

# Uniqueness and Unity

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon us with might and power and deep conviction at this time. That you would open us at the very deepest levels of who we are to the truth of your word, the glory of the gospel.

And just how great and awesome a God that you are, that you would call imperfect, finite, fallen people like us to be your children by adoption and grace.

Father, grip us with the truths of the gospel. Grip us with Jesus so that we will be disciples of Jesus who are living for your glory.

And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. In a couple of moments, we'll be looking at Ephesians 4 if you want to sort of grab your Bible and start to try to find that.

One of the things that we're going to be talking about today is the consequences of being a Christian. Now, for many people in our culture, as soon as you hear this, that there's consequences to being a Christian, we immediately think of one thing, sex.

[ 1 : 1 0 ]     But if you just talk to a group of people in a coffee shop or just anybody, you just went out and said, you know, what do you think the main consequences of being a Christian are? And probably the very first thing they'd say, well, something to do with sex.

And probably for most people, they would think that Christians are stupid about it and wrong and mean and hateful and a few other things. And it depends on how polite or rude they would be with you in terms of how much they'd express it.

But that would be going on in their mind. One of the things that we're going to be looking at today is... So just so you know, here's what's happened.

We've been going through the book of Ephesians. If you're a guest here this morning, it was written by a man named Paul who was in jail in Rome. And he's writing it to the second largest city in the Roman Empire, to the churches which are there.

And he's writing it around the year 60. So that's a long time ago. And what he's done is for the first three chapters, because, of course, he didn't write the book in chapters. It was just a letter, right? But the first half of the book, basically, he explains the gospel.

[ 2 : 1 1 ]     He explains this good news that Jesus came and he died on the cross. And as a result of him dying on the cross, if you put your faith and trust in Jesus, God makes you his child by adoption and grace.

And Paul has explained how different ways about how this works and what it means for our lives. He's talked about bringing home to them in a very powerful way. I mean, I'm explaining it, what he said.

But in a sense for us, listening to it many years later, he's saying that when somebody listened to St. Patrick in the 400s in Ireland and put their faith and trust in Jesus, if somebody earlier today at a church service in Rwanda put their faith in Jesus, if somebody even earlier on the day today in Beijing put their faith and trust in Jesus, if somebody put their faith and trust in Manhattan, if somebody in London, England, and somebody in Ottawa, every single one of us enter into the same reality.

We all become part of the same family. We all, in a sense, become part of the same reality. And it's the gospel, Jesus' death upon the cross and his resurrection, it's for everybody.

And that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, one of the things to understand that what happened at a spiritual level is that even though Jesus died in history about 20, 27 years before Paul wrote this letter, even though Jesus died in history in one particular spot, in one particular location, because of who he is, because he is the son of God who took on human flesh and became fully human while remaining God, when he died in that one time, in that one place in history, it was also something, in a sense, outside of time.

[ 3 : 56 ] It was something eternal, which means that whether it's in the fourth century or today, when you put your faith and trust in Jesus, one of the things to understand is that it's as if Jesus himself comes to you, and he puts his arms around you and he unites himself to you and you become united to him.

And so that in a true spiritual level, that when Jesus died upon the cross, you died with him. He died for you. He experiences your death for you.

And you are made alive in him, in his resurrection. He's the one who's resurrected, not you, but because you're united with him, you have this spectacular transaction that all of your shame and all of your imperfections and all of your wrongdoing, every single aspect of your wrongdoing from the moment you could do something wrong to the moment of your death, that all somehow became Jesus's.

And he became the one who bore all of that and the punishment and the accusations, everything that could come against you. He took it upon himself.

But in this mystery of grace, this mystery of God, that since he's completely and utterly united with you, when he rises from the dead, you rise from the dead.

[ 5 : 12 ] And in a sense that we will only know when we die or when Jesus comes to see us face to face, we also ascended with him. And there's this profound mystery. And Paul spends three chapters explaining how this is all done because God loves you.

He's not weighing your successes. He's not looking at your merits. He's not looking at all that. He just loves you and does this for you. Jesus does this for you.

And the consequences of that, Paul explains. He explains how Jesus himself indwells you. The Holy Spirit himself indwells you. God the Father himself indwells you and makes you alive.

In a sense, he makes you a new type of human. Not a new type of human that can be detected by x-rays. But from God's perspective, you have become changed. And one of the things that comes out of this is that not only does he just dwell in you, but that God is making this profound mystery whereby he dwells on earth in his people.

And it's described, Paul describes that there's not just an individual indwelling, but that in this profound sense of mystery, God is making a temple that he dwells in.

