to be born chosen of God, you are predestined to be saved. You cannot do anything about it. You are going to get saved no matter what you do. You side over here, you are predestined to go to hell, you could not get saved if you wanted to."

Now, that makes life real simple if you do not want to be a soul winner, because I simply do not have to bear the burden of the Great Commission anymore because God already worked it out. This side is going to hell, this side is going to heaven. All I have to do is just study the deeper things of the Bible, and that is exactly what they do. They are out of balance. It is a terrible heresy. The book of Ephesians lays that heresy out.

Then you have in Ephesians 1:6 another concept about being accepted in the beloved. In Ephesians 1:7, you have another great concept about the redemption through His blood. Ephesians 1:13, what a great concept, talking about sealed with the Spirit of promise. Then in Ephesians 1:14, it talks about our inheritance as the purchased possession. What a great, great seven great doctrinal aspects to break down and lay out to really put it through.

Now, the book teaches one great concept by which all other concepts have to be defined. It is a very simple thing, and you might know that when God wanted to confuse the wise people of the world, He would do it in a very simple fashion. It is a little term "in Christ." In fact, in the first three chapters, you are going to find where He uses the term "in Christ," "in whom," "in the beloved," some derivative that talks about the fact that we are in Christ. You are going to find it 18 times in the first three chapters. You are going to find, I believe, 11 times that term in the first chapter. What He is simply saying is this: Chosen in Him, predestinated in Christ, accepted in the beloved, redemption through His blood, sealed with the Spirit of promise, our inheritance. You are going to see in just a few moments when we get into Ephesians 1 that God put all of those things in Christ. In Christ. You have to put everything in the book of Ephesians in one little box, and that box is labeled "in Christ." If you want to get any or all of those things, you have to get in Christ. How do you get in Christ? You get saved. That is the way this thing works.

2 Timothy 1:9

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

You are going to find that everything in the book of Ephesians, every spiritual, deep concept, has to be viewed in the light that God, way back before time ever started, put all of those things in Christ. So you did not get predestinated one second before He put it in Christ. So predestination is never dealt with with salvation in the Bible. If you want to get all of those things that He is talking about, you have to get saved to get them. It all starts with redemption through His blood because that is the only way we can get in Christ. God took every spiritual thing that there was and put it in His Son.

Now with that in mind, let us begin to look at the breakdown of this great book. Ephesians 1, Ephesians 2, and Ephesians 3 is the first division. Ephesians 4, Ephesians 5, Ephesians 6 is the second division. The book of Ephesians is based around that great old doctrine that we talked about on Thursday night. I think it was the first week we did it. Maybe it was the second week. I do not know. Come to think of it, maybe we did not do it. I have taught it so many times, so many people play the camera. But if we did not, we will. I know I taught it to you on Sunday morning, but it is that concept of standing and state. Standing and state. Everything in the Christian life breaks down to those two aspects.

Ephesians 1, 2, and 3 deals with our standing in heaven, and it deals with the heavenly side of things. That is why "in Christ" in the first three chapters, you do not find it in Ephesians 4, 5, and 6. Because in Ephesians 4, 5, and 6, he is dealing with our state. Our state is our physical relationship, our pilgrimage on this earth, as we try to serve God as best we can. I laid that out when we came through the book of Leviticus, if you remember. If you want to go back and look at that in your notes, I laid out, and that is where we attacked the doctrine of standing and state on Sunday morning, is in the book of Leviticus, because that is how the book of Leviticus is broken down, showing you how the Old Testament priesthood, the first half is spiritual, second half of that book is physical, and it deals with the breakdown between the two. Our standing will always be your spiritual relationship with Christ. Your state will be your physical relationship as to your fellowship. You want to remember that. We are going to talk about those as we come through here.

Let us listen to Ephesians 1. It says in Ephesians 1:1, and this asks the Lord to bless us. Father, we thank you and praise you for all you do for us. We ask you, Lord, to bless us now as we come to your word, make it all clear to us today, help us to understand all that you have for us, and take the word of God and open our hearts and pour it in. Lord, we thank you for these men and women. Lord, I know that in any size church, Lord, whether it is 5,000 or 500 or 5, the first thing it goes is an attitude. Lord, I pray that our hearts would always be mindful for this book. We will thank you and praise you for what you are going to do today. Let this book keep us as one that we may find what you have for us to do, and protect us from those that would hurt us, protect us from those, Father, that would within this body, divide us, and we will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

It says in Ephesians 1:1:

Ephesians 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:

Ephesians 1:2

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

Ephesians 1:3

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

Ephesians 1:4

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

Ephesians 1:5

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Ephesians 1:6

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

Ephesians 1:7

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

Ephesians 1:8

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

Ephesians 1:9

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

Ephesians 1:10

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:

See that thing? Over and over and over. In Christ, in Him, in Christ, in whom it never stops. Ephesians 1 is probably the deepest spiritual chapter in all of the Bible. There is so much in here, dealing with all this stuff "in Christ." This chapter really defines what the book of Ephesians is. Obviously, we are not going to have time at this point to go through all of it. But it begins to show you that the key here is "in Christ."

He says in Ephesians 1:3:

Ephesians 1:3

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

You want to get blessings from God? Here is where they are at. With all spiritual blessings. You want to get spiritual blessings? Where are you going to get them? Are you going to get them at church? Are you going to get them in your Bible? Are you going to get them from your preacher? Are you going to get them from your husband or your wife? No, you are going to get them in heavenly places in Christ. Every spiritual thing that there is, God put in Christ before the foundation of the world, and then from there we have to get in Him to get those things. That "getting in Him" means you have to get saved. When you get saved, that term simply means you are now in Christ. Once you are in Christ, you now have the doors open to you for all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That is why for a child of God there are no limits. There are no limits for you and for me as a child of God, other than the limits that you and I put upon ourselves because of our flesh. Other than that, it is wide open. You can do whatever you want to do for God within confines of the Scriptures as long as you understand that the only person... All my life I have heard people blame their lack of spiritual growth or their spiritual problems on somebody else or something else. I just laugh at them. I absolutely laugh at them. Because that is the most ludicrous thing in all the world to say that a circumstance or somebody else will stop you from spiritual growth. There is only one person that will stop you from growing, and that is you. And your choice to stop growing because you do not want to. Now you may blame it on everything else, but you will want to package it up and sell that to somebody else because I am not buying it.

