

One Body, One Spirit, One Hope

by Tim Conway

This sermon focuses on the importance of unity within the body of Christ, emphasizing the one body, one Spirit, and one hope that believers share. It highlights the need for humility, gentleness, patience, and love to maintain this unity, rooted in the work of the Holy Spirit. The hope of believers is centered on the confident expectation of obtaining future glory and inheritance through Christ, promoting a deep sense of unity and love among God's people.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:4, Ephesians 1:13, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:22, Ephesians 2:16, Ephesians 3:6, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 1 Peter 1:13

Topics: "Unity in the Body of Christ", "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Believers' Lives"

Description

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Transcript

Father, I pray just now with the subject before us that You'd give me the right words to say, the words that we need to hear, the words that most accurately describe Your Word. I pray for words that would be so put together that would be faithful to bring forth the essence and the message, the heart of what it is that we should find in the verses before us. I pray that You might use this sermon for good to Your people.

And I pray in Christ's name, Amen. Ephesians 4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. A worthy walk.

Worthy of the calling to which you've been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For there is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. So, first three chapters.

Remember where we came from. God. Rich in mercy.

And remember what He did. Remember, these first three chapters are describing the glories of our salvation. What did God do? Rich in mercy.

He raised us up together with Christ and He seated us in the heavenly places with Christ. This is the Father. We find in these first three chapters the Son.

What is He called? He is the Head of the church. And then we find the Spirit of God. And what is He? He's the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

And you know what else Paul tells us in those first three chapters? The Spirit of God strengthens us. He empowers us. That Christ might dwell in our hearts through faith, but also that we might comprehend the love of Christ and the dimensions of that love in order that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.

And having lifted the believer up to His true position in the heavenly places. You know what He does in this second half in chapter 4, the second half of this letter to the Ephesians is He brings us down to the earth. He brings us down to where we live.

He brings us down to where we walk. Where we walk. The very first lesson regarding the worthy walk of the Christian is about the Holy Spirit-wrought unity in the body of Christ.

That is really what permeates verses 2-16. So Paul comes to the life of the believer where we walk, where we talk, where we live, and his first care amidst whatever differences or whatever shortcomings we might have is to protect that thing. To maintain that thing that the Spirit is doing among God's people.

And what's that? It is to protect. It is to guard. It is to keep.

It is to maintain the unity of the Spirit. We are to preserve it at all costs. Strain every nerve in endeavoring to keep it.

You know the picture that I have? It's that picture of Paul. It's straining every nerve. It's reaching out towards the goal.

And it's like you bring the goal. You know how it might be with just the way the wind blows. The wind blows the grass and it all leans.

That's the picture. The wind. This is the kind of unity, the breath of God.

It blows and we all bend the same way. There's this unity. It's the goal.

We're striving after the same things. The Spirit of God has done something in the life of every true believer here that there's earnestness. There's desire.

There's a longing. There's a stretching after this same thing. And what we're being called to do is maintain that.

Not create it, but keep it. Seek to maintain it, to manifest it, to bear with one another in love. Take up the new commandment that the Scripture talks about.

Adorn yourselves with humility. But here's the thing, what verses 4-6 show us is that in our humility, in our gentleness, in our patience, in our love, we don't pursue unity at any cost. It's not that.

There is one body. Look at it. Ephesians 4.4 There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all Who is over all, through all, in all. What happens after Paul talks about the unity of the Spirit? This is where he goes. In these three verses, you see what Paul's doing.

He's playing on the word one. It comes at us seven times. Seven is unique in Scripture.

Here is what we need to capture this. Here is what the fundamental unity of the Spirit revolves around. The oneness of the church.

And do you see here in these verses, we sang, Holy, Holy, Holy. We were singing to the Trinity. Do you see the Trinity here? All three Persons? You know what that means? Look, what's Paul doing? This is the practical walk.

This is the practical life. And you see where he takes us? He takes us right here. Our unity is found here if only we have eyes to see it.

