

Christ The Head And Builder Of The Church

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[0 : 00] The title of my message for the sake of the recording is Christ the Head and Builder of the Church. First passage is Colossians chapter 1 starting in verse 15. This is speaking of Jesus, Jesus Christ.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body of the church.

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Some other translations will say preeminence or first place.

So that he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

[1 : 13] So that's a, there's a lot in there. But a few of the things I want to pull out there is that first of all, Jesus is before everything. He's the first.

He's the origin point of not only everything that we experience in creation. God said he created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. So he's the origin and the author and the means of all creation, and it was all created for him.

So he's the beginning and the end. He's the Alpha and the Omega. And in like fashion, he is the beginning of the church. Okay, how is he the beginning of the church?

Well, it says it right there. He's the head of the body of the church. He's the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. Okay, the Bible teaches that we are born dead in our sins.

We get that from Adam. We're alienated from the life of God. Okay. And Jesus came down. There's nothing we could do to undead ourselves. But God sent his son to undead us by becoming dead on the cross.

[2 : 19] And he brings humanity into his death, puts to death the old creation. And God raises him from the dead and brings him into new life. So that all who repent and believe in him are born again into new life through Christ's resurrection.

And become a second born. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead. We are the second, third, fourth. Everybody who puts their trust in Jesus is born again through Christ.

And we get to partake of Christ's child relationship with the Father. We're born again through the resurrection of Jesus. So what Peter is referencing in 1 Peter, he says, there's a verse I prayed earlier.

He, you know, praise God, who caused us to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Which is really interesting terminology. Think of Peter just kind of putting himself in front of everybody throughout his ministry.

Read the gospels. He's always first. And he's like, everyone else will forsake you all. You know, I won't. And then he ends up denying him. Worse than everybody. And I just have this image of, you know, after Jesus restores Peter, after he rises from the dead, he calls Peter to feed his sheep.

[3 : 34] I have this image of Peter having a big reset button on his life. And he backdates it to, well, Jesus, he caused us to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus.

I got a new start. And it required my Savior to die. And the old self that thought it could do it, that thought it had what it takes to follow Jesus and be faithful, I found out it doesn't.

I need someone else to do it for him. And that's the power of Jesus. And I love the language Peter uses in this kind of a rabbit trail, but just he's, he's on the same playing field with all these believers

who tried to us.

He caused us to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus. Which is great. But anyway, the point is that Jesus is the beginning. He's the firstborn from among the dead. And we come out of him.

Our new life is founded in Christ. Okay. And then we are plugged into this living organism called the church of which Jesus is the head. So if you think of a body, think of a head.

[4 : 42] Like, let's talk to my kids this morning. What does a head do for the body? Any of you kids want to answer that? What's the head do? Raina.

It controls the body. That's a great answer. Your brain's in your head. Okay. So a healthy body does what the brain tells it to do. An unhealthy body doesn't do what the brain tells it to do.

Okay. So paralysis. Someone who's paralyzed has somehow, there's a connection lost between the head and the rest of the body. So it's not working right. Okay. And so I think this is a great image.

And this is the Bible uses this imagery for a purpose. That's what Jesus is for the church. He's our living connection. He's our source. Okay. So in that way, he's the head, but he's also boss.

He's key. He's the actual, uh, admin administrator of the body. The body with all of its parts works good when it's obeying what the head says, just like your body, like any part of your body.

[5 : 44] That's not a brain. You're obeying your brain is defective. There's something wrong.

There's special attention given to it so that it can be restored and then used again. Like you're a broken your arm or something.

You can't use it. You know, it's just like so much of your mind and heart and thoughts are, how do I get my arm to work? Right? Uh, well, it's the same way. He has the same attitude and care for all of those who are his members in the body.

Uh, so that's headship. You can think of headship. Uh, there's a lot written about headship. Uh, there's a lot of debates about headship. Like this headship mean like authority or does headship mean like source and usually like in, in like gender role, uh, uh, debates in the church.

Uh, you know, complementarianism versus egalitarianism. One side will take one stance versus another. They're both in there. And they both just are. Uh, Jesus is the supreme authority.

