

Ephesians (Part 6)

by Les Wheeldon

Les Wheeldon's sermon on Ephesians 6 emphasizes the importance of spiritual warfare, the necessity of God's armor, and the growth that comes through struggle and burdens in our faith journey.

Duration: 1:07:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:5-6, Mark 10:29-30, Luke 14:33, Ephesians 5:31, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the power of heredity and how it shapes our characteristics and national identity. However, he emphasizes that ultimately, we must choose between our own lives and being married to Jesus. The preacher also highlights the influence of fashion culture on society and the need to resist its ambitions and pressures. The sermon then delves into practical advice on living together, including how to love and support one another despite differences. The book of Ephesians is referenced, with the key words 'shoot,' 'stand,' and 'walk' representing different aspects of the Christian journey. The importance of working as a witness for Christ, especially in challenging environments like factories, is also emphasized.

Transcript

...surprises, but again and again we are surprised, aren't we? Just taken a little bit unawares by the greatness and the love of our God. Isn't it wonderful, just to be together? Now, in this chapter 6 of Ephesians, if you turn to verse 10, it tells you the word, finally. Alright, finally, my brethren.

And he begins to talk about warfare. Alright, he begins to talk about warfare. He says, finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

And put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles, or the tricks of the devil. 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, or wicked spirit in high places. Alright, that's what he says at that point.

Now, he's talking here about wrestling. Now, we all know that we must fight, don't we? We all know that. You may have heard the story about the man who had on his, who saw a cocoon, and he'd seen butterflies struggling out of their cocoon, and he saw how hard it was for them, so one day he cut the cocoon with a scalpel to make it easy for them to get out.

And when he had cut the cocoon and released the butterfly, the butterfly died, because it had come out without a struggle. And if it had come out without a struggle, it would have loosened its wings, its wings would have been rubbish and unfollowed. Because it had not struggled, because it hadn't fought, it died.

Now, that's the truth for all of us. We must all face facts. And remember that some of the difficulties we face are because we have to learn to fight.

Let me read you another verse, which just I, the Lord directs me, and I read this morning, in a daily reading, it's in the Judges, actually I never read it last night. Let me read Judges chapter 3, in this context. Just to read a quick verse there.

It says, These are the nations, verse 1, which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel have had not known all the word of Canaan. Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least, such as before knew nothing at all. He left them a few enemies to teach them how to fight.

Right, amen. So you see, God leaves things around for you to fight. He leaves the odd enemy lingering around for you to fight.

Remember this, that even the presence of the devil in the world at this time, is in the end for our good. He doesn't know it, but he is. Are you getting husky like I am? He's offering me these mental lectures.

Are you getting husky? No, we'll get back to that one. But we have to fight, we have to wrestle. And the Lord does grant us, by His grace, to have obstacles in our path.

Do you know that the obstacles He leaves in our path are not obstacles, they are settings then. At first you see them as being against you. Later you see that they help you.

It's the same with things like burdens. You get a burden from the Lord and you think, well this burden is going to be quite hard to carry. But you find if you do carry it, if it's from the Lord, that the burden actually carries you.

That's strange, isn't it, that burdens can carry you, but they can't. Because, you know, if you've ever met a man with a burden from God, he's whipping along faster than somebody who hasn't got one. It's true, isn't it.

Somebody's got a burden from God, they're flying. They may not feel like it, but you men can feel it. That something's happening to them, they're going on, they're praying, they're wrestling, they're going on, they're discovering.

And another person who's got no burden at all from God is just sitting there. Got some kind of peace. Of course, if you give yourself a burden, and you put a burden on yourself, it will crush you and destroy you.

That's what we do. We say, oh I'm going to pray. I did this once.

I asked a confessor in church, a teacher of the priesthood. I went and said, Lord, give me a prayer every week. And I didn't ask for a prayer, I said, Lord, give me a prayer every week.

I'm going to pray with this prayer every week. And I did this, I got this, and I had to write a letter to people. I told people I was doing this, I had to write a letter and say, I made a big holler and mistake.

It doesn't work. It was for me, it crushed me. To the point where I was down there on the ground, I thought, well, it's just not working.

At first I tried to think, there was this one coming, that one, and then there was that one coming, and God answered my prayers, and then there was a burden that hung me. And I couldn't keep it up. It wasn't from God.

And I was trying to imitate somebody else, who I knew. Alright? And it crushed me. And I'm sure we've all had different things like that.