I mean, if you're looking for anything to lift us up above the mundane and the petty self-concerns and the trifling selfishness which so often corrupts our unity, what happens? He's saying we need to stand face-to-face with the magnificence of the Trinity. Here is the Spirit. Here is the one Spirit, the one Lord, the one Father.

And then it's interesting, it's like these other things, these other things that he brings in that have to do with the church. The church's unity chiefly involves us all orbiting around the same Son. That Son being the Godhead Itself.

We talk about being practical, but we can't be practical until we know how to be practical. You know what some people think is practical? A list of rules. Well, that's practical.

We'll never be practical if we neglect doctrine, if we neglect the glorious teachings of these things that are set before us. Think about it. Think about all the things that... I mean, if ever there was a mind that was gripped by the truths of God, the realities of God, it was Paul.

And think about where his mind goes and all that he could say about the unity of the church. He goes to these seven things. A number of perfection.

He brings out this. One body. We may read across these things and not find a whole lot of significance, but that's not the case with Paul.

He finds significance in these realities. One body. One Spirit.

One hope. One Lord. One faith.

One baptism. One God and Father of all. This is what he finds to be practical.

And we're never going to be practical if we neglect these things. He isn't talking about unity at any price no matter what we believe. All the world is God's children and so we all need to get together.

And there's that mindset, but it's not that. We never jettison the fundamental truths of the Gospel and of the Godhead to maintain the unity of the Spirit. You see what he's saying? He calls us to maintain the unity of the Spirit, and then where does he go? He goes to these seven things.

These are the bedrock. As the wind blows and we all bend, here's what we should be bending towards. As there's an orbit around one common center, these are the things that he puts at the center.

And people who are not orbiting here are not in the unity of the Spirit. That's the reality. So, to maintain the unity of the Spirit, we must know, we must embrace the truths that the Spirit loves.

You remember, Paul's being carried along by the Spirit as he comes up with these seven things. We need to embrace the truths the Spirit loves, the Spirit teaches, the Spirit emphasizes. You remember how it was back in that chapter 1? Paul is praying.

He said, my prayer for you is that the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give us the Spirit of wisdom and of a revelation in the knowledge of Him. You know what this Spirit of God is all about? The Spirit of wisdom. The Spirit of a revelation of the knowledge of God.

This is all about knowing God. And I'll tell you, as we move through here, this is all, until we come to the unity of the knowledge and of the faith of the Son of God. This is where we're headed.

It's got everything to do. You want to get practical? It's got everything to do with what's happening in the mind. You see, we can sit here and you can hear the preaching.

And if you were to look at a camera angle at everybody and you saw the heads nod, and you say, oh, there's unity. They're all acknowledging the same thing. But what's really the issue is what's happening in the brain because you can be nodding that head, but inside, your brain is somewhere else and your thoughts are somewhere else.

What this is, it's the thoughts that are in unison. They're hungry after God. They're reaching after God.

They want to know God. Eternal life is to know God and to know His Christ. And there's this longing and hunger and there's this bending.

That's the unity of the Spirit. He bends us. He's going to glorify Christ.

He makes Christ spectacular in our sight and in the mind. Not just we nod. Not just we carry our Bibles, but in the brain, there's a hunger.

There's an earnestness. There's a stretching. There's a bending.

Wraps around this. This is the unity of the Spirit. This is what we find.

The Spirit of wisdom and the revelation of the knowledge of Him having the eyes of your hearts enlightened. Your heart. Your mind is where the heart is.

It's the thinking. It's that they might be enlightened. Enlightened to what? You see, this Spirit, this one Spirit is at work in every true child of God here.

And there's this unison. There's this unity. There's this bending of the mind, the thoughts, the desires, the hungers.

And these seven things are seven things that of all the things that could be said, the Spirit of God says write that, Paul. Write those seven things. There must be some significance there.

Before we can respond to all these personal appeals that come at us as to how to live this out practically, to do this or do that or live in the life of the church, we've got to see what we are in light of these realities. Who we are. Where we are.

Who God is. And so to the text. One body.

There is one body. What's that? Well, let's let Paul define it for us right here in this letter. Ephesians 5.23 Jump over there just a second.