V. The Unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ

Ephesians 2. What a great chapter on the concept of the Jew and Gentile in one body. Now this is a new issue. This is what is called the body mystery. The mystery of the body is how the Jew, who was one identity group in the world, and the Gentile, the other identity group in the world, who all through the Old Testament are at odds with each other, finally in the New Testament become one in Christ Jesus. This is what this great chapter deals with.

He talks about in Ephesians 2:1-6 that the Gentiles were God's enemies. That is you and me. Of course, we saw this from Romans 1, Romans 3, and Romans 10. Then he breaks into Ephesians 2:11-12 and he talks about how the Jews hated us also. Of course, we find out Romans 9, Romans 11. Then in Ephesians 2:13 he says, "Even though the Gentiles are God's enemies and the Jews are our enemies," he says in Ephesians 2:13-14:

Ephesians 2:13

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

Ephesians 2:14

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

You see, in the Old Testament the Gentiles and the Jews were separated. In the New Testament they become one in Christ. Because the Old Testament gets done away with, the law gets done away with, Christ fulfilled the law, and now that we have moved into another dispensation called the dispensation of the church, the body of Christ, the church age, the Jew and the Gentile are now in one body.

I explained this to you before, but I am going to do it again briefly just so you understand the main difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament it is all physical. In the New Testament it is all spiritual.

They fought literal enemies back there, the Amalekites, the Hittites, and all that group. We fight spiritual enemies on this side. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.

Their warfare was a literal one. They had real swords. We have a sword that is in a book today.

Their enemies wanted to kill them. Our enemy, the unsaved world, wants to stop us.

Everything you see falls into those two categories. Their kingdom was the kingdom of heaven, a literal visible kingdom dealing with a city Jerusalem, dealing with a piece of ground, the land of Palestine. Ours is spiritual because our kingdom is the kingdom of heaven. So my city is a spiritual city, New Jerusalem. My kingdom is a spiritual kingdom.

Where their inheritance is a little piece of ground, my inheritance is all out into eternity with all the spiritual blessings that go along with it.

Back in the Old Testament they had a temple. That temple was a real building. The Jews went out and got everybody and told them to come to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. Because it is all built around a literal place called Jerusalem.

In the New Testament there is no temple, literally. The temple is your body and my body.

The biggest difference between the New Testament and the Old Testament is in the Old Testament the whole world was to go to the temple. In the New Testament we are supposed to take our temple to the world.

That is how it works. That is why the Jew and the Gentile are in one body. Ephesians 2:16 says:

Ephesians 2:16

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

That is a great concept that shows that in the New Testament, the body of Christ, it begins to explain. With that chapter alone you can see how that fits into what he is dealing with in the book of Galatians. That they are being brought back under the law. When he explains the church, you begin to see all the great concepts and how they fit into our lives.

Here is another great concept. Ephesians 2:6:

Ephesians 2:6

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

You see that thing? In Christ. Somebody said one time, "What is the easiest way to figure out eternal security? That you know that once you get saved you can never lose your salvation." Because we know that even though we are saved, we still do wrong things. We get out of fellowship with God. We all do. Of course, I have told people many, many times that, you know what, once you get saved, it is not a matter, "Do you need to get saved again?" Once you get saved, God no longer looks at you as a sinner anymore. He now looks at you as His child. The real issue is, are you a good child or are you a disobedient child? That is the real issue.

But here is another way you know. Once you get saved, you get in Christ. I do not know any way to get out of Christ. I just do not know how that could happen. I have read in the Bible, over and over and over again, probably to the tune of a thousand times how a man gets in Christ. I cannot find one place where it ever says how you get out of Christ. In fact, once you get saved in Christ Jesus, you are so surely saved that in God's mind, you are already seated up in heavenly places. You know right now, when God looks around the throne, I do not know if they have bleachers or chairs like this, but anyway, when God looks around the throne, He sees every saved person up there. You say, "You mean I am really seated up there?" No. "You mean there is a dual image of me up there?" No. "You mean there is a, when I got saved, an angel was transformed in the Bible Alexander's image and told to shut down and God sees him seated?" No. No. Do you know how He sees you? He sees us when He sees Christ. Because I am in Christ. When He sees Christ, He sees me. Do you know why? Because I am the body of Christ. See how it starts to come together? It is real simple. It is real easy. In God's mind, you and I are already in heaven. Why? Because we are in Christ and every time He looks down on His right hand, He sees Christ sitting there and me in Him. I do not know any way to get out. I mean, I have got terrible news for you. If you are saved and truly been saved at some point in life, I have got some terrible news for you. You are going to heaven. God may get you there in an iron lung or a hospital or a casket, but you are going. I know the Bible says a thousand ways you can get in. I do not know any place in the Bible that tells you how to get out. You are in, you are in.

VI. The Fullness of God and the Fourth Dimension

Now we come to Ephesians 3.

He says in Ephesians 3:1:

Ephesians 3:1

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which has given me to you word. See, that is the church age. Church age in the Bible will be called the dispensation of the grace of God. Now we have defined what a dispensation is before, but let us do it again. We have got new people here. A dispensation is nothing more than a period of time. I will give you a good example. The Old Testament and the New Testament is a different dispensation. In fact,

depending on how you count them up in the Bible, there are anywhere from seven to eleven different dispensations in the Bible. Some guys even get more than that. A dispensation is when God stops dealing with a man, dealing with people this way and then starts dealing with another way. For instance, from Adam to Moses was the dispensation called conscience. Why? Because there was no law and God dealt with man on the basis of his conscience. Then when Moses showed up, God gave him the law. So from Moses up to the first coming of Christ, they are under the law. Then when Christ came, He fulfilled the law. Now we are in the church age. There are three dispensations. Dispensation before the law, He dealt with them one way. Dispensation under the law, He dealt with them another way. Dispensation of the grace of God, the church, He is dealing with us another way. It is real simple. It is not hard.