Sometimes you wanted to have a certain kind of prayer life, and you said, I'm going to call out this. And you put the burden on you, you struggled under it, you were lucid, then you found that you feel so defeated at the end, you feel worse off than at the beginning. If you stayed on in what God was doing with you, walking with God, you wouldn't have felt so defeated.

Oh well, the Lord crushed me. So this verse in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 12, we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Now, you know, that word, powers and principalities, occurs again, or previously in this book, in chapter 1, it says, far above all principalities and powers, that's where we were just now, that Christ is exalted far above all principalities and powers, and dominion, and might, and dominion, every name that is known, that's verse 21, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

So we know that Christ is over every other demonic power, or human power. If you look into chapter 3, it says in verse 10, to the intent that man, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. So the church is teaching the powers about the wisdom of God.

We are teaching the powers a lesson. Now, just to fill in a bit of, on something about the book of Ephesians, just, if you notice, there's a very famous book written about Ephesians, called Six Walks Done. If you've ever heard of that book, it's a famous one.

I've not read it, but anyway, I don't know if it's good or not, but anyway. He takes that title, because the book is divisible, into three parts. If you look at it, if you read this book, you'll notice that the book did help a lot, just by the title.

It's amazing, isn't it? How this title can help you. But in this chapter 1 to chapter 3, you find that the key word is to sit. From chapter 4 onwards, the key word is to stand, and to walk.

And in chapter 6, from the verse we read onwards, the key word is to stand. So, first of all, you sit, and you receive revelation. And God gives you understanding.

And remember that we're only the church by revelation. We're not the church by natural power, in any sense at all. If we gathered together, and agreed certain things, that would not make us a church.

We're only the church by revelation. Well, you know, we are the church, and it's revealed that we're the church. Because we can't even tell what we are, because it's invisible.

It's an invisible thing to be the church. It's a strange thing to be a church, because we are seated, according to this book, in heavenly places. And if you think I look good, I'm sitting in heavenly places this morning.

Or maybe you think I've had a bad night, or what have you. But you know, I am seated in heavenly places, permanently. And if you don't know anything about this book, you think I'm cracking at something to say that.

You know, if you've never heard anything from this, if you were completely new this morning, you'd think this fellow's cracking. What's he talking about? He's not in heaven. He's on earth.

But the church lives in the revelation that she has a position in God. The other side of that revelation is that if you haven't, if you're not in the church, that is, in heavenly places, but in Christ, that's got to be revealed to you. The other thing is, if that's not got to be revealed to you, and anything's got to be revealed to you, that you are in Satan.

Very much of earth. You're either in one or the other. Either in Christ, or in the body of humanity of sinners, headed up by Satan, who is the chief power among the powers and principalities.

So, you've got that position that the church must sit and be at rest. We can only receive revelation in rest. We can only prophesy in rest.

We can only preach in rest. We can only do the things that God wants us to do in rest. We can't do them any other way.

You can't bless anybody unless you're in rest. You find in chapter 4, it says, walk. And you walk.

And you see, the walk is the practical living. He speaks in chapter 4 about the life of the church. He's talking about the way you are with each other, you love each other, you forbear with each other, you put up with each other, but that's not just putting up with each other, it's actually overcoming and loving each other.

Despite anything you don't like, you love each other. You don't have impatience with one another. That's where you have to walk in your relationship with each other.

You know, if you're walking with somebody, you've got to walk with somebody. If you're going to walk with somebody who's got a very fast step, you know, you're trying to keep up with her, you're sort of lagging behind, you're moving away, you've got to walk together. That person, and you're struggling to keep up.

Or if you go walk with somebody who's very slow, and you're struggling to go ahead, you have to walk with each other. Somebody's got to go either fast or slow, haven't they? The one who should change is the one who goes too fast, isn't it? In his walk with Evan, in your walk with the Lord, the Lord knows you too. He's got a bit your pace, you know, he won't drive you too fast.

He's very good. He gives you a walk that is just right for you. You can't go on as it has gone.

But in your walk together with people of God, you find where the other one is at, and you walk with them. Amen. You seek to find out.

I know you find yourself in these chapters that you have to work in various things you work in. In practical living, you go to chapter 5 and you find he starts talking about marriage. That's practical.

I've lost... Sometimes, I don't think I ever shall, I've lost someone to talk about some of the awful difficult subjects that are concerned in this walking, but I just know this, that about this whole thing of marriage and

being single and all the different things about it, one of the things I notice as I've read the scriptures concerning that very often is that it is vital that people get out of impatient striving in those realms. In other words, find contentment in your lot. Don't try and change things.