Well known. The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church. His body and is Himself its Savior.

Okay, just from that text, what is the body? The body is the church. But not only that, the body is that which has Christ for its head. The body is that which has Christ for its Savior.

No matter how you define body, if you're not saved, you're not in this body. Now let's look at another passage. Ephesians 1.22 and 23.

Back in the first chapter. And He, that being God the Father, put all things under Christ's feet and gave Christ as head over all things to the church which is His body. And this may be one of the most glorious things said in all of Scripture concerning the body.

The body is the fullness of Christ who fills all in all. And I want you to think about the term fullness. Look, you can't get away from the meaning.

Fullness is that which makes something complete. And you know right away, if you have only a head, something is massively wrong. If you see only a head, it's not complete.

In fact, it's appalling. Only a head. The body completes the head.

And you know what you have here in these passages? You have this idea about the power of God at work in us and it's the same power that raised Christ from the dead and God seated Christ at His right hand in the heavenly places. What you need to recognize about this is yes, there is the risen Christ. There He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

But you know what? He is not complete. That resurrected Christ sitting at the right hand of His Father is not complete. Because as that old Moravian mission called, may the Lamb who was slain receive the reward of His suffering, I'll tell you this, He was raised from the dead for the justification of God's people.

That's what the last verse in Romans 4 says. He was raised victorious, but there's no victory unless all of those for whom He died and suffered and was victorious are fully saved and safe and at His side. He said, Father, His desire was that they be where He is.

Until every one of them is there, this thing is incomplete. We fill up the fullness, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. I'll tell you this, nothing is said like that about anything else that God created.

Nothing. When we start defining the body of Christ, whatever else can be said, the body of Christ is the highest revelation in Scripture of the glory of God in all of creation. Hear what I'm saying.

Creation. Of all that God created. This is never said of anything else in His creation.

In fact, in Ephesians 3, verses 9 and 10, God created all things, so that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. God takes a creature. Think about this.

He takes a creature made from dust. A creature. He spreads Eden before.

And He listens to the devil. And He comes under the power of sin and Satan and death. And He's got to be banished from the garden.

And He hates. He hates. They hate one another.

The children of Adam. They hate. They kill.

They're in constant strife. And God takes this. He takes this.

We read in Scripture about the potter from the same lump of clay. It's this lump. They hate.

Hating and hated. War. Strife.

And He pulls off and He says, I'm going to make this the body of My Son. I'm going to make this to be the one who fulfills the fullness of My Son. This is the body.

One body. So what and who is this body? Years ago, I heard all sorts of discussion and argument about the church. The emphasis on the local church.

It was extreme. I was taught that every place in the Bible where you find church or body, it's local church. Local church.

Local church. Local church. It was like this idea of universal church was abhorred.

And it's like, well, if it's not exactly the local church, it's church used in an institutional sense. You know what that means. Like marriage as an institution.

But you don't really have marriage as an institution unless you have the individual marriages. You don't really have the church as an institution unless you have the local bodies. The independent local New Testament Baptist church was everything.

The universal church was denied. I even heard it suggested that if you belong to a Baptist church, then you were the bride. Maybe it was a specific kind of Baptist church.

You were the bride. And basically, imagine it like a football game. You get to heaven.

If you were the Baptist bride, you're like a football player. If you're George Whitefield or Jonathan Edwards who wasn't part of the Baptist bride, you're just a spectator. Or it's like the marriage supper of the Lamb.

If you weren't this Baptist bride, then you're probably one of the guests or one of the servants when we all get to heaven. But I'll tell you this, that sort of talk, it creates the very type of division that Paul abhors here. Of course, listen, Paul recognizes we practically live out our Christianity in local churches.

He's writing to a local church. He's writing to the church in Ephesus. But when Paul speaks of one body here in chapter 4, he doesn't mean many local churches.

He's not even talking about local churches. That's not what's in his mind when he talks about one body. Listen, you don't say one body and have that mean one local church.

Because there's many local churches. That doesn't even square. We don't want to say, well, it's the institution of the local church being spoken of.