[ 6 : 32 ] And it's not that he's waiting until it's complete that he dwells. He dwells in it right now. But every person who becomes a Christian becomes a living stone that God is using to build this temple that he dwells in.

And this temple that he dwells in is of people of every culture, of every ethnicity, of every race, of every sexual orientation, of every language, and of every time.

There's just this one temple that he dwells in here on earth. And that is made up of this remarkable thing of the Irish in the fifth century and all over the world.

No respecter of color or anything like that. He takes you as his own. And so Paul has done that for three chapters explaining the gospel. So then the question is, how shall we then live?

Like, what does that mean? What is the implication of that for human beings in terms of how to live? Now, just so you know, as I said, most Canadians would say, well, the main implication has to do with sex.

[ 7 : 47 ] Well, he does talk about sex, by the way. And we're going to look at it. But he doesn't talk about it first. He doesn't even talk about it second. I think he talks about it third. He's going to talk about marriage.

He's going to talk about children and parents. He's going to talk about slaves and masters, employees and employers. He's going to talk about music. He's going to talk about church life.

He's going to talk about how to be good neighbors. He's going to talk about demons. He's going to talk about a whole range of things. There's a whole pile of implications that come from the gospel being true. And he's going to talk about all of them. And we're going to look at the beginning of them right now.

But here's the most important thing. I'm going to put the scripture up on the screen so you can see it. Here's the most important thing. You notice right there it says, I therefore.

We're looking at Ephesians chapter 4 verse 1. I therefore. There's a therefore. One of the things which makes Christianity different than every other way, it doesn't matter if it's a philosophy.

[ 8 : 45 ] It doesn't matter if it's a spirituality. It doesn't matter if it's one of the great religions. It doesn't matter if it's a spirituality that you've cobbled together yourself from different sources of wisdom. One of the things which is completely different about the Christian way than all other way is that it begins with redemption.

It begins with God doing all that has to be done to make you completely and utterly right with himself. And Paul here isn't making up something new.

This is what the Old Testament said. Go back and read the Ten Commandments. And if you look at the Exodus and the Deuteronomy version, both of them begin. I am the Lord who redeemed you out of the bondage and slavery.

Therefore, this. First, there's redemption. And then there's how you shall live. And it's the same here. So Paul is for three chapters explained that you're saved by grace alone, by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as God's word has told us, as Jesus said that it would be.

That is how God has made you right. Right. And if God has made you right in such a way, how is it going to be that you're going to now start to live? And now Paul starts to unfold it. It always begins with redemption.

[ 9 : 58 ] It doesn't begin with if you start to get your life together and then if you take on some spiritual exercises, then maybe God will sort of accept you in some way.

That's how all spirituality, all religion works. And the Bible goes in the opposite direction. I have redeemed you out of slavery, by my mighty power, out of love for you, for your good and for my glory.

I have done it all. How shall you then live? How shall we then live? And Paul begins to unpack it now over three chapters. So over the next weeks, over the next six times that we get together to look at this, we're going to look at it and look how it begins in chapter four, verse one.

Looking on the screen is verses one to three. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace.

Now, just sort of what's going on here. First of all, this idea here, I mean, you know, Jonathan mentioned, if you haven't given your life to Jesus, this is a perfect Sunday for you to call out to him.

[ 11 : 19 ] But what we understand is that nobody calls out to Jesus unless he first called you. And if you are here today and you feel any type of stirrings within you, what that is is Jesus is calling you to be his own.

He's doing it right now. He still does it. He does it in postmodern Ottawa. He does it all over the world. He's still calling people to be his child. So he says here, I'm a prisoner of the Lord.

I urge you to walk, verse one again, in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. And then Paul outlines four Christian virtues. They're not the only Christian virtues. He's going to talk about others later on in this.

And there's others in other parts of the Bible. But he tells you four really important ones. He talks about humility, gentleness, patience, and a type of love for another person that bears with them.

And these are four important Christian virtues. And the first one, I think three of them are pretty easy to understand. Hard to do. It's hard to be patient with somebody that is just really frustrating.

[ 12 : 21 ] It's hard to be gentle with somebody when you really just would like to just let them have it. And it's hard sometimes to bear with one another in love.

You know, sometimes it's hard in marriage. Sometimes it's hard with your kids. Kids, sometimes it's really hard with your parents. And there's this important virtue of just being able to bear with one another.

But humility is a harder one, especially in our culture, because it's not understood. Usually when people in our culture think of humility, they mean that I'm supposed to say that I'm stupid, I'm ugly, I'm untalented.