He is the boss. He's the brain. The body absolutely must do what Jesus says. When it does what Jesus says, it's healthy. When it doesn't do what Jesus says, it's unhealthy.

[6 : 46] Okay. He's the authority. He's also the source. He does. He's not just some disconnected deity up in heaven, casting down commands. And then if we obey the commands, we're good.

And then if we don't obey the commands, we're bad. That's not how it is. He's the life source through which if we're not livingly connected to Jesus through the gospel, we can't like we're dead. Like we're dead.

We can't obey. We're actually severed from Christ. So we need both. Okay. So I think both analogies hold up. Uh, headship means authority. It means life source. Um, okay.

We'll move on from Colossians. We're going to move to Ephesians chapter four, uh, verses one through 16. Anyway, uh, this, I hope this is a preview. This is kind of a, an appetizer on the doctrine of headship.

There's so much in the Bible about this Ephesians and Colossians. It's like every other verse is head, you know, I just, there's, there's so much in there. So, um, I want to give us a little bit of excitement about thinking about this.

[7 : 47] And then maybe we go in and pray about this, read about this, try to understand what is like, what, Lord, what does headship mean for me? Uh, so I encourage you to do that. But we're going to talk about Ephesians four, uh, verses one through 16, uh, that, uh, kind of unpacks what this looks like in the experience of the church.

Uh, starting first one, as a prisoner of the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you've received. Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love. This is speaking to the body parts here. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But each one of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Okay. So we have a common grace, a common faith, common experience as believers in the church. We all get the same deal, same hope, same gospel.

[8 : 52] It saves each one of us. But then we have a particular grace and that is our function as members of the body. The particular way we uniquely function as a unique Christ body part.

Okay. And that function is different than the other members. And it's important to know who we are and it's important to have humility here to realize Jesus did this. He gave each one a unique faith. And that thing is different than other people's things. And we got to be careful. Even when we think about each other and stuff, it's just like, why is that, you know, goofball? Like, why can't they see like I see? Well, hey, God, he, Jesus apportioned grace with particularity.

And we together, all together in one body holding fast to the head, represent Jesus. But all by ourselves, we're a body part.

Okay. And we ought to have value for the uniqueness of the other body parts. In light of the fact that Jesus actually is the one making you unique and giving you unique grace for the ministry he's called you to in the body of Christ.

[9 : 58] I live like rabbit trail here. Moving on, verse 8. This is why it says, When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men. What does he ascended mean except that he also descended to the lower earthly regions?

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will be no longer infants tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men and their deceitful scheme. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

As I think the ESV puts it, as each part is working properly. So, starting off there, again, Jesus, you know, the context here leading into this is, hey, there's some particularity of the grace that's been given.

[11 : 25] There's each body part that's unique. 1 Corinthians 12 talks a lot about this. It talks about ears and eyes and mouths and feet and all that kind of stuff. And it's using it to illustrate, hey, there's a uniqueness to each member.

Okay? And we have a need for each other. We shouldn't despise each other. And now he also says, you know, in addition to these particular graces that are unique to every single member of the body of Christ, he's also given leadership gifts.

He's given apostles, he's given prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. You know, this is often referred to as the five-fold ministry. These are gifts that Christ himself as king and head gives for the equipping of the body for the work of ministry.

So each one of us has a ministry from God that we are called to exercise towards each other. And then he gives leadership gifts to the body, like the actual person themselves are the gift to the body for the building work of equipping all those members to do the work of ministry.

It's part of the gift of leadership, you know. And it comes from Christ. This is not a man-centered thing. These actually come from Jesus Christ instead of himself as the head of the church. He gives them. So we have a full expectation that in a New Testament church, we'll see these things active.

[12 : 42] You know, we'll see these things active in ministry. We'll see these things, hopefully, God willing, active in the eldership team and the leadership. You know, we would view Josh as playing this apostolic role as being a church planter, kind of a missionary.

And we expect the rest of that to follow. But what's interesting is these don't, these guys aren't professional pastors. They're not the ones doing all the ministry.

They're equipping the body for the work of ministry. We all have responsibility from God to build each other up as part of the ministry that we've got from Jesus Christ as a living member of the body.