He says that the church age is called the dispensation of the grace of God. He says in Ephesians 3:10:

Ephesians 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,

He says that the church can know the manifold wisdom of God. Do you know why? Because in this dispensation of the grace of God, He put the manifold wisdom of God in a book that you can have holding in your lap today.

Ephesians 3:17-19 says:

Ephesians 3:17

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Ephesians 3:18

May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

Ephesians 3:19

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Now, God wants in this dispensation you and I to be filled with the fullness of God. Now you have all of the Holy Spirit of God when you got saved, and in a sense you have got the fullness of God, but you do not recognize how to use it all. That is why God gave you a book that lays out the manifold wisdom of God, which is called the unsearchable riches of Christ in Ephesians 3:8, that never ends, that is eternal, unexhaustible, which is unsearchable in all of its riches, that you may study it and read it, and this book passes knowledge that you might be filled with the fullness of God.

Now he says, look at this, Ephesians 3:17-19, "that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, depth and height." Now I do not know if you know it or not,

but we live in a physical world. I know you know that. But in the physical world we have three dimensions. We live in a three-dimensional world, and that three-dimensional world is basically length, height, and breadth. He says here that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, the length, and the depth and the height. Now I want you to look here that even though there are three in our world, there are four here. How many times have I read something someplace about some astronomer or somebody that is into physics or whatever talking about the fourth dimension, another dimension? They have those theories that if you got out of outer space that you would go through a door or a time warp. Some people call them black holes. Other people think that there is a parallel universe. In other words, there is a universe on the other side of our universe that mirrors our universe. And there is an earth like this with people that look just like us doing the same thing over here. Only better, I hope.

Now I do not believe any of that. The Bible does not teach any of that. But I understand the concept that there is a fourth dimension. You see, when it says down here that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, the length, and the height. The breadth would be the mercy of God. The length would be the longevity of God, history. The height would be my ability to trust God because He is taller than I am and He is tall enough to see over my obstacles that I cannot see.

So the average Christian, when you get saved, never really enters into the spiritual world. What I am about to tell you is one of the most tragic things that I know of the body of Christ. It is the thing that I work at every day of my life, being the pastor of this church, that I know of you from falling into. I know as well as I try, some of you are going to. Nothing I can do about it. I do not like it. I understand my responsibility. I may give account of a lot of things at the judgment seat of Christ, but that is one thing I will not give an account for.

I think the most tragic thing is that God's people who are spiritual beings never step into the spiritual fourth dimension. God's people as saved, born again people, they understand the mercy of God. They understand the length of God, His longevity. Many of them understand the height of God. That is how they can trust God to get us through the tough circumstances in life, but that is where they stop. The fourth dimension is unknown to man. Only a saved man or woman can enter into the fourth dimension, and 99.999% of them do not because the fourth dimension is not physical. The fourth dimension of God is spiritual, and it is the depth of God. The depth of God has to deal with a book that is the unsearchable riches, that is eternal, that has no end because the mind of God has no end. When you get into this book, you have everything you need. You step outside of the physical realm.

I have told you before, back in the book of Proverbs, the book of Proverbs talks about knowledge. Knowledge is in the physical realm. When you listen to somebody like Bill O'Reilly, who lots of people like, because he is somebody of a conservative and he takes the conservative side, or Rush Limbaugh, who neither one of those guys are Christians, but they take a more conservative approach to the liberal, so many, many Christians gravitate because they hold good, solid positions. When you listen to them, you will find two men, and there are many more like it. I just use them because you all know who they are. You will listen to those men and you will hear knowledge. You will listen to those men and you will hear wisdom. Because both of those

men are very well versed in the facts and the wisdom of things that are going on in this world. What you will not get from any one of them is understanding, because understanding is not in the physical world. Understanding is the fourth dimension, which goes down to the depth of God's mind, that when you see what is going on in the world, you can put two and two and see God's hand in it and know where the thing not only started, where it is at, why it is where it is at, and where it is going. Those guys cannot do that. Most of God's people cannot do that.

Most of God's people spend all of their Christian life in the physical realm of Christianity. They know that God is an old God. He has been around forever. We know that God has mercy because we have got saved and He has cut me some slack. That way they can trust God to get us through the tough circumstances in life. But we never enter into the depth, the mind of God that takes you beyond comprehension. To understand the fullness of God, all that God is, all that God is doing, and all that God wants to do with you. It goes to the fourth dimension, beyond the three physical ones. It enters into a situation where you now have understanding, perfect understanding of every given situation in life. Every situation you see, you will now see it differently from the rest of the world and most of Christianity. They will see it from a physical side, you will see it from what God is doing. There will not be an event in history. There will not be anything under the six o'clock news. There will not be anything that you do not hear all day long on Fox News forecast that does not give you not only the physical, but you have the ability to see it in a world sense of what God is doing. Though it is called, again, the unsearchable riches, the depth of God is His mind, which is in a book, which any child of God who has the Spirit of God has the ability to get, but brother, they do not get it.

VII. Walking Worthy and Church Unity

Ephesians 4. Now we enter into, we have just looked at three chapters that dealt with our standing. Our standing in Christ is sinless perfection, the spiritual side. We are in Christ. When you are in Christ, He wants you to have everything that is the fullness of God. So we have seen now in three chapters where, my goodness, he has detailed these three chapters out with tremendous material in it. We have learned a lot of things and we have not even scraped the surface. Yet I am hoping you are getting a good understanding so far of the book of Ephesians.

Now we come to Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4, we enter now into the earthly side of things and we enter into our state. Now we are going to come down to earth. We are going to look at the physical things in light that we have to deal with.