It's the key. So many people are striving, single people wanting to be married, married people wanting to be single. I know a lot whose lives are miserable because they're married.

You read 1 Corinthians 7 and you'll find one strange thing about that chapter. Everybody's trying to go into something else. He's talking to singles who wanted to get married, people who wanted to leave their husbands, people who wanted to leave their wives, people who wanted to get divorced, people who were divorced wanting to get remarried, people with this and that.

And he says, and he said, look, just let everyone abide in the calling. Learn to be content. Let rest come upon you before you ever think about doing anything else.

Walk, walk, learn the things that are hard. Sometimes you can have a revelation that takes you right up to the heavens and then the next day you've got to go back to your life and you've got to work it out and you've got to walk with it. You've got to walk in a pattern of life that may be very, very hard for you.

But remember that you must learn that equally as learning the revelation otherwise you'll become a totally unreal person. You must become spiritual and practical as well. Alright? Learn these things.

And he goes on to talk about how husbands and wives should be together and the wonder and the glory of marriage. And that is, just as he talks in another place, about the wonder and glory of being single. Alright? There's a calling in them.

Discover your calling. Discover the wonder and glory of what God has called you to. Don't look at somebody else's and try and get there.

But he goes on to talk about how we should live together and various things, practical things. And then he goes to chapter 6 he's talking about children, servants, work, how you should work, what you should do at work. There's no doubt that that's the place, especially if you're a man working in a factory or a woman working in a factory, that's the place where you really have to know because there's no doubt that when you're in a factory you soon become the target of everybody else's scorn.

You stick out like a sore thumb if you don't swear and of course you do. And that's where you have to really lay your life down as a witness for Christ. That's where it is.

But you see, when you come to this chapter 12, sorry, chapter 6, it's not chapter 12, it's chapter 6 verse 12, you've got this, we wrestle. But you see, the thing is, the order of truth is that there's revelation, there's our working, and there's warfare. The strength of our warfare is in this realm, is based upon being spiritual and real.

Not just being spiritual, not just being real, but being all those together. Then you can stand and fight. And don't think that I'm saying that there's a process of ten years getting your spiritual side sorted out, then ten years getting your practical side sorted out, then you begin to go into chapter 6 where you have warfare.

No. What you do is you learn spiritual things, you learn practical things, and you learn warfare all together. And you find that they're all interlinked, all the time.

As I said the other day, sometimes you have to go through, this is one of the things about sanctification, that sometimes you've got through issues, then you were younger, you had certain patterns, you fought those battles, you got over them, and then you have a time of even walking, but then you find another battle comes, and you have to work something out again, and it's not easy. It comes again and again. But look at this verse 12 again, just look at this verse, chapter 6 it says, Principalities, Powers, Rules of the darkness of this world, Wicked spirits in high places.

Now, they are there, they exist. If you look back into chapter 5, and look at this verse 31, we read this already, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and those two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, that I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

Notice he's speaking concerning Christ and the Church. And, look at that verse 31, in the context now, Christ and his Church. For this cause, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto Christ, and those two shall be one.

Alright? Now, in this realm of powers and principalities, I've been, as I said, we've talked a little bit about them already, and I say, I don't want to become, I have no ambition to become an expert on these things. I'm not curious, over-curious about them. But I want to point out to you some of the ways in which the powers and the principalities actually affect people, and ways in which you must actually be separated from them, because the powers and principalities actually come through your father and your mother.

Alright? There you are, I've got you thinking now, haven't I? Got you thinking. What do I mean? You see, when we think of the powers and principalities of, let me say, let me say your powers is that you will recognise very easily. When I was in Cameroon, we lived in a, an area which was overlapped by about three tribes, about 80% of the town we lived in was one particular tribe called the Bamiloke tribe.

That tribe has about 2 million people out of the population in the country of about, say, 10 now, and there are 150 tribes in Cameroon, Now you would agree with me, wouldn't you, that that tribe has a power, a principality behind it. You would have no doubt about that, wouldn't you? And isn't there something about the, what they do? I mean, in that particular tribe, they, when a person dies, I won't go into all this, but they worship the skull, so you can imagine what they do to get that far. Anyway, they, they bury the skull of the person in the house, or sometimes in a little hut.

I hope I'm not interrupting anybody. Anyway, they, they pour, then they pour wine and oil and all kinds of things, and I won't tell you all that they pour down there, I mean, leave it to your imagination to, but the thing is, they worship it. Now you would have no doubt in seeing that they are bound in that particular spirit, would you? That particular tribe is very, very bound in heathen worship.