These gifts are there to help equip, to build up, to mature. Okay. Which brings to this next section here. What's the goal? Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

This is the goal. God is glorified when we are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ together. I think it's often well known, I believe, in Christian circles, especially evangelical Christian circles. [13:57] There's a verse in Romans 8, 29 that says, Those who he foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus. Okay. So that's our destination.

If we're in Christ, we have a destination. Becoming like Jesus. Okay. And that's accepted. We all believe, hopefully we all believed, that's our destination.

If we're in Christ, God is conforming us to the image of his Son. That's where we're headed. That's his will for our life. It's his express will. Lord, what's your will for my life? To be conformed to the image of my Son, Jesus.

Okay. So how do we do that? Do we just read our Bibles by ourselves? Listen to sermons? You know, me, myself, and Jesus? You know, video church.

Like, there's such an individualistic mindset in our culture that can take a promise like that and just say, alright, here, I'm going to become like Jesus now.

[15:02] You need all those things. You need the Bible. We need the Holy Spirit. But, this, that truth has to be compared to other truths in the Bible, especially this passage here in Ephesians 4.

God has chosen the church as the means for conforming us to the image of Jesus. So, he gave all these gifts for, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

It's necessary. The interdependent ministry of the different members of the body of Christ in the local church is essential for making this happen.

This Romans 8.29 promise of becoming like Jesus. This is how it works. Okay. And, reading the Bible is important. And, walking by the Spirit is important. All of those things are talked about in the Bible.

But, we don't pick and choose. We get the whole counsel of God when we look at what the whole counsel of the Bible tells us about a given topic. So, anyway, the church is essential for sanctification.

[16:10] Moving forward, it says, verse 14, Then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and the cunning and craftiness of men and their deceitful scheming.

That's a great, that's such a great description of immaturity. Okay. You're just knocked back and forth. You read one thing, oh man, I believe that. And you read another thing that says something different. You're like, oh, I believe that. And you're just kind of tossed all over the place.

Well, that's immaturity. And you're susceptible to deception. An immature believer is susceptible to being deceived. Okay. But, through the church, an immature believer, through the manifold grace of God, can be grown up into maturity.

How does that happen? Verse 15, instead, instead of staying in this place of immaturity, in your own little echo chamber, listening to all your own ideas and listening to people who affirm all your own ideas and kind of just running in a circle of isolated self feedback.

Instead of that, instead speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up in the head, who is the head, that is Christ. You can't see the back of your own head.

[17:28] Okay. And God's ordained it like that. You don't get to see the back of your own head. There are truths in the Bible that God is going to speak to you. And that's awesome. There are other truths in the Bible that he's ordained other people speak to you and you don't get to find it all by yourself.

Wow. That's a blow to your pride. God has ordained that you not be able to find out all of his will all by yourself. He's ordained that you humble yourself and you be in a church where other people can speak into your life and tell you all the stuff that you can't see about yourself.

Ooh. Sounds scary. But it's awesome. Like if our ultimate goal is to become like Jesus and I don't want to be like me anymore.

Like I'm tired of me. I don't want to be like me. Like me is terrible. Me ran my life into an absolute pit of sin and horribleness. I don't want to be like me anymore.

I want to be like Jesus. He saved me. We're stoked about that. I'm going to be stoked. Like it doesn't feel good to get challenging feedback from people.

[18 : 37] But like my spirit says, yes, amen. I don't want to stay stuck in this immature, unsanctified, selfish world that I live in.

I want to come out of that. I want to be like Jesus. And we're stoked about that. I challenge you. The spirit will make you stoked about this. It's not fun necessarily.

No discipline for the time seems pleasant. Hebrews 12 says that by afterward, it produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who've been trained by it. And the church is God's mean of disciplining us from immaturity to maturity.

That's how he set it up. Moving on, verse 16. From him, meaning Jesus, the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

So I meant to have my ESV here as well. The way ESV renders this is as each part is working properly. This is more than just each part doing their job.

[19 : 48] It's effective. You can do your job when you're a body part that's working properly. Okay? So like if I'm a surgeon and I got to use my hands, but my hands aren't obeying my brain, I can't do surgery.