Ephesians 4:1:

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Let me just stop there and make reference to that. He said, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." What vocation? Your vocation and my vocation that we are called is to be a prisoner.

Ephesians 4:1

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Ephesians 4:2

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:3

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Ephesians 4:4

One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Ephesians 4:5

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Ephesians 4:6

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Ephesians 4:7

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Ephesians 4:8

(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

Ephesians 4:9

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Ephesians 4:10

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Ephesians 4:11

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:12

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 fulness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:13

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;

Ephesians 4:14

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Ephesians 4:15

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 a great 16 verses. Let me break it down for you. First thing he begins to come into here and look at this thing and lay it out. He talks about the first thing is unity. That is what the church needs to have above everything else. Unity. Everybody is singing off the same page. Unity. By the way, that is the first thing the devil goes after is unity. He will try to divide it. How many times I have seen it over the years? The devil gets in, begins to do some work, gets into a young man or a young lady's heart, off you go. It is a tough thing, but it is part of the way it goes.

I learned a long time ago that that is just the way Christianity is, and it bothers you when you are young, when you get into the ministry, and it bothers you when you get older in ministry, but you have to come to terms and realize this. It is just true, especially when you have a young church and you have a small church. Because if you are not careful, you only have to lose, make one family mad or two families mad, and they leave and you start to feel it in your offerings. So there is a tendency there for you to be afraid of that. Unless you have been around this thing long enough to understand the great truth I am about to tell you, there is not anybody in this room, anybody, that God could not do this job without you or without me. You are not going to know that. You have to understand that. We are all expendable. The moment you fall into that trap as a pastor, where you start worrying about somebody going to leave, or if this person leaves, or if this family leaves, it is going to affect this, hey, you have to come down to the terms, is this God's church or is it my church? If you pastor someday, you better learn that deal real quick. It is not yours. The moment you start taking responsibility for it, you are in trouble.

I told you from day one, God takes care of it. It is His work. He does His job. I do mine. As long as you keep preaching the Word of God and you stay true to the Word of God, and you preach the unity, and you work to build people to unity, you are under a delusion if you think that even the best job you can do, some people are not going to get their nose bent out of joint about something and go somewhere else. It has happened all of my life. It is just the way that it is. It does not matter if you have a church of 10,000. If it is God's church, God sustains it, God ordains it, God will take care of it. You get fallen into the trap where you are worried about this person, or this person, or that person. I try to do the best I can be and be what all I can be, and lay out and give everybody an equal shot at it. But I know. You are going to find young Christians that come in here, and they are going to...

I will tell you what the problem is. I get calls probably twice a week, and I do not know how they all come from. I know some of you are talking to people. I will get calls probably once or twice a week, and people will want to know about a church. I had a call... Remember Friday night when we were playing softball, and we were over there, and Danny or somebody, people were taking the pictures, and the lady heard you guys doing the devotions and praying. She came over, and she said, "My husband was looking for a Bible study on Thursday night." She says, "Do you guys have a..." My wife and I went to the grocery store after that thing there. I was in the grocery store, and my phone went off. It was that guy on the phone wanting to know about our Bible study.

I am not saying anything about this guy. He sounded like a nice guy. But I could tell right off the bat that he was a very, very young Christian, did not know anything. But he falls into the same trap, and this is the tragedy. I talked to the guy for 15 minutes, and I talked to a guy a week before it lasted for 20 minutes. I talked to somebody the week before that, two people a week before that, for like 30 minutes apiece. Everybody wants to know about the church. They want to ask me, they ask about the music. They want to know if we have a praise service. We have a... This guy went over to the band. I said, "Yeah, I have got a praise band right here. Praise the Lord all the time I am preaching. I am going to praise Him for an hour today. If it falls off, it may be two or three hours today." Never in my life has anybody ever asked me, "What do you teach about the Bible?" Do you know why? I am telling you why. This is the bottom line. People today, Christians today, absolutely have bought into the concept that you can serve God without learning your Bible. I am telling you, you cannot. You just cannot. It is just not... So with that in mind, I know that everybody that comes through the door, it is not going to happen. Why? Because the Bible teaches unity. One body, one hope, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism.

Then he goes down through Ephesians 4:7-10 and he talks about, he is starting to set up here and going to define the church a little bit farther. So he starts to say, "Well, Christ died on the cross, then He went down to the center of the earth, then He rose to heaven." But before He went down, He went down first, then He rose to heaven when He went to heaven. That would be Acts 1. The Bible says that He gave some pastors, teachers, prophets, apostles. Then Ephesians 4:12, the work of the church. This is why we are in existence. This is why we meet on Sunday. This is why we one-on-one where we can. This is why we do Thursday night. This is why everything we do. Because we are part of a body. We need to have the unity and through the unity comes Ephesians 4:12:

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

You see, God has a job for you to do, but you need to get perfected in that job. That perfecting there is not sinless perfection. It is you and me perfecting ourselves in the work of God. We get perfected because for the work of the ministry, God has something that He wants every one of us to do. You are all in stages of spiritual growth. The thing that I do not want this to happen, and I

am just going to say this and I am probably going to make some people mad. But I do not know what else to tell you. I do not want to tell you. I get so sick and tired, and I am not going to say it. No. No, not. Yes, I am. No, I am not. Yes, I am. No, I am not. Let me just say this. You can never take what we have here for granted. You just cannot.

You cannot think that you are above cleaning up afterwards. I am going to tell you something. You guys playing us a little screwed up last week, right? I said, "That is no deal, but that is God's judgment for leaving church and not being here." You on this side, you on this side. When we hit the order. I am just going to say it. I watched him haul every piece of equipment out here last week by himself. I watched everybody else standing around here, John, about all the nice things you wanted to do. Did you come on? No, sure, you did. You called me four times this week saying, "Say something." Did not say a word to me. I saw it. I saw it. Do you know why? You are so me, as soon as you are out of here, you are onto your world. I do not know what else to say. I am not saying to make you mad. I am just saying, "Hey, are we in this together or are we not?" More vacations. I am not saying to be mean. I am just saying that it happens because you have got your own schedule, your own agenda that you want out of here. There is a lot of work that gets done. Nobody sees the guys that show up rarely putting up all the sound and getting this stuff ready. Nobody does. But if you showed up here and you did not get your CD at the end, or when I get up here because you could not hear me, you would want to know why. Why? Because you demand the very best. But you do not want to be part of the process to make it that way. I am not saying you like you. I am just saying in a general sense of the world.