The churches in that particular tribe are all small, if there are churches. There aren't many churches in that tribe. Big tribes, not many churches.

But in the capital city, where there's a church that's quite big, maybe quite a thousand or more people now, the leader of that church, I was talking with him once, and he said that when they evangelize that particular quarter of the town where this tribe lives, they have particular difficulties, they have very little fruit. All right? That's the tribe we worked amongst for most of the time. And you can tell that that is a particular power and principality.

How did they become people under that power and principality? Well, there are two ways. One is they were born in it, father and mother. Another way would be if they decided, let me say, if a man left this country and went over there, and he said, oh, I like this, this is a good way, this is a good way of worshipping, I'll do the same, he would then come under the same power by his choice.

And so, he would come under the power that works in that tribe, either by birth or by deliberate choice. Because the whole tribe works, the whole spirit works through the tribe. You find people who leave that country, go and study in America and England for years, and they go back to their country, and when they get there, they still do the heathen tradition.

All right? That's very clear, isn't it? But you do realise that being born an Englishman is as much putting you under a power and principality as that. Do you understand me? Do you know what the remarks of our power and principality would be? I don't know what they are, I'm not particularly interested. But one of them would be, let me say, your pride in being an Englishman.

This great thing about your country. And you think, when it comes to this portion, a man leaves his father and his mother. Part of that means that you're going to leave your nation.

You're not going to be under the power and influence of being an Englishman anymore. You're going to renounce it. Now, renouncing, if you were to renounce being an Englishman, people might think you're docile because there's no pride in being an Englishman anymore, is there? Not many English people are proud of being English.

A lot of them say, the country's a piece. Do you understand what I mean? But I don't want somebody piped up in a meeting on this kind of line. They suddenly said, you know, they suddenly said, I forgot the exact context.

I think it was being said, there are no Americans in heaven. Or something rather provocative like that. And there's an American lady there, she's an evangelist, and she suddenly goes, pardon? Yes, there are.

All kinds of green and black. Do you understand? Now, if I said to you there are no British people in heaven, I don't mean you'd be particularly bothered, would you? Isn't that right? Oh, no. Hallelujah.

There are only redeemed people there. No Liberians. No Nigerians.

Not to regard, I don't mean to misanybody out. Burundis. No Burundis.

No Kenyans. No need to start over. And, and, no Bavarians.

And no Norsemen. No Norsemen. Because you see, now there you've touched a good one, no Yorkshireman.

Because you see, there's a mind working through the Yorkshireman, isn't there? Well, he's very, he's very blunt a Yorkshireman, don't name him. I won't give him a name, because there are a number you could name. But, the thing is that, certain of the virtues of your father and mother have got to be renounced.

Renounced. Do you understand? Your pride in being, in a sense it doesn't so much figure in, I'm not talking about the, you know, we laugh about it, but it's the extreme nationalistic things. We laugh about it because we hope that not many people are bound to it.

But if you're bound to being a Yorkshireman, you're proud of it, you've got to repent of it. It can be a very subtle thing. This pride in being British, you know, one of the things that I think that destroyed this nation very much was, in a strange way, you understand me, I'm sure, I'll say it anyway.

One of the things that destroyed it was winning the war. Because we thought we'd won it. And it's something, we won the war.

Do you understand? Well, we didn't win the war. God decided which side prevailed in that battle. A lot of people lost the war who were British.

They died. There was no glory, was there? And we, you know, I'm not trying to say that any, I'm not commenting on the war, God knows the war, why it was fought, and God knows it was, it was God's grace that there was, the earth wasn't overrun by Hitler. And all that.

I'm not commenting on that. I'm just saying the fact that if it made people proud of being British, and thought that being British was superior to being German, then it can jam a person's soul. You do realize that? Nationalism can jam a person's soul.

And it's, you find this in nations, you find it in families, you find powers that work through families, you find strange things like, I met a lady once who was, when she was very young, who got involved with something called moral rearmament, and she'd come under the power, it tells you about powers and principles, doesn't it? Power of moral rearmament. It's a spirit. You've got to renounce the spirit.

She had to renounce the fact that she'd been in moral rearmament. And she had not done that. And she said to me, I can imagine loving the Father, I can love the Spirit, but I cannot love Jesus Christ, I cannot love the Son.

She couldn't imagine it, she couldn't, it was something away, it was distant from her. And the reason was, because in moral rearmament, they do not believe that Jesus is God. You find the same thing in a number of sects, like Jehovah's Witnesses and various things, and you will find that they will shape your personality, and you have to renounce it.