I mean, what's that? You might as well say it's the institution of one spirit. That's the institution of spirits. So it doesn't really mean one spirit.

It means that there's a lot of spirits. Or it's the institution of faith. It doesn't really mean one faith.

It means that there's a bunch of faiths. Well, that's ridiculous. You don't want to do that with any of the rest of these.

Don't do it with body. There's one body. One.

People who talk different, they tend to be narrow and exclusive. But Paul says one body. Now listen, go back to Ephesians 1. I keep taking you back there, but this is such essential truth to the message of Ephesians.

If you're thinking about the plan of God, the purpose of God, the mystery of God, what is it? The plan for the fullness of time, Ephesians 1.10, is to unite all things. And as I've repeatedly said, the all things in heaven and on earth are the people of God. It's not rocks and stones.

All you have to do is cross-reference this with the verse in Colossians, and you see that this all revolves around the cross of Christ. This gathering into one all things. Well, the cross of Christ is about redeeming men, not rocks, not stars.

One. In heaven. That can't be the local church.

In heaven. This is the mystical church. I know.

What term are we looking for? Let's just watch how Paul himself defines the term. This one body is that which completes the head. And the imagery is destroyed if you want to have one head and many bodies.

There's one body. Look at Ephesians 2.16. Here we see the one body. "...And might reconcile us both..." That's Jew and Gentile.

"...to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility." The one body is not distinguished by location, but by reconciliation. Do you all see that? That's the reality here. Or look at Ephesians 3.6. Tremendous truth.

You see what Paul has in mind? He's got in mind this glorious reality primarily that Jews and Gentiles are being brought together into one redeemed people of God. And you see it here. What's the mystery? Ephesians 3.6 The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

Gentile inclusion into the same body. That's the great mystery. Look, there is one true people of God.

That's the issue. The dispensationalists are dead wrong. There are not two people of God.

There is not Israel and the church. Those holding to covenant theology that would have their unsaved children part of the covenant, that's a lie. That's not true.

There are not two people of God or two people of the covenant, the saved adults and the unsaved children. One body is a reconciled church no matter if you are Jew, Gentile, black, white, young, old, but you're reconciled. What is true? The church.

The body. His body. Christ is its Savior.

These are saved individuals. It's anybody and it's everybody who has ever been saved. That's the reality.

Look at 1 Corinthians 12. Jump over there. Paul says something very similar.

1 Corinthians 12. He says, for just as the body is one... The body is one. One body.

For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. Notice v. 13. The unity of the Spirit.

For in one Spirit... He's throwing these ones at us here too. One Spirit. We were all baptized into one body.

Baptized. That means to be immersed into. You baptize somebody in water, what happens? The water swallows them up.

You are immersed into the body of Christ. That's the picture here. Baptized into one body.

Jews or Greeks. Same thing. Now, he goes beyond that, but that's where Paul's... this is the mystery that they're all in one body.

And not just Jew or Greek, but slaver free. And all were made to drink of one Spirit. You see, if you're in this one body, you drink of this one Spirit.

To fight for anything but this one body is to attack the very unity Paul is fighting for. Listen, if there were two Spirits, yes, we might concede that we have two sorts of people. If there were two lords, we might be divided into two parties.

If there were two hopes, two faiths, two baptisms, we might have two people of God. But in the one true church of Jesus Christ, there is one Spirit, there is one Lord, there is one God and Father of all Who is over all, through all, and in all. And I want you to see.

Go back to Ephesians. Ephesians 4. Verses 4-6. These are declarations.

Paul called us to do something. He called us to maintain the unity of the Spirit. But when he gets to verse 4, this is not an exhortation.

This is a declaration. This is what's true. There is one body.

There is one mystical body of Christ. All believers are members of this one body. Every true believer makes up not one of many lesser bodies.

That's not the issue. But they all make up one body. You don't need to turn to this one, but listen.

Romans 12.5 So we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. The outward visible local church is not this. Why? The outward visible local church is never pure.

Jesus Himself says there's an enemy that spreads tares among us. It's never pure. That's not what's even in mind here.