My point is this. It is real easy. You do not have to have a church. We say, "Oh, them big churches out there." Oh, yeah. You do not have to have a big church to think you are better than picking up paper or picking up this or picking up the hymnals. That loss of unity of what you have happens so easily. That is where it starts. I am not picking on anybody. I am just telling you. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry." It is either your church or it is not. "For the edifying of the body of Christ." Strengthening. Strengthening. Strengthening the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:13:

Ephesians 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 fulness of Christ:

That is the rapture. When we get a glorified body. When we come to the stature of Christ. Where now everything He is. The rapture has happened. That is Ephesians 4:13.

Ephesians 4:14-15:

Ephesians 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;

Ephesians 4:15

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

There it is. That is what you are supposed to be doing right now. Growing up. Realizing. You have a responsibility. Everybody. Everybody. Grow up. Understand that we are here.

Then He says in Ephesians 4:27, "Neither give place to the devil." How do you not give place to the devil? The key is Ephesians 4:22, 24, and 25. He says in Ephesians 4:22 that you put off the world. Ephesians 4:24, you put on Christ. Ephesians 4:25, put away the world or the flesh. Put off the world. That is why I tell you. When you start to do what is right, the world has got to go. Your friends have got to go. It just does not work. You have got to let it go. You have got to put off the world. Put on Christ and then put off the flesh. The only way you can do it. When you do that, you do not give the devil any place in your life. When you do not do it, you do not give Christ any place in your life.

VIII. The Intimacy of Christ and the Church: Marriage

Ephesians 5. The great chapter here. This great chapter is the great chapter on the intimacy between Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:22

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Ephesians 5:24

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 5:26

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Ephesians 5:27

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.

Ephesians 5:28

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Ephesians 5:29

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Ephesians 5:30

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Ephesians 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.

Ephesians 5:32

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:33

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

You know the Bible is probably, if you did not know the Bible was the greatest book the world has ever seen any other way, you would know it by places like this. Because he gives us a model. God instituted marriage. We talked about this. God instituted marriage. Marriage is not something that was man's concept. It was not a product of society. The first marriage in the Bible is the first type of Christ and the church in the Bible, Adam and Eve. We saw that. We know that.

You are going to find that he says that after you get saved, and I know that people come into the church in all different kinds of shapes, forms, sizes, and all different kinds of marriage. You cannot take one thing and put it across the board to everybody because everybody comes in differently. Some of you come in with good marriages. Some of you come in with terrible marriages. A lot of it simply is that that is where you are at right now in the spirit given the spiritual circumstances you are. A lot of people come in with marital problems. They are just all beside themselves because they think at the end of the world there is nothing they can do. I do not see it that way. I always try to see it from God's perspective. "Hey, you know what? Given your circumstances and where you come from, where you are at, you are right where you need to be. Now, do not dwell on that. Learn from here and make the changes."

What are the changes? Christ and the church. You see, God gave the institution of marriage so that you and I would understand that the personal relationship I have with Christ, the personal relationship a wife has with Christ, teaches you how to have the right kind of marriage. That is why a husband will never be the right kind of husband to his wife until he learns how to have the right kind of relationship with Christ. The wife will never be the right kind of wife to her husband until she learns how to have the right kind of relationship with Christ. Because it is built on that great parallel example, Christ as the bridegroom and the church as the bride. That is why when you come down through here you will find there are four verses that tell the wife how to be to her husband. There are nine verses given to the husband. Do you know why? Because it is the

husband's responsibility to do what is right. As you build your relationship with Christ, sir, and you learn all the good attributes that Christ does to you, He does not belittle you, He does not make fun of you, He does not leave you nor forsake you, He does everything you need even when we do not do it right. You learn from that, you love God more from that, and then you work at taking that same kind of concept and you deal with your wife the exact same way.

Now it is not going to be perfect. There is no man who is going to come down in the morning with a halo around his head and a glow off of his body that just says he is going to do it all right. I am telling you. But you learn and you stay consistent and you build those characteristics in your life with Him and in your marriage. The wife, she does the same thing. She builds a relationship with God and as the relationship with God grows, she understands how that she loves Christ, she loves her husband, and she builds all those things in. That is why when two people are in the Word of God and growing, there is not any problem you cannot solve because there is not any problem you cannot solve with Christ. When you have a wife or a husband who does not want nothing new with their God, you have got hell on wheels and hell on earth. You can kid yourself all you want saying, "Oh, it is going to work out, it is going to work out." Yeah, she gets hit with a truck. Or you get hit with a truck. But there is no compromise with the principles and if you do not do it by the book, it is not going to work. It is not going to work.

This is why the Bible says in Colossians 3:19:

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

There is not a saved man on the face of this planet that has a reason to be bitter in his wife about anything because she is simply what you trained her and brought her up to be. At some point you have to start doing what the Word of God says and then turn it around to get it where it needs to go. That is all it takes. The wives need to be patient till the husband gets there. The husband needs to be patient understanding he has the bulk of the work to do, but it needs to be done. The biggest problem many times to a deterrent is because the wife does not get the counsel she needs or she does not get the support that she needs. So she wants him to turn it around in two weeks and you know what, you do not turn it around in two weeks. But as long as somebody in the middle refereeing the thing and sorting out and keeping everybody honest, it will happen. It cannot help but happen because that is the way it works. What a great parallel that is of the intimacy. The intimacy. You see, we think intimacy is sex. Intimacy has nothing to do with sex. Intimacy is that personal time relationship that you spend together. That is what you have with Christ and that is how it transfers down. That is what is missing not only in our spiritual relationships today as Christians, missing in our marriage. But you can put it there.