If you were an exclusive devil, you have to leave your father and mother. If you were in a certain group, if you were a Roman Catholic, you have to leave Mother Church. You do.

You have to say, I will renounce the error I was in. You have to consciously leave Mother, whether it's your physical mother. Do you understand when I say that? I'm not saying that you begin to hate your mother, if it's your own mother.

She said it in a day. The thing that spoils the marriage is Mother in there, isn't it? We laugh at it. Mother comes in and begins to be a third force in the family.

Do you think that you're going to be able to follow Christ if there's a third force in your thinking? Do you think you're going to be free to follow Him if there's a third force? You can't. And these powers want to possess you. You find that there are various powers, like our sister goes to Israel.

She should never be dominated by Israel. Never. Israel should not become a force in her relationship with Jesus.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Nothing should ever become a third force in my relationship with Jesus Christ. That is supreme. And if I allow it to, if I do not renounce it, I am trying to make a match that will not work.

Have you ever been in a home where mother has come in and has got dominion? You notice that the order of God is broken. And you know what is most difficult about seeing a mother influencing a home? You know what the most difficult thing is? It's because the man is shamed, isn't it? The manhood is denied. Well, the thing is this, that when the manhood is denied, in the relationship with the Lord, who is being shamed? It's Jesus Christ.

You're shaming him. You're depriving him of power. You're depriving him of authority.

Because you see, you must have a love for Jesus that surpasses every other love. You must see that there is a possibility of being free. I tell you another mother, or father, whatever way you speak to that, look at it, it can be the company you work for, it can be your career, it can be mother ICI, it can be, just simply, mother money.

And the power, the principality is coming to dominate your life through mother money. You know, in American money, they have this thing, they have the dollar bill, you know, they have a pyramid on it, and they'll be all sitting there on top of the pyramid, and it's all this kind of thing, it's very dark and horrible, and you get all that. But then they have in the centre of it this little banner on the dollar bill saying, in God we trust.

Have you seen the dollar bill? On the dollar bill they put, in God we trust. And it's absolutely true. The only difference is that their money is the dollar bill.

We know God is the dollar bill. That's what they trust in. We trust in the dollar.

And it's our God. If I've got enough money, I'll be okay. The company will look after me, no it won't.

The company will use you, abuse you, and spew you out when it's had enough of you. I heard the other day about a man who'd worked for this company for so many years, I don't know, 20 years or something. He was given his notice one minute, basically, don't go back to your office, don't do anything, just don't come in.

That's what they do to you. They demand your soul of you while you work for them. They do.

They will have your soul. And you have to be careful that you don't become married to your work and find that Jesus Christ is the shamed husband in the relationship. Because you know these powers and principalities, you know what they do? They shape you.

As I said that woman, she couldn't, her thinking was such, she couldn't worship Jesus. Well she could when she renounced it. She renounced it, she prayed, and the Lord gave her the love of Jesus.

Isn't that wonderful? But you have to renounce it, you have to, and it's the same thing, you cannot worship him, you cannot love him. You can't have a relationship with him. Let me just show you a verse in Ezekiel while we're on this subject.

Ezekiel chapter, there's a number of verses in Ezekiel, but let's just look at Ezekiel chapter 19. Moreover, verse 1, take I up a laid lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say, what is thy mother? You see again,

you can see going back to Israel, you can see that this strong nationalism in Israel consumes men, doesn't it? It demands their soul of them. If you're called to Israel, then you must follow that call.

But no one should ever take Israel to be something that must demand something from you. Jesus Christ is the one we're married to, you remember that. You find it coming through here, in the English here, in this chapter.

Incidentally, it's to do with Israel, but I'm not talking about Israel. Look at verse 2, and say, what is thy mother? A lioness. Look at that, eh? She lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions, she brought up one of her whelps that became a young lion, it learned to catch the prey, it devoured men.

What a thing to produce. What does mother produce? Do you know what mother wants? She wants the best for her sons. She wants them to be strong.

She wants them to overcome others. She wants them to be the top ambitions for her sons. This is what they are.

You go on down, the nations also heard of him, verse 4, were taken in the pit, they brought him with chains into the land of Egypt. Now when she saw, that's mother saw, that she had waited and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps and made him a young lion, and he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey and devoured men. Verse 10, thy mother is like a vine in thy blood.