So this is where the pride of man can come in. I can still do my part in the body of Christ, but not the obedience to the head.

No, you can't. No, you can't. I can still do my part in my head as each part is working properly, holding fast the head.

Okay? When we are joined to the head, Jesus, each one of us individually joined to the head, Jesus, walking in the light, we confessed our sin for putting our trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit fills us with light.

light. It's just a game changer. The Holy Spirit just fills us with peace, fills us with light. There's joy and peace with God. There's love towards man. And you can be effective. Okay?

[20 : 55] You can be used by the surgeon to do this heart work. They can speak the truth in love. But if you're not, here's the deal. When you're not connected to the head through sin, through unbelief, you know, maybe unforgiveness towards people, like things like this, you still remember what to do. And that's the problem. You can roll on that for a long time.

Jesus says that the light, the eye is the lamp of the body. But if the light within you becomes darkness, how great is that darkness?

I believe he's speaking of those who have a form of godliness that deny the power. They remember what it is like to do all the ministry stuff. They're actually pretty good at it. But they thought they didn't need to be daily connected to the head.

They thought, well, I can hold this unforgiveness for a little while. They owe me. They owe me an apology first before I go forgive them. No, they don't. I mean, yes, they do before God, but that's between them and God.

You hold out unforgiveness. You're alienated. You're a member who's not livingly obeying Jesus. You're in the darkness.

[22 : 11] And you can't be affected. You can't effectively do his work. So it's essential that each one of us be a properly working body part. Okay. Anyway, what is this?

Colossians 2, 18 through 19 speaks of this. I'm just going to turn there real quick. So that passage in Ephesians 4 talks about what it looks like to be well connected to the head.

You work properly. You speak the truth in love. The body grows. Paul speaks in Colossians 2, verse 18, saying, Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.

Such a person goes into great detail about what he's seen. And his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the head. From whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

So here's an example of someone who has lost connection with the head. They're still rolling in ministry mode. See, like they're teaching. They're in this church context saying all kinds of things and actually leading people astray.

[23 : 19] And their mind is puffed up with idle notions. Their unspiritual mind is puffed up with idle notions. And people are listening to them because it sounds like Christian adjacent, you know, or whatever.

Maybe it's actually real doctrine, but it's severed from the power, the source of life that makes it effectual. And he says, a person like that, they've lost connection with the head.

Okay. So it's a warning for us. We need to be effective as members of the body of Christ for this ministry of building up in love. We need to live in connection with Jesus. Okay.

Your secret life with the Lord is of utmost importance. Okay. And it's so simple. Like children can understand this. If we walk in the light as he is in life, we have fellowship with each other and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

Okay. And if we're walking in the darkness, we have hidden sin that we're refusing to bring into the light for whatever reason. Hey, we're lying and we're not agreeing with the truth.

[24 : 24] And we experience that state, that disconnect with God. We actually experience that relationships almost immediately. You start having conflict with people. You start having evil thoughts about people.

Like this immediately starts messing up relationships. What's the solution? Get back into the light.

Okay. Okay. Come to Jesus. He freely forgives us our sins because he atoned for on the cross.

We confess him. He's faithful and just to forgive us, cleanse us, and then boom, we're back in fellowship. We're back in relationship. So it's important. It's important that we steward that part of our life and realize the impact it has on other people in the church.

Okay. Where am I here? Well, yeah. I think that this passage in Ephesians here gives us a sense of ultimate goal.

What's the ultimate goal for the church? That Christ would be put on display. Okay. That Jesus would have an accurate representation of himself on earth. God is pleased with his son.

[25 : 28] He says, behold, this is my son in whom I'm well pleased. His goal is to glorify himself through Jesus Christ. He's the means of glorifying himself on earth, Jesus. Now, through the church, the body of Christ, he glorifies himself in the same way.

Okay. Conforming us to the image of Christ together so that those who hold the name of Jesus would glorify God. Okay.

He's glorified in one way. That we would be conformed to the image of Jesus together. That is actually, that's the definition of maturity it gives here. What's maturity? We go from immaturity to mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

That's what maturity is. So if I want to know, like, what's it mean to be a mature Christian? It's Jesus. And I can't do that by myself. I do that under the headship of Christ in his church.