IX. The Warfare of the Believer

Ephesians 6. The last thing we look at here is the warfare of the believer. I want to read Ephesians 6 here when he says this in Ephesians 6:10:

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 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.

Ephesians 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.

Ephesians 6:14

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Ephesians 6:15

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Ephesians 6:16

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Ephesians 6:17

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Ephesians 6:18

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Great passage. Great passage. This big passage began to close out this great book. We saw the first three chapters dealing with our standing, all heavenly stuff. Then Ephesians 4, 5, and now 6. Now we are down to our warfare. We talked about two chapters about walking with the brethren, walking in unity, walking in love. Our relationship with Christ on this earth like a husband and wife relationship earthly. Now we enter into the warfare. The warfare of the believer.

Down through here you will find seven pieces of armor. Those seven pieces of armor, I am going to give you reference verses to look them up on your own. I will break them down for you.

1. Loins girt about with truth. That would be 1 Peter 1:13. God wrapped around your thighs, which is the symbol of a man's strength in the Bible.
2. The breastplate of righteousness. Romans 13:12-14. The breastplate of righteousness covers your heart. Covers your heart, attitude of heart. Most important thing.

3. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. 1 Peter 3:15. The goal of you being perfected, being edified and being ready for the work in a ministry. As you might be able to tell somebody the story of Christ. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. You see that is what the mission is all about. Little thing like that. Little training thing. Getting people ready.

There is not anything that I do not do, that I had in my mind, you may not know it. But I know it. That I am setting you into a situation to see how you react in it. See how you do that you will learn. You will learn. You will learn. You will learn. Most people do not know this. Probably should not even tell you. You look at the mission down there and you go down on every third Sunday. I think it is one of the greatest training grounds to start a young man out. You can make whatever mistakes you want to make down there. But I am looking beyond that. Once John and I concocted the idea about it, we got set up to go down there. I have got a couple of little buddies down there. Known them for about 20 years. 30 years probably. I said I have got three of them. I said, "I will tell you what I want you to do." I said, "I am going to give you these things and this is what I want you to look at. We are coming down here to do this for you. I want to do this for you. I want it to be a blessing to you. But I want you to do something for me because I have got a job as a preacher training these guys. So you know what? I come down here and listen to them and I know I am looking for one thing. But you are listening at it different than I do. Here are these sheets. Evaluate each preacher. I do not care about his content. I am looking at from your standpoint working with these guys, how sensitive was he to the people? You have worked in this ministry for 35 years. You know what these guys will listen to and what they will not. Give me some feedback. I am coming down here helping you. Help me train my boys. Help me keep people accountable. You send them back the mail to me every week. You get you three guys to write them out and put them back. You put them back to me and tell me from your... And I understand it is your own perspective but you work in this thing 24/7. The thing that I want to build into my people is a sensitivity to the people they are speaking to. Tell me, did they deliver or did they miss the boat?" I have got some interesting things back. Someday 30 years from now I will show them to you. But I am telling you. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Training, learning how to lay it out. Learning how to do with it.

He says the next thing is the sword of the Spirit. That is His weapon, Hebrews 4. You have got to learn how to use that book. You go down to the city union mission. You have got to deal with it one way. You preach down at one of the Bible conferences we go to down in Joplin. You have got to do it another way. What I want to see is do you have the ability to bring it down to the level of the person you are talking to. Are you that sensitive or are you just shooting from the hip? Shooting from the hip will get you by. But it will not get you by in the ministry. It will not. It is part of the warfare.

He says the helmet of salvation, 1 Samuel 17 and 18. Two great chapters on David and Goliath and him not having a helmet on. Then he says praying always with all prayer and supplication. Years ago, I laid the book of Ephesians out when I got to Ephesians 6. It suddenly hit me one day. It is just like all the little points came together. Here you have Paul's first prison. He is in jail. I read Ephesians 6. Here he is explaining what a Christian ought to be. But he is explaining

it in the dress and the mode of the time by a first century Roman soldier. I thought to myself, "You know what Paul was doing?" He is sitting in jail being guarded by the Roman soldiers living in a world that was dominated by Rome. I do not know if you know it or not, but the Roman army was the greatest military force on the planet. In fact, up at Fort Leavenworth today, I have got two friends up there that are both major lieutenant colonels. They teach in the War College. Good friends of mine. We talk from time to time. Sometimes I will go up and they will come down. We have a thing from military history. So we sit down and we talk a lot of things. Both of them teach military history. In fact, both of them teach tactics. Do you know to this day at Leavenworth in the War College for generals, they still teach infantry tactics based on the Roman army and the Roman Empire in the first century. It is an incredible concept. They were the greatest military force that you ever saw when those men, colonels, field grades, majored out when they go off to Fort Benning, Fort Bragg, or even Fort Riley with the Big Red One over there. When they teach their infantry tactics, they have learned a basic set include not only all the warfare, but focuses on the greatest military force, the Roman Empire.

I know what Paul is doing. Paul is sitting there in jail. He is faced with the Roman world. He is being held captive by Roman soldiers and he is watching those guards go up and down. He has heard of the great Roman victories. He is saying to himself as he is writing the book to the church. Here is what he is saying. He is saying, "If I could get God's people to have the discipline and the fortitude and the power for God the way these Roman soldiers do for Rome. Rome conquered the world with a legion of army men who just were invincible. If we want to conquer the world for Christ, we just need the same kind of stick-to-itiveness that these Roman soldiers have got." That is why when he told young Timothy about being a soldier, he told young Timothy that he had to endure hardness. He told Timothy that God had chosen him to be a soldier. He told in the book of Hebrews that Jesus Christ is the captain of my salvation. All the way back, the wisest man that ever lived in Ecclesiastes said there was no discharge from this war. He told Timothy to be a good soldier.