Do you see what he's saying? He's referring to the power of our heredity, if you like, what we are from, what we've taken from the things we've received from our parents, certain national characteristics and so on, all these things, but in the end, your choice between your life and being married to Jesus. What do you do? You could take it now in any sense because there are powers at work in our country that are spreading their power, the drug culture is spreading its power, the fashion culture is producing people, it's changing their sexuality, it's ambitious to possess people, it's trying to form people, it's trying to possess them. You could look at it any way you like, and what I'm saying to you is this, whoever you are, you must renounce that culture.

You must fight that power of principality. You don't fight it by just saying, I will beat you in the name of Jesus. You fight it by having nothing to do with it.

It's a battle, and the battle will come near to your soul, that something is trying to possess you and win you. And, you know, you take things like, something simple like music, pop music, there's a spirit coming through it. You take something as simple as a television, there's a spirit coming through it.

I'm not trying to make you fight the spirit, I'm just telling you the truth, that you must fight the power of principality, you must declare war on it. We were bombarded by spiritual attacks during the election campaign, trying to win you to dogma. If you crack up in it, into believing that dogma got this party in power, and you put something in your window, and you did this, you should be ashamed of yourself.

You don't campaign for them, your vote should be secret. How will you witness to the men from the opposite party, with a sticker in your window saying, How will you do it? Do you get someone real going for the other party? Oh, you'll feel your sticker, you won't listen to your love for Jesus, even though you're married to a party. You shouldn't be.

You shouldn't get drawn into it. People get drawn into it. They try to draw you into it.

Believe me, it's a battlefield. There are men grasping for power, lioness, that's what it is. It's a lioness grasping for power, trying to make her son successful, trying to shape them.

And what is it that's really at the heart of it? Let's go back into Ephesians chapter. If this memory is reviving in your blood, it's something that God sent to your blood, and you can't get rid of it, but you can, only by Jesus Christ. Do you mean I have to change my culture? People wouldn't understand me if I did this.

Well, it'd be good, wouldn't it, in one sense? You wouldn't understand them anymore. You wouldn't understand why they do those silly things that they do. You wouldn't understand why people find joy in it, why they feel pleasure in it, why they feel down to it.

Renounce it. Keep yourself absolutely clear for God. And in this chapter 5 of Ephesians, this is where we go.

Verse 24. We were there last night, really, in a way, but look at verse 22, rather. Christians, submit yourselves to the Lord.

Do you understand what he's saying? Christ is the head of the church, verse 23. He's the Savior of the body. Therefore, the church is subject unto Christ.

For let each individual Christian be subject to the Lord in everything. Look at verse 35. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

Do you know what Christ wants with you? He wants a relationship with you that is in love. He wants you to be married to him. He is giving to you a marriage proposal.

That's what it is. The whole thing we have in our hands is a love letter to us as individuals. And then he says, will you marry me? Will you be joined to me? There's also the question, will you leave your father and mother? Will you leave it all? Will you leave everything? Will you renounce everything? Women on the heat at the end of the day, they can't do anything.

They can't pray. They can't serve God. You know what I'm saying? I'm not saying that you shouldn't work ten hours a day.

You understand it's difficult to comment on it. It's when it possesses your soul that you must... It's when it demands of you a marriage vow. And there are gentlemen's salaries now that are very inflated, but you know why.

They give you twice the salary of a normal man and they ask of you three times the labour. And you're clever enough to give it perhaps. Able.

So they get their money's worth, but to do it you've got to give your soul. Love Jesus. Christ loved the church and gave it himself for it.

Is the church and the truth worth fighting for? Is it worth all that we are to give up that Christ gave himself? Christ loved the church. And gave himself for it. You know one of the things that the devil is resisting? What the powers and principalities are resisting? One of the things they're resisting is that churches

should be powerful.

They don't want that. They want churches to be powerless. They want people to be flawless.

They want people to be loveless. They don't want the gospel to spread. They don't want men to become bold in their praying.

They don't want men to become... They don't want men to be really married to Christ. They want men to be linked with him. Loosely.

They don't want churches to spring up all over the country. They don't want people to get to the point where they're going to lay their lives down for the church. Do you understand what I say that you must lay your life down for the church? Dying for the church is only a secondary position.

The first is that you're willing to die for the Lord. You love him more than the church. You love the church because it's his.

Do you understand? You love each one for themselves. But there's this point where you're willing to die. You give yourself for the church.

Let me tell you, there's a call for you coming right through in every way out there drawing you into their powers and influences. Let me tell you there's a call this morning. Christ Jesus wants you.

He wants you. He wants... He didn't want you to take Christ into the spirit of the world. He wouldn't go anyway.