Okay. And the other means here is speaking the truth in love. Healthy body parts connected to the head. How does he move us from immaturity to maturity? Speaking the truth in love.

[26 : 37] Together. Both of those things. It's not just loving silently. It's just not, not just speaking without love. They go together.

Okay. We can't, we can't let go of either one. There's this super passive Christian culture now where we just kind of love everybody to hell. You know, it's going to be a witness. It's going to shine a light.

Pray that God opens a door for a conversation and you pray for like until you're dead. You know, it's for whatever reason, God didn't open the door. They didn't ask you some, you know, mysterious question that would indicate to you that now is the right time to talk about Jesus.

Okay. So we don't do that. And then there's the other side where we're just hammering away. Truth, truth, truth, truth, truth, truth, truth, truth, truth. And you don't really care about the people. Like both are bad.

Jesus is both. You know, law came through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. He's, he's both. He's got real love and he's got real truth, baby. It's both.

[27 : 36] And he says, those of my love, I rebuke, be zealous, therefore, and repent. Jesus is in our church. We're going to experience that. Like just come to terms with it. You are immature in some sense.

And if you're in his church, he's going to speak to you about that. Okay. Like you can't be in his church and not get talked to.

That's just like, none of us are getting out of this because are we like Jesus yet? No. So that means he's going to talk to you specifically about the areas where you're not like Jesus.

And that's, that's awesome. That's actually his love. And we can make it easier when people know that we love him, but we love him. Okay. And we're not going to do it perfect.

This is where as like this, this applies to both the giving side and the receiving side. We ought to have mercy for people when they're coming to talk to us about things that like neither, like just neither one of us want to have this conversation.

[28 : 34] So I can extend them mercy that like, you know, they probably don't want to talk to me about my, you know, frustration, my bad energy, whatever it is that I need challenging on.

They don't want to talk to me. I can extend them grace. I can extend them love and in generosity, you know? And so this works both ways. We can have love to the people we're talking to. And then we need to have love for the people who are talking to us.

And when we do that and we're working properly, the body builds itself up in love and we together become like Jesus, a more full representation of the character and the nature of Jesus Christ.

And God has chosen that as his particular means of glorifying himself on earth. Just like he chose sending Christ in the flesh to glorify himself 2,000 years ago, that was his particular way of glorifying himself was sending Jesus to do it.

Now through the church, he's doing the same thing. Okay. I'm not sure if I have time to talk about the builder side, but I'll mention this.

[29 : 46] First Peter 2 verses 1 through 10 speaks of the builder motif, the house motif, you know, the church as being the house and Jesus is the builder and he's a cornerstone.

Okay. And that we like living stones are being built together into a house. We're being built together into a house. He's the builder. And he says to those who believe this stone is precious.

I think it's just a great, that's a great witness test for us. Is Jesus precious to you? This is like, well, I think this is one of the first fruits in a true believer's life is my savior is precious to me.

In light of what he saved me from, he's precious. It says to those who believe he's precious and he will never put them to shame. That's an awesome promise to take to the bank.

Jesus is the builder of the church. He promises that. He says that to Peter, I'll build my church and gates of hell won't prevail against it. And it says to those who believe he's precious to you and whoever trusts in him will never be put to shame.

[30 : 52] That's a promise to take to the bank, especially in light of there's sinners in the church. So there's leaders here to let us down. But ultimately, who's building the church? It's Jesus. And if you trust in him, if you come to him, as it says, like a living stone, you will be built together into a house for the Lord and you will not be put to shame.

The Bible says that. It's an awesome promise to hold on to. And there's a warning for those who don't believe. It says he becomes a stumbling stone and a rock of offense, which is just interesting. Like, just have a category in your mind for this. If you trust in Jesus, you're going to be built up in him. You know, it won't be put to shame. But if you don't, he's going to oppose you in his church and he'll be a stumbling block to you and you'll be offended.

Like, wash your laundry list of offenses through that lens of interpretation. Okay. Am I really offended at wrong that's been done to me?