Please kick me. Like I should have a t-shirt that says, please kick me, both in the front and the back. Or if not, maybe in the front it can say, please kick me the back. It can say, walk all over me.

And that's how we think of humility. But that's not what the Bible means by humility. It's a very, very powerful and important virtue. It's one which is characterized by Jesus.

[ 13 : 23 ] And you can begin to get a bit of a sense of it if you just think of this illustration. Imagine, it looks like it's going to be a really nice day today. And imagine, maybe after church, you grab a couple of people, you go for a walk in the Gatineaus, go see the colors, have a nice hike.

Afterwards, you go have, I don't know, a pumpkin spice latte with pumpkin scone. Pumpkin scones, I wish they weren't like 500 calories. They are so delicious. I actually lived with a guy once who was a good enough marathon runner that whenever they had a marathon, he was invited to be at the front, not making it up.

But he signed up for a marathon. They'd say, oh, Mike, you're here. I'll say his name. Nothing embarrassing about being the guy who gets invited to stand at the front. And he literally, he ran like 100 miles a week.

He could just go and eat like a couple of cream pies and still just be skinny. Why? Because he's running 100 miles a week. I wish I ran 100 miles a week so I could eat as many pumpkin scones as I would desire.

And I can desire a lot. Anyway, so imagine, I got off the story. So imagine you've had the day, you know, you've gone for a, you've had church, gone up to the Gatineaus, had a beautiful walk, you know, some scones and stuff like that.

[ 14 : 38 ] And just a great time. And then, you know, you come back to wherever you're living and you're just looking out in the sunset, just beautiful sunset. And you say to yourself, gosh, that's such a beautiful sunset.

And the person that maybe you've come back home to or whatever, they're beside you. Or maybe they were with you that whole day and had all the wonderful things, the hike and everything.

But you're standing there thinking, such a nice day. Whoa, is it ever beautiful? And all they say is, do you hear what he said to me? Did you hear what he said to me?

They're not looking at the sunset. All they are is preoccupied with a slight. Humility is when, you see, and this is why the gospel is so important.

You see, the gospel says Jesus dies on the cross. And when he dies on the cross for George, Jesus knew every single wrong thing I ever did from the first wrong thing I ever did until my death.

[ 15 : 37 ] Which, unless Jesus comes, I'm hoping is another 30 years or more away. And every single wrong. He knew everything. He knew everything about me when he died on the cross for me.

And still he loved me and bore it in himself. And so as the gospel grips you, there begins to be the possibility of a type of self-possession that means you can be self-forgetful.

Right? Because in that illustration, the one person, you've had such a spectacular day, it's as if you forget about yourself. Because you're just overwhelmed with the beauty of the sunset and the goodness of the day.

That, in a sense, is a picture of humility. And the opposite of humility is the person who had the scones, the walk, the sunset, and all they can think about. Did you hear what he said to me?

It's just rankling away at you. You can't get away from that thing that's going on inside of you. And so the virtue of humility is that the gospel can start to grip us in such a way that we can be, in a sense, so secure.

[ 16 : 46 ] It doesn't mean we don't repent of sin. We do. We have the humility to actually say, you know what? That was wrong. I shouldn't have done that. You know, yes, there's this thing in my past which is deeply shameful.

I have to walk towards that. I have to walk towards it with Jesus. I know he knew about it when he died. And the gospel can so grip you in such a way that you can be self-possessed without being arrogant and self-forgetful without being a doormat and open and present to the beauty and glory of others, what's going on in the world.

And that's humility. That's humility, according to the Bible. And we can see, you know, imagine if that was actually something that could begin to grow within you.

I know it's very, very counter to the culture's solution. But I think it's a beautiful solution.

And I think because Christianity is true, it is the real solution. The deeper solution to what we need. So just look at this quote again.

[ 17 : 57 ] We're spending a bit of time here with it, but it's an important beginning. Look at it again. Verse 1. For this reason, I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles. Sorry, the wrong text there.

This is the right one. I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

You see, here's the other thing which is about this. Remember, these are the implications of the gospel. Part of how we assess a person's moral life, so to speak, is not just how they live, but where they're headed.

Right? We do it all the time with kids. We might say, are you going to be doing well in school? Yeah, I'm going to do really well in school. And then you sort of think to yourself, well, how come you're just watching TV the whole time?

Like, watching TV all the time and doing well in school like they don't work. They're not going in the same direction. One of the things we worry about maybe if our kids or our husband or our wife or our best friend is where are they headed?

