

# 05/25/2025

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Preacher: Christopher Baker

[ 0 : 00 ] I hope we understand the truth of that last line we just sang. Nothing compares to the promise I have in you. Now, there are a lot of good things we have in life, a lot of promises God gives us, but the greatest promise is that promise that we can find in Jesus Christ, that when we put our faith, our trust in Him, when we believe that He lived and died and rose again so that we could have forgiveness of sins, when we accept that and believe that, what is the promise?

Eternity, everlasting life. Is that a wonderful promise? Is that a wonderful promise? I mean, I hate to be the one to break it to you, but you're not going to live forever physically.

You know that, don't you? You don't want to, yeah. That is the reality. Our lives here, and I know we don't often like to think about it or talk about it, but folks, our lives here are brief.

Even if you live to be 90, 100 years old, and you know, as a pastor, I haven't had an opportunity to talk to lots of people that are in their 90s, up to 100, and you know what they all say?

Every one of them, you know what they say? It went fast. They all tell me. It seems like just the other day I was a teenager. Blink of an eye.

[ 1 : 25 ] So folks, it's not just about this life that we experience, but it's about what God has for us after this life. All right, if you have your Bibles this morning, I'd encourage you to turn. We are in the book of Ephesians again, and I can't encourage you enough to bring your Bibles, to follow along.

I know that we have the words up here on the screen, which is great, and I appreciate that, but bring your Bibles. You need to be in your Bible, using your Bible. It is the Word of God. It is the truth of God for our lives today.

We need to get used to using it and being in it. We are in Ephesians 2 this morning, and I'm going to ask, once you've found that, if you're able, if you would stand as we read God's Word together. Ephesians 2, and this is what God's Word shares on this day. Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ. By grace are you saved, and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

[ 2 : 59 ] For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

Wherefore remember that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now, in Christ Jesus, you who are sometimes far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace, and that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were near.

For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are

built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together grows to a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

Let's pray. Lord God, once again, we thank You for this time we have to come together, knowing that we are in Your presence. Lord, help us to know that that is a promise, that is a surety.

[ 5 : 07 ] That is what we're experiencing, being in Your presence. And Lord, also knowing that what we've just read is truth. It is Your Word, words that You inspired, words that You breathed, and it is for our understanding.

It is for us to live by, to gain hope from, and knowledge from. And Lord, I pray that that happens today. That as we look at Your Word, that it would just take root in our hearts, and that it would be planted there, and that it would grow, and that we would allow it to transform our lives, to change the way that we think, to change the way that we act.

So Lord, let Your Word accomplish in our hearts exactly what You want it to on this day. Lord, I know that there's lots of activities we have on holiday weekends like this, places to go, things to do, people to see, all the above.

But Lord, for the next few minutes, help us to set those things aside, to forget about those things, and to focus on You, our relationship with You, and what You desire to teach us this morning.

Help us to have ears that are open and hearts that are open. And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. You can be seated this morning. Last week, we were in Ephesians 1, and obviously, we're in Ephesians 2 this week, and we're going to kind of continue in the book of Ephesians.

[ 6 : 33 ] I really didn't intend on doing the whole chapter this morning, but as I was preparing this week, that's how it ended up. Because every time I think, no, I'm going to stop at this verse, and then I'd read the next verse.

It's like, no, I don't want to leave that one out. Let's look at the next verse. No, I don't want to leave that one out. So, oh, thank you. So, what did we end up with? The whole chapter. And you know what? There are so many wonderful things in this chapter.

As I look at this chapter, there are a dozen different sermons that we could preach from this chapter, just the truth of God's Word. But if you remember, what did we talk about last week?

And I hope you remember, those of you that were here. What's that? Family. We talked about family. Family. And again, I hope we understand, how important is family?

It's vital, isn't it? And we're not just talking about physical family. We're talking about spiritual family. What God has brought together. And again, as we look around the sanctuary today, this is what God has brought together.

[ 7 : 37 ] And it doesn't matter whether you've been here for a week or whether you've been here for 20 years. It doesn't make any difference. If you call in the name of Jesus Christ, if you have Him in your heart, you're part of the family.