It would only be a weak Christ that you presented if you stayed married to these things. The thing is, he wants you to be so loosed in your spirit, in your understanding that you're a free man, free woman, able to present Christ as he really is. He loved the church and gave himself for it.

Are you willing to die for it? Oh, we're back on this ground, aren't we? Have you ever looked at your hand? Here's something. Please don't get too emotional about this, but understand it. I'll say it anyway, but look at your hand and imagine a nail being put through it.

How much do you value a soul? How much do you value your relationship with Christ? Oh, you pray to something. How much do you want... Would you be willing to have a nail through your hand to get the answer to that prayer? Would you? Do you understand what I'm saying? You may say, well, that's very emotional. I know it is.

And I don't want you to go overboard with it, but do you understand that is actually what happened? He actually gave himself for the church. He actually had his hands and feet pierced for you. He did love you that much.

He did leave his father to be married to you. He did give everything for you. He did leave glory for you.

He did suffer for you. He did pray for you. Do you think you're going to obtain anything without praying a prayer? Which prayer? The ultimate prayer.

Does that mean you've got to die? No. I doubt that any of us will die for the gospel, especially in a country like ours, which has not got persecution of Christians. That doesn't mean you're not persecuted.

You are being persecuted all the time, in a different way, by powers and principalities, harassing you, hindering you, discouraging you, whispering to you. Even powers like the Church of England, spiritual power. Where does that come from, that power? Who's the head of the Church of England? In history, it's Henry VIII.

Do you understand? If I'm against the Anglican Church, as long as those individuals in it are loosed from their father and their mother, it tells me this. Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it. What can you imagine that could be an offering acceptable? It's experience, isn't it? We've said it already.

Grace is free. Do you know what the Old Testament says in Isaiah 55? It says, Oh, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Come buy without money.

How do you buy without money? How do you buy without money? Because it costs you to get it. But it doesn't cost you money. You don't have to pay for it.

It's free when you get there. But it costs you everything. Are you willing to be like Jesus? Would you look up to a group of people and see Jesus on one side and see the world on the other and say, I want to be married to him.

He loved the church and gave himself for it. Verse 26, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.

He that loves his wife loves himself. No man ever will hate his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church, who remembers of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. O Lord, that I should be of the same substance as Jesus, that I should be like him.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery that I speak concerning Christ and the church. You see, the wonder of it is, is that when you realise this, there's a great mystery to be entered into.

It's the mystery of love. It's the joy of discovering him. It's the... When you meet with Christ, you must meet of his ground, not your ground.

On your ground you may say, I'm willing to do this for the Lord. On his ground, say the cross. His ground is a cross.

You must be crucified. He crucifies you. And then they say, well I'll bear my cross.

But your cross may not really be a cross. It might be your own pride. Do you remember the rich young ruler who said, who said, first of all he said, what good thing shall I do? And then the Lord said, keep the commandment.

He said, which? And he goes in the commandment and he went through and he says, all these that I kept from my youth. He was very careful to take from my youth. Didn't go back too far.

He was a young man anyway. Hadn't been very long had he? But anyway, he said, all these that I kept from my youth. You see his moral uprightness was part of his cross.

I'm morally upright. Not enough. I'm upright.

I don't do anything wrong. Not enough. You won't build a church by moral uprightness.

Of course you won't build it without. The church isn't built by moral uprightness. She's built by blazing devotion for Jesus Christ.

Then he said, what lack are you at? What else is there for me to do? And Jesus said, go and sell all that you have. Come. If you're the poor, come follow me.

So, he then thought, well, if I sell everything I've got, I'll have nothing left. I'll have no home. I'll have no clothes.

No great changes of clothes, you know. I won't have this. I won't have any candles to light.

I'll have nothing left. Then Jesus said to him, look, all I want you to do is to, we need a nice meeting hall building in this place. We need, would you give all your money for that? Put a little plaque on it.

Obadiah, Obadiah Herbenazer, or whatever his name is, gave this, you know, gave this money for this thing. And then you've got this gold plaque and he says, oh, thank you. I'll give myself for that.

That's my cloth. I gave this for that. Look at it, a bit more on a copper plate.

But he didn't say that. He said, I want you to sell everything and give to the poor. Now, if he'd had a mention in the church times that he gave everything to the poor, maybe he would have done it.

Remember, there was no guarantee that it would have got into any record at all. It was all to be thrown to the wind. And come follow me.

Leave your father and mother. Leave everything. Leave it.

Leave it. Does that mean hate your father and mother? Of course not. You're only your father and mother.

You provide for them. You look after them. You do everything.