[ 19 : 04 ] Where are they going morally and emotionally? Where are they headed? And so here we see in this that the gospel is saying, as the gospel grips you, as the truths of the gospel grips you, as Jesus dwells within you, as the Holy Spirit becomes real in your life, it's going to move you, it's going to ground you and propel you and draw you in a certain direction.

It's going to draw you to be so mindful of the gospel and who Jesus is and what he did for you on the cross that it will move you towards humility. It will move you towards gentleness. It will move you towards patience.

It will move you. It should move you. Hopefully it will move you. If it's not, then it's something you need to repent of and call out to the Lord of, towards love that bears with each other. And it's not just that you have these virtues, but that these virtues work so that you have a heart to maintain the unity that the Holy Spirit creates.

That's what the gospel does. That's the implication. It draws you to that.

Now, some of you might say very correctly, George, that's very, very interesting. But gosh, there's so many angry Christians who just get so mad at other Christians over the tiniest little thing.

[ 20 : 16 ] You know, I was just a couple of weeks ago at a meeting of other pastors in Montreal, the east, east, east end of Montreal. And we were just talking about some issues that were going on in the church, trying to help each other think them through.

And one of them was just some unbelievable vitriol that had gone on around an author, Sam Albury. And this whole tribe of Christians just attacking him for the most minute little nuance in his argument.

And the vitriol is just something. I mean, we all know about it. It's not just Christians. It's a human problem right now. Don't you? If you look at some of the feeds of things, I don't look at them. Life is happier if you don't look at responses on social media.

Get off of Twitter. Get off of all those things. You'll actually have a happier life if you just get rid of most of that stuff. But, you know, the vitriol, people will just attack you. And that's not counting all the ugly divisions in the church and the anger and what's going on with all of that.

And all I can say is I have nothing to say other than pray that it not characterize us because it's wrong.

[ 21 : 29 ] In fact, look what Paul does immediately after this to try to help to bring home how important the unity is. He talks about seven great things which Christians have in common. Right?

Verse 4. Chapter 4, verse 4. There is one body. By that he's meaning that at the end of the day there can be many, many visible churches. But there's only one invisible church.

That temple that I described that he was building. He also used the word body earlier on. And that is made up of people who come to faith in South Africa and Rwanda and Uganda and China and Canada and, you know, the far north and all over.

There's just one body. There's only ultimately, you're either in Jesus or you're not. There's only one body. And there's only one Holy Spirit. If you're being filled with the Holy Spirit, there's only one Holy Spirit.

You're not being filled with 17 different Holy Spirits. There's just one. And you were called to one hope that belongs to your call. That's the hope that Jesus is our Savior. That heaven is our final destiny.

[ 22 : 33 ] That we will dwell in the new heaven and the new earth. We all have one hope. There's only one Lord. That's Jesus. There's only one content of truth, which is the faith. There's only one immersion in Jesus, which is what baptism is referring to, which is why generally you don't want to have people baptized five, six, 10, 15 times or even two.

Why? Because there's only one immersion in Jesus. And the water baptism should represent the spiritual reality that God has done when he immerses you in Jesus.

There's only one immersion in Jesus and a saving faith. And there's only one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. So one of the things you can pray about for us as a church is that when it comes to other true Christians, that we will pray that the bonds of affection for churches and Christians will grow.

It's one of the things if you come to the church prayer staff, you're always welcome to come to some of the staff prayer meetings or come to the other prayer meeting that Shirley organizes on Tuesdays, I think it is. One of the things I pray for regularly, we pray for regularly is that the bonds of affection of the Christians organizations that share the office space that it grows.

The bonds of affection amongst true Christians pray it grows. Pray that we will be known as a church that prays and desires to be at peace with other true Christians as much as we possibly can.

[ 24 : 01 ] But the Bible then goes on and reminds us of something. I've already told you about how there's one spirit and all of that, but it wants to remind us far more deeply about what it means to have Jesus as our Savior.

Because it's not just that Jesus came and saved us and now he's up in heaven and who knows what he's doing. I don't know. Maybe he's playing Fortnite. Maybe he's just having, I don't know, playing ping pong with the Father.

No, he's just up there doing whatever it is he does and he's not caring about anything that goes on here. No, Paul goes on and reminds us of what happens in the whole act of redemption and how Jesus continues to have this power and minister within the churches.

It comes up in the next few verses, beginning at verse 7. And by the way, I don't know if you're going to notice it. I've read this text hundreds of times. I never noticed it until I was preparing this sermon.

I'm just going to give you a teaser in advance, but there's something really cool about this text. I'll come back and point it out. Verse 7. So we had all the ones, but grace was given to each one of us.