What God has brought together. And this morning, as we look at this chapter, you know, it's interesting. It doesn't use the word family at all in this chapter, does it? You can read down through it, read through it again, look through it.

You will not find the word family. But there is one word it uses five different times that I think has a lot to do with family.

And that word is together. What does that word together mean? What's that? As one?

United? Anything else? All right, I looked it up. You know I like to do that. If you look up the word together, it means in close proximity to one another.

[ 8 : 44 ] Proximity means like around somebody. So are we together this morning? Yes, we are together. But is that all that definition really means?

Just being together in the same place, does that really mean you're together? Together? You know, there's a lot of aspects to that word together. You can be sitting in a waiting room or on a bus and you are together with those people, right?

But are you really together with those people? Do you get what I'm saying? You're together. You're in the same spot. But physically, but do you know them?

You may not be going to the same place. You have different directions, different goals, you may have no clue about anything in their life. So in that sense, are you together with them?

So together is more than just proximity, isn't it? And that's why there's a second definition. Close association with another person.

[ 9 : 46 ] That's a whole different thing, isn't it? And that is what we have to understand. We can all come together every Sunday, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday.

We can come together Wednesday night Bible studies, Thursday morning Bible studies, any other activities. We can come together as often as you want and still not really be together. We might be in the same location, but it takes more than that.

You know, sometimes you'll be driving in a car. You're all together, right? But you look in the back seat and the kids are all individually on their phones doing their own thing, right?

You're driving, maybe the wife or the husband sitting in their seat doing their phone. Are they together? They're together, but they're separate. They've all got their own attention on different things.

When we start talking and thinking about God's family, He doesn't just want us to be together as far as in the same spot. He wants us to be together in the same heart, doesn't He?

[ 10 : 49 ] And as we look through this chapter, together is used five times in this one chapter, talking about the togetherness that God wants us to have.

But we all start as individuals, don't we? I want you to look in verse 1, first verse that we read. wherein in time past, you.

That word you is talking about an individual, isn't it? You means who? Any one of us. You means Chris.

You means Tammy. You means Jim. It means Jerry. It means Tom. I'm not going to take the time to go through all your names, but you get the picture, right? It means you.

Wherein in time past, you. It's talking about you. Put your name in there. All right? You walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

[ 11 : 55 ] How do you feel about that? Second verse. That's what it says, right? You walked according to the course of this world.

That is a description of you in times past. Do you like that description? No. Anybody like that description? Let me read it again.

You walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. That's you. That's me too, though.

Do we get that? What does that mean? We're all sinners. We're all sinners. We all have a past, don't we? You know, so often.

Do we ever judge people by their past? Think about that. Do we ever judge people by their past? Oh, I know who they were. I know what they did.

[ 12 : 54 ] Do you remember that time they... And we think about their past. What does this say about our past? Every one of us came to the point, hopefully, where we accepted Jesus, right?

This is talking about up till then. And up till the moment you accept Jesus, what does it say about our lives? What does it say?

We were sinners. We were disobedient. We were not following Jesus, and then we made that decision. You know, one of the things that this should tell us is we're all in the same boat, aren't we? We all have a past. We are in no position to ever look at anybody and say, I remember what you used to do. So what? So did you. You were apart from Christ too, and that puts us all in the same boat.

And as we start thinking about this together thing, that is one thing that we need to realize that we all have in common. We all have a past.

[ 13 : 53 ] At one time, we were without Jesus. Now, hopefully, you're not still there. Hopefully, you came to the point where you accepted Jesus. If you haven't, I pray that you get there.

But what happened when you accept Jesus? Look at the first verse. It's also, and you, so put your name in there, you, has He done what?

Quickened. What does that mean? It doesn't mean He made you faster. I remember when I was in high school and played basketball, you know what the coach said I was? Front of the whole team.

Look at Baker over there. He's a slow white boy. Who couldn't jump. That's exactly what he said.

You know what? He was accurate, and I never got any quicker. That's not what it's talking about when it says, you as He quickened.

What does that mean? He made you alive. He gave you life. He took you from that past, which was apart from Jesus, which was caught up in sin, which means, where were you going?

[15:00] If you would have died then, in that sin, where were you going? To hell. He took you from that. He quickened you. He gave you life, and gave you the promise of what?