Or do I actually have a problem with Jesus in the way he works? It's one or the other. We have one of those two experiences as our option.

[32 : 09] And just want to encourage you to consider that, especially if you have a tendency to get offended when people challenge you on stuff that's just plain and plain. It's right on the Bible. You know, I've been guilty of this.

The Lord has corrected me. It's like, hey, you actually don't love the truth. You love telling the truth to other people. You don't like hearing it yourself. I need to be corrected. I need to say, you know what?

No, everything that comes from you is good. And who am I to think that I can just sit me, myself, and my Bible and hear from God and refuse to hear from other people?

That's just insane. That's proud. I want to hear it. You know? And I don't want to be offended by it. Even if it hurts my pride and hurts my flesh, I want to hold fast to Jesus.

And I want to know that he is dead set on offending my pride and making me dependent on him.

You can guarantee it. Expectations are key. Michael says expectations are key.

[33 : 04] Here's an expectation. He will offend your pride. All right? And we need it. It's our life. Okay? But anyway, Jesus is the builder.

There's a lot we can think about that. He's the one who builds the church, not men. Okay? So we don't have to worry. Okay? About bad men screwing everything up. There are bad men. Okay?

Can't screw Jesus' plan up. He's the builder. I will build my church. The gates of hell will not prevail against it. We can take it to the bank. Okay. In closing here, I'm going to try to wrap this up. Exhortations. I have six exhortations. I already did it, but I'm going to just run through them again. Number one, hold fast to the head. It's essential that we hold fast to the head. We get our life from Jesus.

We get our marching orders from Jesus. When we're obeying Jesus, we are loving people the best way that we can possibly love them. When we're connected to Jesus and we're obeying his commands for us, we are effectively operating as a member of the body of Christ.

[34 : 08] And it's the most loving thing we could possibly do for anybody else. Second is trust the builder. He's the one who's building. We're not the builders. He's the builder.

We trust Jesus. We come to him. We put our trust in him. We obey him. And he's the one who sets each member in the body as he sees fit and he builds his church. Number three, this is a really practical one.

Number three, we need to build relationships and we need to speak the truth in love. Okay? Like relationships, building actual friendships with people is how we build the, what does it talk about? The supporting ligaments, okay? That hold us together because we love each other. And it actually, there's a bond there that can withstand the challenges of speaking the truth in love to each other. If we don't have those bonds there, you just, you sever relationship. Okay? So we need to build relationships with each other. We need to say, Lord, I want to build relationships with the different members of the body of Christ so that we can speak the truth in love and grow up into him.

[35 : 15] If we're living in our isolated little world, you won't build relationships with people. And therefore, you won't be able to participate in this love speaking maturation process that the Holy Spirit is working in the members.

So we need to build those relationships. And then when we build those relationships, we need to be speaking the truth in love. Okay? We need to, as you're getting to know people, as they're bearing their hearts and you're opening your heart to them, we're confessing each other's sins, we're bearing each other's burdens, we need to speak the truth in love.

Okay? God has ordained that he use these different members to communicate heavenly mysteries that can set us free. And I need you, you need me, we need each other.

That's just how it works. But we got to be intentional about it. We can't just keep it all on Sunday morning. I mean, actually, I say, I'm going to open up my schedule. I'm going to open the priorities in my life and I'm going to intentionally invest in relationships.

And we won't go there. Okay? Number four, be a body part that's working properly. This just speaks to the, you know, just the picture about holding fast ahead. We can't do this work unless we are working properly.

[36 : 22] We have to repent from sin. Okay? Ongoing, unrepentant, hidden sin. It darkens.

Okay? It's walking in the darkness. And it's sobering. Okay? It's sobering. We're like, we need to repent from sin. It can't get any simpler than this. If the Spirit is in you, He won't let you rest.

Okay? This is the hallmark of the Spirit of God living in someone. Those who are born of God do not make a practice of sinning. Those who make a practice of sinning, they're not born and gone.

1 John 3 says that. Does that mean Christians don't fall into sin? No. It says, I can't be comfortable. I can't live there.