This is one body reconciled to God through the cross. Paul has in mind a spiritual body of which all are in Christ. All are spiritually connected parts of the same body.

There are never to be two rival communities. Even if somebody is in another church, if they're genuine, there's not to be two rival communities. Yes, there's a complex array of members, organs.

You look at my body. You just look at the difference between an eyeball and a finger. They're radically different.

There's difference in various functions among all of us. Differing degrees of honor. But all are one.

The eye, the finger, the church, no matter where it's to be found or in what age it existed, no matter what race, no matter what bloodlines, no matter what skin colors, whatever assortment of languages, it's all one. And it's unaffected by distance, time, physical, intellectual, or social distinctions. Listen, obviously what Paul sees as essential to the unity of the Spirit is that we recognize what the one body is.

Can I tell you this? In the circles that want to stretch and manipulate Scripture to where ultimately body means local church, you know what you typically find? Local churches that can't get along. That's not what's being emphasized here. Possessing a knowledge of what the body of Christ means is essential to maintaining unity.

God, give us to understand. God, give us insight into the glory of this one body that we might be led in our own individual fulfilling of whatever place we have in the body. Whatever calling God has upon us, whatever ministry.

Brethren, this has a deep connection with walking worthy. Because I'll tell you this, when our desire is to help other churches grow, our desire is to help other churches through the Internet ministry, our desire is to help people in other places no matter where they are as long as they're God's people. We want to promote that kind of unity.

We want our church to be involved in that kind of unity. We want to be able to give to the needs of God's people. You see that oneness, that bending when the Macedonians in all their poverty took what they had and gave to the church at Jerusalem? It wasn't well, you know, this is our church here and we're going to fend for ourselves.

You know, who are they? Okay, way over there. Plus, they're Jews. That wasn't the mindset.

They were bending in the same direction. It was that direction. Caring for one another.

One body. We're one. One.

We're connected. The body. Just like the finger in the eyeball, what happens? The same blood flows through.

The same Spirit is breathing life into all the different parts. That's what we have, brethren. This is a deep, deep connection practically with how we walk worthily.

Deep connection with our spiritual life to embrace the unity of the Spirit, the love of Christ. What? It means the death of every vestige of selfishness among us. We can't be all about our own church, all about our own little empire, all about us.

Brethren, there's a sense of laying down our life for the brethren that goes beyond these walls. We need to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren in other places. And that's how I feel when Diego and I travel down to Nicaragua.

I want to lay down my life for people in that place as well. I want to see God's people press on and make it and be victorious and grow the body of Christ. The welfare of every member becomes the supreme object.

Remember what Paul said? He was willing to do for the sake of the elect. Let us try to realize what this body is in which the one blessed Spirit of God seeks to manifest Himself. You know, as I think about John and Judy and the team over in Nepal and they're up against the enemy, I don't want to feel like the wind of God simply bends us all for the stretching for the same objective for the salvation of the Nepalese people.

To hear that Max Church, that Charles Church, to hear that the church in Nicaragua, the church is in Nicaragua, they're bending the same way. Brethren, that is very encouraging. Very encouraging.

It brings us to the next thing. One Spirit. Here's the great, eternal, invisible.

The term actually has to do with breath. Breathe on Me breath of God. It's this eternal, invisible Person.

Jesus said when He comes, the Spirit of God. You try to wrap your arms around what He is, who He is. I'll tell you this, I'll tell you what He is.

He is the power of God behind the church. You know what Jesus said to the disciples? He said you remain in Jerusalem. Why? What were they remaining there for? What were they staying? Until they're clothed with power from on high.

Listen, the strength of the church never, never has ever depended on its numbers. The strength of the church has never depended on our bank accounts. Never.

We desperately need Him. The Spirit of God. There's one Spirit.

One Spirit works in the church and empowers the church. And because the power that empowers God's people is always the same power, the same Person, because He never changes. Ever.

It's always the same work. Look wherever you will and where the Spirit of God is at work, well, there may be minor differences. There may be trivial variations, but by and large, you will see the same manifestation because it's the same Spirit of God always at work doing the same work.