Eternity in heaven. Life. Real life. For all of us in here that have accepted Jesus, and again, if you haven't, you need to do that this morning. But if you have, for all of us that have accepted Jesus, we also have that in common, don't we?

Don't we? That we have been made alive. That we have been quickened. Look down in verse 5, and this is where it starts talking about together.

Even when we were dead in sins, He has quickened us together with Christ. By grace are you saved.

He made us alive together. That's what He has done. The moment you accepted Christ, you joined a family, didn't you? You became part of something.

[16:06] Not part of something that leads to death, but part of something that leads to Christ. That's what He did then. And then in verse 6 is what He's doing now. And has raised us up...

There's that word again. Together. Think about what it means to be raised up together. You know, I was thinking of it in a sense of, I have a brother.

Together. We were raised up together in the same family, right? He's not here this morning, but my brother and I were raised up together in the same family. How many of you have a sibling that you were raised together with?

Okay. What can you say about that? What kind of a difference does that make? We want good things here, not... Learning experience.

There's a learning experience. What else? Think of being raised with a sibling. What is the importance of that? Is there any?

[17:10] It says we're raised up together. And I think it's kind of the same sense. You know, as you're raised up in a family, you're taught, you grow. Aren't those things we're supposed to be doing together as believers today?

You know, I think of being raised up together with my brother. And, you know, with your siblings, you have a different relationship than with anybody else, don't you? Would you agree with that? And there is a reason for that.

You have gone through some situations that nobody else has. You have had some shared experiences that nobody else has. You know, I think back to Kirk and I, my brother.

You know, there are some things that he and I laugh about that nobody else may understand because it was just he and I that experienced them. There are things we look back on and we laugh about. There are things we look back on and we may be frustrated about.

But there's a shared thing there, isn't there, in having a sibling, in being raised up together. You know, as family, that should be the same for us.

[18:13] Understanding that we share something that the rest of the world hasn't experienced. We share being quickened, being made alive in Jesus Christ.

We share that together. What a wonderful thing to share. Isn't that a good thought? Yeah. Five of us agree it's a good thought.

Better than none. You're right, Jerry. We are raised up together together. I don't even know how to respond to that.

In verse 6. But look what it says after that. And he made us sit together in heavenly places. And that is our future, isn't it?

Sitting together in heavenly places. You know, I think of the parable in Luke where it talks about the great banquet. You know, sitting down at a table that you were invited to by Jesus.

[19:10] And that is what we have in store for your future. Sitting down together at a table. That is our future. That togetherness that God wants us to have.

Never forget how precious that is and how important that is. Because it's interesting, this chapter kind of goes through those same things again. Look down in verse 12. That at that time, and again it's talking about our past, you were without Christ being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise.

You were aliens and strangers. That means you weren't part of it. You were separate. That was our past. And then it goes on in verse 13.

But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. We were brought near. And then look at verse 19 because I want to focus on this verse for a little bit. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of who?

[ 20 : 25 ] We're part of God's household. What does that make us? Family. And it means we're in it together. How does it feel to be alone?

You ever been alone? How does it feel? Peaceful. There are times and there are moments where being alone is peaceful and a good thing.

I'm talking about in a new place, going through a new experience and having to face it all alone.

How does that feel? Makes you nervous? Lost?

Empty? What's that? Excited sometimes? You know, being alone is an interesting thing, isn't it?

And most of us at times are okay with it for a while.

But if we're alone for any length of time, it can be hard, can't it? Especially if we're somewhere new or in situations we've not been in before. God doesn't intend us to go through life alone, folks.

[ 21 : 32 ] That's why He has given us family. That's why we have each other. That's why God wants us to be together.

Again, that word we've been talking about. That we are together more than just in the same place, but we're together in heart. We are together, we're sharing with one another. We understand that we are in it together.

Good, bad, and otherwise, we are in it together. As we go through life, we're in it together. As we go through hardships, we're in them together.

As we go through good things in life, we're in it together. Folks, that is what family is all about. And I know in times in our congregation and the people that gather here and the family that's gathered here, are there going to be difficult times?

Everybody say yes. There will be difficult times. You may get a health report that you don't really want to hear. You may have a family issue that is hard.