Okay? He makes you deeply uncomfortable. That's evidence that the Spirit is living inside of you. Like, think of your central nervous system, your nerves.

[37 : 22] If you saw someone and they had a nail just sticking out of their hand, and it's bleeding all over the place, and they're just casually having conversations, you know, acting like it's not there, that would be very weird.

Okay? That would be super weird. You would think, okay, something is wrong with this person. And there would be. Either they're putting all of their thought and energy into ignoring this tremendous pain that's in their hand, or they literally don't have pain in their hand because their central nervous system isn't working.

Those are the two options. Okay? So if you're living a life of unrepentant sin in the dark, you're either going crazy, and the Spirit is hammering on the door of your heart right now saying, repent. Come into the light. It's painful. I need to get right with the Lord. And you're deeply in a state of unrest, and the Lord is using that to bring you into repentance.

Or you're justifying yourself, and it actually doesn't hurt that bad. And the only time you really think about it when people confront you, and then you push back. That's fine. It doesn't even hurt.

[38 : 34] You know? Well, actually, that's worse. That's a lot worse. That means you need to get born again. Because if the Spirit lives inside you, He won't let you. Okay? It says the seed of God keeps Him.

1 John 3. So, it's important. You need to be working properly to be an effective member of the body of Christ. Okay? It's essential. Number five, me, my Bible, and Jesus is not enough to mature. We already talked about that in detail. But again, it needs to be said, the church has fallen on hard times. Okay? We are very individualist.

Well, the Word of God is the same. The Word of God doesn't change with our culture. It doesn't. He's ordained this particular means to perfect us and to mature us into the image of the Son, Jesus. Okay? Number six, it's all about Him. Okay? So, this corrects, like, you can, like, there's so much awesome stuff about the church in the New Testament. We can have a very high value for the church, and that's good.

[39 : 35] But you can actually get weird about it. You can become, like, a church-centered church. And instead of a Christ-centered church. Okay? And I think about this, like a bride, you know, a beautiful bride on a wedding day, got makeup all done up, and, you know, just looks beautiful.

And she's just looking at herself in the mirror and glorying in how beautiful she is. There's something a little weird about that. Right? Why? Why is she beautiful?

Who's it for? Her husband. Okay? That's the whole point. Her affection is for her husband. She's made herself beautiful for Him.

A healthy church, you know what we do? My Savior, He loves me. Okay? And I want to be beautiful for Him. We are feminine. In relation to Christ, we are the bride.

We are all feminine in relation to Jesus Christ. Now, within the church, we image that differently. Men are men, and women are women. But the reason God cares so much for those gender role distinctions is because of this truth.

[40 : 45] Jesus is the Savior of the body. And we owe Him our obedience. Okay? It's beautiful to Him. But it's not for us.

It's not for us. It's for Him. That He would be pleased. And He is. Okay? But just so that we don't, you know, start smoking too much of our own stuff here, it is not about us.

It's about Jesus. And the day, there are warnings throughout the Bible about those who were stewards, who were given a responsibility for a stewardship, a vineyard for God.

And it's all about them. It becomes about them. They want it. They want the fruits. Well, who are the fruits for that vineyard? Him. And we'll turn to the same thing. This is all about us.

If we become a church-centered church, yes, we hold high the value of the church. But it's because of Him. Okay? A healthy church is a Christ-centered church. Their affections are for Jesus. First Peter talks about we are a chosen people to show forth the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness and into light.

[41 : 53] So a healthy church where all the members are connected to the head and we're speaking the truth to one another, we're talking about Jesus to each other. And we are really excited about Jesus. You're going to pick one defining attribute of a healthy church is you come in the midst and people are excited about Jesus.

That's it. They're excited about Jesus. They're excited to obey Him. They're excited to become like Him. They're excited to find out who He's really like in the Bible and not just hear about it from other people, but like, Lord, I want to know you myself.

I want to get in God's Word. I want to hear and know you. They all speak of His glory. So, I think that's it.

Jesus is the head. He's the builder. He's the beginning. He's the end. He's the one who this is all for. So, even as we go through these upcoming teachings on the church, I think it's good to have that perspective.

You know, it's from Him. It's through Him. And it's to Him.