You know what Scripture says? Beloved, do not believe every spirit. Have you ever read that? But rather, test the spirits. You know how that verse is even possible? It's possible because John writing that knows this.

The Spirit of God, there's one Spirit. Evil spirits? There's many. There's one Holy Spirit.

And He is always the same. And so He always speaks the same. You know what He does? Jesus said He will exalt Me.

Wherever the Spirit is at work, He's about the business of exalting Christ. Be certain of that. What else does He do? Scripture says what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no mind has imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him, Scripture says these things, the Spirit of God reveals.

God reveals by way of the Spirit these realities. What's He talking about there in 1 Corinthians 2? He's talking about the realities of the Gospel. What does the Spirit do? Exalts Christ.

What does the Spirit do? Reveals truth to us that could not be seen, heard, or imagined unless the Spirit does that. The Spirit takes... you remember what Paul prayed for. He prayed that the Father of glory may give us the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

There is revelation from this Spirit. He reveals what's in here. You know what else He does? You know what else? The work of the Spirit who is the Lord.

He's transforming us into the image of Christ degree by degree, glory to glory. And He's always doing that. You know what? If you go over and you find true brethren in Nepal, you go over and visit Andy, you find true people of God in China, if you go to Lebanon, if you go down to Nicaragua, if you go down to Monterey, or you go over to Saltillo, if you go to Ecuador, you know what happens? You go to Ireland, you go to Poland, you go to Manchester, wherever you see God's true people, you're going to find the same thing happening.

And if we could go back to those early churches in the book of Acts, you'd find no difference. Sometimes we think of them as being different, but they wouldn't be different. You know why? Same Spirit of God.

One Spirit. One Spirit. Brethren, there's a unity of sorts that revolves around other things.

There is a unity that revolves around the doctrines of grace. There is a unity that revolves around perhaps the Puritans or certain confessions of faith, pet doctrines. But I'll tell you what, that unity is more of the flesh than it is of the Spirit.

Because you know what it does? It causes people to look down and frown on people that don't hold to exactly the same thing. That is not the unity of the Spirit. If you want a confession around which to revolve, go to Ephesians 4. That is our confession around which this unity of the Spirit is orbiting, around which it revolves.

The unity of the Spirit. Think about the Spirit. There's fruit of the Spirit.

Look for where the Spirit is at work. What are you going to find? The same fruit always. What fruit? Love, joy, peace, patience, the chiefly love, the bond between the members of the body.

It's like the joints with which every member is connected. We're going to get to that. All the parts connected.

What is it that joins us all together? Brethren, we're held together. We build ourselves up in love. That's where He's at it as He gets down close to 16 and He's bringing this thing to a close.

There's this unity of the love, the members of our body. I mean, this finger and this finger, there's a vital union. It's living.

There's stuff flows through there that is like the Spirit is at work and among God's true people. We know that tears come in, but that's not part of the body. He's looking beyond that.

He's looking at that which is essentially real and connected and held together by a real Spirit-wrought humility and gentleness and patience and a bearing with one another in love. There's an inner union. And it's real.

And it's strengthened. By what? Loneliness? Meekness? We should be cultivating relationships. Not only with those who are basically of the same way we think.

I'm not talking about these essential seven things. I'm talking about, you get people that didn't come from the same kind of lost lifestyle that you came from. We get people that are different.

You don't want to just cultivate relationships with those people and get into your own little clique. Lest your unity be more of the flesh than of the Spirit. Strive after the love that's demonstrated here.

A love that connects us with anybody in the body. Now it's true, there are people in China that you can't reach. We're talking about those within the body that are within your reach.

And oftentimes, those that are most reachable are those that are in the same church, undoubtedly. Strive for that unity, that love that doesn't assume evil. Strive after that unity, that love that never says an unkind word.

I mean, if we just focus there, that love that never says an unkind word about another Christian. Can you imagine if we as a church were able to accomplish that in any given week? Love every believer. Not just for the sake of those who are agreeable or look nice or are pleasing or make you look good, but for the sake of the Spirit who is at work.