[ 22 : 38 ] A relationship issue that is a struggle. You may have financial hardships. What do you do with those? And here's where it really, we're getting down to, on a real level, what do we do?

When you face those things, how do you handle it? Prayer. Prayer. There is a way we sometimes handle it and a way that God desires that we handle it.

Those can be two different things, can't they? What do you think God desires when we face those difficulties and those hardships? What do you think God wants us to do with those? First of all, as Jerry said, pray.

That is the most wonderful thing we can do. We can talk to the Creator of everything. We can bring it to Him. But has God given us any other means of dealing with those hardships? Yes.

He's given us each other. to share it with. That when I go through something difficult, I should know that, guess what, I've got a church family that I can take this to.

[ 23 : 41 ] That I have people that I can share and talk with and say, hey, I am struggling with this. It is hard. And what should be the reaction of the church family?

How can we help? Compassion. Guess what? There's probably somebody else in the congregation who's also dealt with that. Do you think that's going to be helpful?

Yes. Well, let me pray with you. Hey, can I take this trip with you? Hey, can we just spend some time together? How can I help? Folks, that's what it means to be part of a family.

That when you see somebody in the family struggling, you realize we're in this together. When they hurt, I hurt. When they struggle, I struggle. That's what it means to be a family, isn't it?

Yes. But there's also the other end of that, which is great. That when there's a reason to rejoice, a marriage, a birth of a child, just an accomplishment in life, what do we do in those times?

[ 24 : 47 ] We celebrate with them. This is what it means to be part of God's household, a part of God's family.

You think of the ideal physical family on earth. It's one that loves each other, right? It's a family that's there for each other. It's a family that cares about each other, that in times of difficulty they support, in times of good that they praise God together.

That is what He intends for you and I. Folks, we are to be in this together. Look at the person beside you, in front of you, wherever. Tell them, we're in this together.

I don't care if you know them or not. Okay, right now, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. It is your responsibility. You're out of control now.

I did tell you, but I'm not done with the instructions yet. I want you to look around seriously. If there's somebody you don't know and a few of, before you, behind you, somebody sitting and not any people right around them, make sure they get told too.

[ 26 : 00 ] Tell them we're in this together. Go ahead. Somebody other than your physical family. Okay? Now go ahead. Do your thing. go. Yes.

You got to put up with me for a while. Forever and ever and ever. Great. And you said it. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. You all did pretty good.

I want us to understand that is what God desires. That is the being together that God wants.

That we go out of our way to share with somebody. It's not just a thing of, being part of a family is not just a thing of convenience, is it? But it's a thing of going out of your way, of seeking somebody out to make sure they're okay.

And when we do that as a family, the last couple of verses in this chapter, look in verse 21. In whom all the building fitly framed together grows to a holy temple in the Lord.

[ 27 : 13 ] Again, that word together is in there, isn't it? The building fitly framed together. It gives the example of a building. I've built a few buildings in my life.

I'm by no means an expert carpenter. But what has to happen when you build a building? A plan. Do the parts need to fit?

Do you just go grab a two-by-four and start nailing? Legos. Okay. I'll give you another example. Maybe we understand this one more. We got here at the church garage sale. I think Kerry Gathney had brought them in. And I got them and purchased them.

A bunch, a huge box, a couple boxes of Lincoln Logs. How many of you have played with Lincoln Logs? Okay. All right. So you're with me on this example. And I got them out the other day when Liana was over.

[ 28 : 16 ] It's been a little while back. She had not, I don't think, played with Lincoln Logs before. What do you have to understand or know to play with Lincoln Logs? You need to know they interlock, don't you?

She was trying to stack them at first, just like one on top of another, going the same direction. Does that work? No. All right. I'm glad you're with me on this one.

We understand that doesn't work. They need to be turned, they need to fit together, don't they? Right. And when you build the building with all of them fitting together and you make the walls and we, by the time we were done, we had a very nice building before she knocked it down.

But when it says a building fitly framed together, that's what it's talking about. A building that fits together the way that it is supposed to. That's what God desires to see here in His family, in this corner at Arthur, in any other church in the United States or around the world and the whole church as a whole, God wants it to fit together.