When you read down through this passage, I will tell you what the real issue is here. You do not find one place in this passage where you are told to do any fighting. Your job is to take a stand. Ephesians 6:11, "stand." Ephesians 6:13, "stand." "Stand therefore." It is a stand. Because Jesus does your fighting. The hardest warfare in the world is to not to fight back and let somebody else do your fighting for it and just take a stand. Because there are times you would like to haul off and punch somebody in the face. There are times you would like to be back under the dispensational law where you could take your sword out and decapitate them. But you cannot. Because the bottom line is the captain of your salvation does the fighting, Joshua 1. Your job and my job is to take a stand based on the promises and putting the armor that protects us. But you do not find any place in there where we are going to fight. Now Paul said, "I fought a good fight," but he was not talking about any other fight than standing.

X. The Urgency of the Hour

When Paul looked at this thing, he saw the first century Roman soldier. Last week I finished for the second time. I read it twice. I read about once a year. I read Tom Brokaw's book on The

Greatest Generation. Tom Brokaw, a guy who is the generation of World War II, wrote a book called *The Greatest Generation*. In that book he details that in the 20th century, the greatest generation of our century was the generation that fought World War II. He says that generation shaved the greatest books that I ever read, not in the content of its content, though I agree with him. I think that the generation back then was a great generation.

Years ago I used to write the surviving Medal of Honor winners. I would correspond with them and I would ask them. I would gain some kind of friendship with them through knowing what they went through. I would study up on them before I ever went. Sometimes I even got to sit down with them and meet them. I remember one time they had the survivors of the Bataan Death March had a convention down in Kansas City. I went down. They had a convention of the sailors off the ship *Indianapolis*. The survivors, most of you did not know what the *Indianapolis* was all about, one of the most tragic stories of World War II. I said that was a convention. I talked to those guys. I would ask those guys who won the Medal of Honor. I remember I talked to Bobby Dunlap. Bobby Dunlap won the Medal of Honor on Iwo Jima. He lives up in Illinois. I sat down for an afternoon and I interviewed him and I talked to him and I asked him about what he did. He told me for about 20-30 minutes of the exploits that he won the Medal of Honor. There was a Medal of Honor in a picture of President Truman putting around his neck. I just kind of smiled and let him go on and never said a word. But I saw the mark in that old man, the mark of that generation. Bobby Dunlap did not tell me one tenth of what he did. Do you know why? Because that generation knew that they were not doing it for the honor and glory of themselves. They knew there was a greater thing at stake.

I met Stephen Ambrose one time. Stephen Ambrose wrote the book *Band of Brothers*. I followed Stephen Ambrose all the way back in the 70s when he was a long-haired hippie. He became director of the D-Day Museum down in the south and he died a couple of years ago. I remember sitting down and talking to him and I asked him about the book that he wrote, *Band of Brothers*, which was a book about Easy Company, 101st Airborne Division that followed it from training all the way up to the end of the war. He made a movie about it, which is a series of movies. If you have not seen them, you are missing something in life. If there is anything that shows you the greatness of that generation, it is that I have never seen anything that I have ever seen. It has captured so well. Yet at the end of that movie, this old guy with tears running down his face who lost all of his buddies that told the story, who was of the greatest generation, his little grandbaby came up. Well, a grandbaby was, you know, a baby, he was eight or nine years old, a little boy. Not understanding anything about World War II, but knowing that his grandfather was in the Great War, said to his grandpa, "Grandpa, are you a hero?" The old man, remembering back through those hard times, reached down and touched him on the back of the head with tears welling up in his eyes and said, "No, son, I am not a hero, but I served with a whole band of heroes." That is the generation. That is the generation.

I remember meeting George Gay. I have got a picture at home that he had painted. George Gay in the Battle of Midway was the only survivor of Torpedo Squadron Number Eight. In those dark days of World War II when it was tough to find anything going, any good, we were getting whipped one side or the other. It was the Battle of Midway that turned the event. The Japanese

never made any advancements. They were always on a defensive on retreat after Midway. George Gay was a torpedo squadron number eight off the Enterprise. They found out looking for the Japs, and they all got separated because of the weather. Torpedo Squadron Number Eight found the whole Japanese fleet. But they did not have any fighter cover. They could not get their fighters roused. They could not get anybody to coordinate. This little torpedo squadron of 14 little TBYS attacked the Japanese fleet. George Gay was the last plane down. He watched every one of his boys get shot out of the sky, and not one of them hit a target because they had no cover. The Japs hit him from the air, hit him from the ground or from the sea, and just blew him out of the sky. George Gay put that old ship right on that old thing and bore that thing in. The picture he sent me, that old TBYS is heading in there. I mean flak so thick you can walk on it. That old boy drove right in there and launched that torpedo and hit that ship, got shot down, crashed, and hit it. The guy hit his tail gunner and the other guy got killed. He spent two days on a raft in the Pacific before he got picked up. Only survivor. Down above that picture he said to Bob Alexander, "George Gay," and dated it.

The greatest thing I learned from that generation, the greatest tragedy that I have learned from that generation, and Tom has the facts and Tom has the wisdom, but Tom has no understanding. Because the tragedy is, is what that generation had, our generation has lost. Nobody seems to be able to make the connection. See, back then there was a hardness to endure. There was not only a will to win, but there was a will to fight. But the will to fight and the hardness to endure was all based on the urgency of the hour, because they knew that they were faced with a world domination. Those boys gave their lives. We talk about over in Iraq today, the 1700 boys have been killed in what, two or three years now? On one day the 8th Air Force and the Schweinfurt raid lost 800 men, 800 young boys that did not go home that night, 800 boys in one raid, 80 bombers shot out of the sky with 10 men on them apiece. One day 800 boys, 800 wives became widows one afternoon. Do you know what? The boys that were left went out the next day with the same determination that old George Gay, when he was all by himself, could have said, "I am out of here." He watched his whole squadron go down and he said, "If I go down, I am going down." But you see, there was an urgency. There was a hardness and there was a will to fight and a will to win. Here it has been, what, three years from 9/11 and we are already tired of the war. We do not want anything to do with it. Do you know why? Because America does not have any urgency. She does not have any will to win. She does not understand what this thing is all about. America is about as an effeminate world as it can get. There is no hardness to endure anything.