Like I said last week, conspire with the Spirit. Be about what the Spirit of God is doing. Give yourselves distinctively to this purpose of love to lay down your life for God's children who are within your reach.

That's the issue. The work of the Spirit is to build up a unified habitation for God. This dwelling place for God.

That's what we found at the end of chapter 2. Yield yourself to the Spirit to accomplish this work. The whole body, this structure in which God dwells. It builds itself up in love.

One last thing in v. 4. There's one hope. You see it. Why is this next? Why would you think one body, one Spirit, one hope? It's a hope that belongs to our call.

We're called people. It means we've been summoned by God. Why is that next? Well, I think in Paul's mind, the one body.

Think of it. One body. And this one body is being led by, it is being guided by, it is being empowered by, it is being sanctified by this one Spirit.

Well, you know what's going on in Paul's mind where you've got the Spirit? It's the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. That's what he said back in chapter 1. It seems like when Paul thinks of the body, Spirit, there's this hope. This hope of inheritance.

This hope of glory. The hope that lies ahead of every true Christian. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who's the guarantee of our inheritance.

Or he says it again. He's praying that God would give the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, so that what? That you may know what is the hope to which He has called you or the calling of your hope. The hopeful calling.

What are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints? The one Spirit. Here's the thing. The one Spirit fills each Christian with the same hope.

This is not the world's I hope so. People out there talk like that all the time. I hope so.

I hope this. I hope that. Scripturally speaking, the hope that we have, it's one that's got foundation.

It's a confident expectation of obtaining some future good. Hope is confident expectancy in Scripture. You know what? When people say, well, I hope it doesn't rain today, all they're doing is giving their wish.

They have no idea whether it will or it won't. They just are voicing their desire. They don't even have to say hope so.

My desire is I'd really like it to be nice weather. Will it be? Oh, I have no idea. See, that's not the hope that's being spoken about here.

This hope is undergirded by realities. Something is underneath it that makes it solid. It's got substance under it.

The hope of this world, people that hope out there, it's not necessarily a virtue. It's just a temporary wish. Sometimes it's just an illusion or a delusion.

People are hoping for that which you'll never get. It's ridiculous, but in Scripture it's not so. In the one body, the one Spirit fills each member with this one confident expectation about the same future.

The reality is this, we're not like the world. You've got two guys. They hope for the same girl.

Somebody's going to get disappointed. You've got two men. They're vying for the same job.

Somebody's going to get disappointed. You've got two men running in an election for the same position. I mean, that's how it is in this world.

And what does that foster? Jealousy, envy, strife, division. That's what the hopes of this world does. But you know what? The hope of the Spirit, it engenders unity.

Why? Because we're pressing towards the same... I mean, the reality is Paul doesn't look at somebody and say, well, you're going to get a little piece of the eternal weight of glory. And you over here, you're going to get more. He actually looks at people like the Corinthians and he says an eternal weight of glory.

And that sounds like enough for you. I mean, what's beyond that? You see, there's enough crowns for every one of us. It says, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

And if you're right next to Me, and we're not vying for this, it's not I need to step in front of you. The hope is that when we set our eyes there, we will be absolutely content. We will lose sight of who's next to us.

It won't matter. You see, there's this one... What does Scripture say? What is the Spirit telling us? It says set your mind on that hope that is to be revealed to you when Christ is revealed. What is it? John says we'll see Him and we'll be as He is.

You'll be as He is. I'll be as He is. You see, we're leaning and we're longing for and we're pressing forward to this one thing.

We all may share Christ. All will share in His likeness. All will share in the rewards.

All may obtain this crown. See, this hope promotes unity. Because as soon as somebody gets saved and they come in here, we're not vying with each other like they do in the world.

It's not, you know, I better buy that car that's on Craigslist before somebody else gets it. That doesn't happen in the church. Because in the church, as we sing these songs, we're singing these songs and I don't know about you, but it doesn't even cross my mind to think I better get this before somebody else gets it.

Or I better get this, I want more of this than I want somebody else here to have. It's not that at all. Brethren, one of the joys of going up and down these streets is when we offer salvation, it's not like this guy at the door accepts this.