And as it fits together the way that it's supposed to, it's said that it grows to be what? This is important. It grows into something amazing, doesn't it?

[ 29 : 38 ] It grows into a holy temple in the Lord. What was the temple in the Old Testament? What was it? It's where God was, wasn't it?

Well, in the Holy of Holies in the temple, but where God came to meet with people. That's what the temple was all about. that's what God wants His family to become. When we are fit together the way that we're supposed to, when we understand we're in it together, when we are praising God together, praying for each other, sharing Jesus with each other, when we are doing that and fitting together the way that God wants, that is the temple that He can come and dwell in.

That is a temple that God is pleased with. We could build God a huge cathedral that is the most beautiful thing on earth and yet if the people in it weren't together the way that they were supposed to be, do you think that would please God?

Is He more concerned about the physical building or the family that's in it? Family that's in it. Look at the last verse, 22.

In whom also are built, in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

[ 30 : 57 ] We become, as a family, a place where God dwells, a place where God works, a place where the Spirit of God comes and works in us and through us and we become the family that God wants us to be.

Do you think that just happens by accident? It happens by each one of us, first of all, making sure that we have that relationship with Jesus Christ. And then it happens by us intentionally reaching out to the rest of our family, sharing those hopes, sharing those struggles, and experiencing them together, knowing that we are in it together.

That's that word unity that was mentioned earlier. I pray that we have that kind of unity because, folks, this world that's out there needs a strong church in here so that we can encourage each other in here to be the people that we need to be when we go out there.

Pray for our church. Pray for each other. Lift each other up to the Lord. Be there for each other. Understand we're in it together.

Let's be the family that God needs us to be, a family that He is pleased to dwell in. Let's pray. Lord God, thank You again for Your Word.

[ 32 : 24 ] I thank You for this chapter in Ephesians. I thank You for that simple word together. And I pray, Lord, that it challenges us to remember that we are more than just these four walls of this sanctuary.

But it's about the people that are in it, Your family that comes together here. Lord, we have ups, we have downs, we have struggles, we have praises, everything in between. Lord, help us to be there for each other, to reach out to each other in love and in compassion.

I think of the Scripture where it says how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. that, Lord, that's a good thing. It's a blessing to You and a blessing to us. So, Lord, just help us to be a family that is in it together, that loves each other through thick and thin, through good and bad.

And, Lord, help us to remember that we are part of Your family, of Your household. Lord, help us to act like part of Your family. And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. This morning, as we close, the most important thing, folks, it doesn't get any more important than this. If you've never accepted Jesus Christ, you're not part of what we've been talking about this morning, but you can be.

[ 33 : 49 ] When you accept Jesus Christ, you become part of something that's wonderful. You become part of all these promises that we read about in God's Word. If you've never accepted Jesus Christ, and He's pulling on your heart, come and pray.

I'd love to pray with you. But, folks, anything else that you're going through, any other difficulty, bring it to the Lord and share it with each other. So many times, we don't want other people to know what's going on in our life.

It's not what it means to be part of a family. Whatever the need, come and bring it to the Lord and make sure we're sharing those needs with each other as well. The altar's open as we sing. Becky.

You know, Ron gave an example of being asked, what'd you learn today?

If you don't remember anything else in the sermon this morning, but remember that if you're a believer, we're in it together. Let's act like it. Let's bow our heads as we close in prayer.

Lord God, I just thank You that You've invited each one of us to be part of Your family, part of Your household. And Lord, the decision that we've made to accept Jesus Christ, for all those, Lord, that have made that decision, they have joined Your household.

[ 35 : 02 ] They are part of Your family and Lord, that's special. There is meant to be a togetherness of knowing that we can share anything with each other and we'll just love each other.

Of knowing that we are going to spend not just now, but eternity together in heaven. Lord, that's a togetherness that is hard to even explain. But Lord, I thank You for those promises.

I pray that You continue just to hold and to bind this family together in Your love. Help us to grow not just in numbers, Lord, but more importantly, spiritually. Help us to grow closer to each other and most of all, closer to You.

Thank You again, Lord, for Your Word. I pray that it challenges us and encourages us. And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ and all God's family said. Amen.

God bless you and have a wonderful Memorial Day weekend. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

[ 35 : 57 ] God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.