I said all that to say this. That is what is wrong with Christianity today. That is what is wrong with every one of us in this room. I do not care who you think you are. That is the problem we all have. That sickly, godless mess out there in that world and that philosophy seeps into everything in our world. If you do not keep your heels clicked and your nose in that book and you do not stay with the principles, it will affect you and before you know it you will be just like them, only a spiritual side, and you will not have any will to fight or win. You will not endure any hardness. You will wimp out every time something comes along your way. Do you know what the problem is? The problem is that you and I forgot that there is an urgency of the hour. We weep and cry over things on TV and movies and dead dogs in the street and everything else and the things we see on TV and your neighbor or your best friend dying and going to hell and we do not shed a

tear over them. We can blast the world and guys like Brokaw and the generation of all that and we can say all we want to say but let me tell you something, God's people are no different today and we have lost the willingness to endure a hardness for Christ. We only want what is comfortable. That is why you are out of here so fast you are not going to hurt your little back on picking anything up. You have got your own life. You have got to get to. That is why you do not show up till five minutes after we start. Your world is more important. I am sorry. I am sorry but you know what? Maybe it is time we just figure out if we are going to really build a church or we are just going to play a game like everybody else. I do not know what else to tell you. All I am saying is my friend there is an urgency and some of you approach the Bible like there is no urgency. We have to be able to endure a hardness. Yet we want everything in life so comfortable. We do not want to be inconvenienced in any way of what we want to do. We want to know the Bible. We want everybody to know we know the Bible. We want to learn the Bible. When it comes down to doing the little dirty, nitty gritty things that nobody else wants to do, we do not want to do them.

I will tell you something, if we have lost the will not only to win, we have lost the will to fight. We are just like the world, just like the world. We have lost the desire and the will to stand and fight with everything we have. I had to laugh Friday night. We are playing ball out on the ball field. We are getting our rear end kicked. I am over here pitching closer to the other bench and all my, all the Danny's teams out here on the field. I start here and yell because we are down. We only have one inning left and we have to get some runs. So everybody starts yelling, "Hold the line, hold the line." Everybody, "Hold the line. Hold the line. Hold the line." Somebody on the other team who we are playing says, I heard one of the girls say, "What line are they talking about out there?" I thought to myself, "God, we can do it in a ballgame. Why can't we do it in a life? Why can't we do it for Him?"

See, that is the book of Ephesians. It is the intimacy. It is not about how much I know or how much you know how good we are, what we do. It is about you seeing the urgency of the hour. That you look for every little thing to get done that is not done. That brother, when Christ is presented on Sunday morning to some visitor here, everything is perfect. It is not about how late you can get here and how quick you can leave. It is not about, "Well, I have got to get on with this or I have got to get on to do this." Well, that is just exactly what the does. That is why there is no urgency. That is why there is no hardness to endure. That is why there is no will to fight. There is no will to win. That same attitude has destroyed America. That same attitude has destroyed Bible Christianity. Take it for what it is worth. I do not know what to tell you. I just know this. If I have to do it by myself, I will do it by myself. I do not know what to tell you. I love you all. Do it in the world for you. But you have got to grow up. Some of your husbands, you have got to get your act together in your marriage. Some of your wives, you have got to get your act together in your marriage. Some of your parents, you have got to get your act together with your kids. Some of you have got to get your act together with the Word of God. You have just got to see. You cannot quit taking this thing. I mean, that is the danger of coming and getting good Bible every week. Not because I am teaching it to me, because God is here and the book is here. You come and get it all the time, every week. It is so good and you leave so full. Then when

you do not do anything with it, you do not do anything with it. It is not my responsibility. It is your responsibility to do something with it.

Do you know what? The biggest thing lacking in all of our lives, and I am just as guilty as you are, I am preaching to myself. I knew this was coming when I get in the book of Ephesians, because I can hardly read it without just killing myself in the thing. I will tell you what is wrong with Bible, Alexander. I live in a nice house, got nice things, and it is so easy to get caught up in all this stuff that you just forget. There is an urgency. There is an urgency. You live in an air-conditioned house, you have got this, you have got that, you have got money in your pockets, you can go eat wherever you want to eat. Do you know what you forget? You forget. You forget. You forget. You forget that there is a hardness that we have to endure. In the process of that, we do not even know if we get so soft. We get so soft. Every little ouchie becomes a hospital. Like Michael Jackson, run out of the hospital five times a day. "Oh, look at my little back, look at my little bruise, look at my little leg, look at my little..."

I watched those boys in 1941 and 1942 after Wake Island fell and after Bataan fell. I watched those boys going down the road to Bataan, to the prison camp, with Japanese soldiers on both sides not sleeping for four or five days. Some of those boys with dysentery so bad they were carrying their own intestines in their hands so they would not drag in the dirt. I watched the Japanese soldiers laugh at them and make fun of them and say, "Want some sleep? Lay down, I will give you a nice sleep," and bayonet those boys and shoot them as they left them in the road. I watch, I know they are a godless bunch. I know that all soldiers for the most part are the worst rotten vials, but I want to tell you something, they have got something in them that will get them through life when nothing else will get them through. If we just could get a little bit of that in, God's people today, we could turn this world around, but it is not going to happen. It is not going to happen, but it can happen here. But it all comes down to your attitude about it. I watched those guys do that and back in World War II, those guys on the average made \$37 a month to endure that kind of agony and pain for \$37 a month. You get some of God's people to get one little business meeting or one little thing that does not go this way and they are going to leave the church. Would you open those doors back there? Someone may want to go out today. I have no place for it. I pacify you and I love you, but I have no place for that in my life in God's people today. I just do not have the time. There is an urgency. I am done. Thank you. Praise you for this book. We love you so much. Lord, we are so vile, we are so rotten, we are so selfish. We are so, so selfish. We are so stuck on ourselves with our careers.