It's going to diminish my eternity by we want as few people as possible because there's only so much to be had. We're dealing with the infinite God who showers His salvation and this thing is eternal. It goes on forever.

It's a weight of glory that actually is going to pull us in. And we're going to be consumed by this. We're going to be overwhelmed by this.

There's nobody in heaven that is feeling empty or feeling like they're at a loss or feeling like they don't have something that somebody else has. What are you lacking when you have Christ? When you have the face of God when there's no longer a veil and it's been taken back and you're exposed to the full glory? You see, the Spirit promises all the same thing. We all have an inheritance.

There is all such things before us. And there's one body. There's one Spirit.

And I said this in the eschatology series. When the Jew is here, and he's in the Old Testament, he's in Isaiah, he's in Jeremiah, and it says that God is going to make a covenant with the house of Israel. And you've got that Jew looking there and saying, ah, that's my promise.

We as Gentile believers, we can look over His shoulder. We can say every one of those promises are mine too. There's no different hope.

The dispensationalists are wrong. There's no hope for the Jew that is distinct and separate from the hope that the Gentile has. One new man in place of the two.

Too much focus. Think about it. Peter, preparing your minds for action.

How do you get ready for action? What do you do with your brains when you get ready for action to fight the Christian life? Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. You know where our minds are? Too much focusing on the stuff here. Too much focusing on the trivialities here.

Too much focusing on the sufferings here. Not enough focusing on that. You would get the church really bending the same way.

Bending as we are hastening the day of Christ's return. Because we are given as one body in unity, in unified fashion, we are stretching every nerve to accomplish those things that must be accomplished before Christ. How do you hasten the day? That means do the things that need to happen before Christ is going to return.

Paul said this, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus, our hope. Ultimately, our hope is not in some plan. It's not in the right church.

It's not even the correct theological position. Ultimately, or I should say it this way, it's not to be found in one correct theological system. Our hope is ultimately found in a person.

One of the most significant aspects of our hope is this, that Christ is coming and He has promised, I'm going to take you to be where I am. I'm coming for you. One of the most significant aspects of our hope is this, I'm going to come for you and I'm going to take you with me to Paradise to spend eternity with Me in complete perfection.

I'm going to free you from all the sin and all the shame and all the sadness. I am taking all of you that are in this body who are reconciled and of whom I am the Savior. I am taking you in united fashion into this eternal glory beyond the grave.

This is our hope. Our hope is that beyond the grave, there is no judgment. We are not going to stand and pay for our sins.

It is a people with one hope that their sins have been paid for and there is this inexpressible joy that lies out ahead. That is the hope. So let's pray.

One Body, one Spirit, one hope. Lord, that last night before You went to the cross and You gave Your life to this body, Your prayer for that body of believers was, Holy Father, keep them that they may be one. You even talked about perfectly one.

Your desire was to see a united flock. Lord, now You're exalted. You've left the weakness of here below and You are crowned, enthroned.

On the very throne of David. You've taken Your rightful place. We saw it in 2 Samuel 7. One of David's sons.

A kingdom that is forever. And now You reign. And You have promised to save us to the uttermost.

And we call upon You now in Your power. We call upon You. Plead for us.

Pray for us for the unity that You prayed in that day to Your Father for. We ask You, Lord, send Your Spirit mightily among us. There are forces and powers that seek to divide us.

Lord, You hear me. You hear me pray just now. From Your throne, You hear me.

Make this unity a reality more so than we've ever known. Lord, we pray this. We pray in Your name.

We pray based on the blood of reconciliation that was spilled. We pray as a saved people. We pray as a people for whom all the promises have been secured by that death and by that blood and by that resurrection so that they are yes and they are amen and we lay claim to them based not on ourselves, but on what You have done.

One Spirit, we pray, breathe on us breath of God. Move. Cause us to sway.

Cause us to bend. Bring us all to sway in the same direction. Cause us to move like a field of grain before the wind.

All in the same direction. All bending in the same earnest, stretching desire, pressing towards that mark of the high calling, pressing, stretching. I pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

You're dismissed.

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