But you leave them in your heart. You're not under their power anymore. You're married to another, to Jesus Christ.

You're married to him. And it's this love, great love relationship. Let me show you one other verse.

Go into Jeremiah. We'll finish in a moment. Jeremiah, chapter 3. Just show you this verse.

There's a lot on this. And maybe we'll have to come back here tonight. I don't know.

But it is in chapter 3, verse 1. Oh, there is a tale of a man who put away his wife and she go from him and become another man. Slightly different picture now. She's been unfaithful to her husband We're talking about it, isn't it, really? You can be unfaithful to your husband by listening to your mother.

You're betraying him. You can be unfaithful to Jesus by listening to your earthly mother and doing what she says. But here she's become another man.

Shall he be firm to her again? You know what the Old Testament says about that? No. The Old Testament says no. You know what it says in Deuteronomy? Abomination.

Abomination. She'll never go back. He'll never take her again.

That's what God said. Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast saved the harlot with many lovers. You've not gone to one.

You've gone to many. But return to me again, saith the Lord. Return to me again, saith the Lord.

I love you. You can play with your life and give your life to many lovers. It says here, many played the harlot with many lovers.

You know, if you look through Jeremiah, you look at the way it developed this theme. You look at the way it's all brought out that she went and did all kinds of foolish, stupid things. And what does Jesus say? Well, just return to me.

Return to me again. Return to me. I love you.

He says it in Jeremiah chapter 31, I have loved you with an everlasting love. I would love a loving kindness if I had drawn you. He loves you with an everlasting love.

Nothing can diminish his love. But you went away from him. What does he say then? I will, he's in Hosea now, I will heal their backslidings.

I will love them freely. I will heal. He loves you.

You see, what we have in our, as we go and look at the church, what we have is a passionate thing. You must become passionate for Christ. It's devotion for him that is good.

It's death that he died for to give you that. Let's go back to Ephesians 6 and we'll finish there. We haven't looked at the warfare really, but you won't wrestle against flesh and blood, you won't be open to the, we've mentioned the television, we've mentioned fashion, we've mentioned peer groups, we've mentioned work, we've mentioned family, we've mentioned nations, we've mentioned, you won't be open to, you won't fight them.

You'll compromise. You'll fit into them. You'll keep them along there.

You'll have a place for them. You won't wrestle against them. Wrestle.

You'd better put on the whole armour of God. Not because it's very tricky. I don't think that putting it on there means you forget something.

The heart of the armour of God is that you are devoted to Jesus. You love him. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Are you clever enough to resist the devil? No, you're not. He's cleverer than you. But the only thing he can't understand is love.

He cannot cope with love. He can't cope with Jesus Christ loving him enough to die for him. Otherwise, he wouldn't have gone there, he wouldn't have stirred them up to crucify him.

He wouldn't have done that. It says the prince of this world that he understood the hidden wisdom. They wouldn't have crucified Jesus.

That's what it says in the scripture. They would have held back. If they'd realised that Jesus was willing to go all the way on beyond it, if they'd realised that Jesus was not only going to go the second mile, but a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth.

Because when they got him there and beat him, he was already, I don't know how many miles down the road, past the second mile. When they crucified him, he was maybe a thousand miles past the second mile. And the devil said he's going to do that.

That's why he crucified him. That's why he tormented him. That's why he did everything.

To stop him going there and dying for us. That's what he wanted. He wanted to stop Jesus dealing with sin.

And he thought that love went further than hatred. Love went further than marriage. That's what the church is, going further.

Love going further. Don't you want to be part of love? Pure love that will go further, and further, and further? For what? For Him. Don't you want to go further? He won't drive you.

He's not going to drive you at some great speed. He wants to kindle devotion in your heart. He doesn't want you to do some great act.

He wants you to open up your heart, to love your father and mother, and to have devotion confident in you for Him. He wants you to love Jesus Christ. He wants you to be married to none other.

He wants your home to stand absolutely clear to Him, with no other influence in it. He wants your home to be free from the powers and principalities. He wants your mind to be free.

He wants your will to be free. He wants your spirit to be free. What can one say? He wants you to fight.

And then he wants you to pray. Amen. We'll leave that, and we'll pray.

We shall pray. Well, we've explored truth this morning. Again, I must give you an opportunity to respond.

You don't have to tell anybody else what you're responding to, whether it's a small, personal thing that concerns nobody else, whether it's a big thing. We don't need to know. It's Jesus Christ you're responding to.

If you want to respond, you can stand up and indicate it by that.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net