[ 25 : 12 ] God gives grace to each one of us. He doesn't treat us all as, okay, these are the Canadians, you get the Canadian thing, or these are all white people or all black people or all old guys or all young people.

No, no. George Sinclair uniquely gets grace. Laurier uniquely gets grace. Victor uniquely gets grace. Louise uniquely gets grace.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. And what that just means is if I was to give you gifts, if you saw my bank balance, I'd run out of giving you gifts pretty quick.

But the measure of Christ's ability to give gifts, it never comes to an end. That's the wonderful thing about that. He doesn't run out of grace. He never runs out of it.

He never runs out of the ability to give. Never, ever, ever. Read that again. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, and he's quoting here and paraphrasing from Psalm 68, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men and women.

[ 26 : 23 ] In saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth. He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all things, but all, sorry, ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things.

Now, here's the cool thing. And you might not have noticed it. What Paul says here at the beginning is this. The therefore comes in the wrong spot. He should say, we would say, here's the Bible text, therefore this.

But what it says is, this is what Jesus did, therefore something written a thousand years earlier says this. That's what's so cool about it. What Paul is saying, and what goes on here is that Paul is summarizing Psalm 68.

He quotes from a bit of it, but fundamentally he's summarizing Psalm 68. And he's making this remarkable claim. He's saying, a thousand years before, God put this in the Bible.

And he put this in the Bible because he knew that he was going to send Jesus. Jesus, and Jesus was going to leave heaven, and he was going to come and take into himself our human nature.

[ 27 : 41 ] He was actually going to become a zygote, I don't know if I'm pronouncing that correctly, in the womb of Mary by an act of creation. And he's going to become a zygote in the womb of Mary. And he's going to live a life on earth.

And then he's going to die on a cross bearing all of our sin and shame. He's going to taste everything there is to taste of death. And then he's going to rise from the dead, and he's going to ascend into heaven after he's proved to many people that he really had defeated death and sin by resurrection.

And God knew that he was going to do it, so he had this written. That's what it's saying. See, that's why Christ, Jesus Christ crucified, is the key to understand anything in the Bible.

If you don't understand that, you won't understand anything in the Bible. It'll just sound like moralism. It'll just sound like rules. But that's this remarkable claim that Paul is making just as an aside.

He doesn't even make a big thing. He just says it. It's just the normal way that he would think. It's a huge, huge, huge claim. And one of the things about this, and it's not recognized as much as it should be, and we Christians should take great comfort in it.

[ 28 : 56 ] I love using the phrase inconvenient truth. Didn't think much of the movie, but I like the phrase, an inconvenient truth. And this, you see, one of the inconvenient truths is this.

People can say, why is it that people thought that Muhammad said everything, that everything Muhammad said ultimately came from God? And you can have different curious wonder about why that happened.

But what's going on in the gospel is something very, very different. It's a claim about a fact of history.

About seven or eight years after Paul writes this, he will die a horrible, painful death because he will maintain right up until his death that Jesus died on a cross outside the walls of Jerusalem on a Friday.

And on Sunday around sunrise, he was raised from the dead. The body was gone. He had been resurrected. And Paul will go to his death.



[ 30 : 05 ] He would have gotten out of death if he just said, no, no, no, it was just a metaphor, just a story, just an illustration. And the inconvenient truth is this. Paul writing this letter bears witness to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

All of the different letters, which all start out in this book, and they look fancy because they're in the Bible because we now have come to see that they're very precious, but every single one of them were originally letters, all going back in some cases to only 15 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, maybe even earlier with the gospel because we don't know when the gospels were written.

And in every single one, time and time and time and time again, we see the writer bearing witness that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Paul is an eyewitness and recording other eyewitnesses. And the body was never found. Was never found. Was never found.

And it couldn't be because he'd risen. I need to start to draw this to a bit of a close, and there's still some more implications. Why did Paul go ahead and say all of this, just reminding people he'd gone, remember he'd gone from, you know, if the gospel is true, how are you going to live?

[ 31 : 29 ] Well, one of the things that's going to happen is the gospel will propel you into these virtues. It'll propel you into having this desire to have unity. And just so you remember, there's all these huge things which Christians have in common, and so you should be pursuing unity.

And by the way, you're not, just remember who Jesus is and what he happened, and then he goes on as to what happened. What are the gifts that Jesus gives? Well, Paul will describe it, and we'll try to get into it very quickly now. Look at that.

It begins at verse 11. And by the way, many, many, many, many trees have been killed for scholars and people to write about these next five things.

I'm just going to say a very simple thing. There's all these different ways to interpret it. I'm just going to talk about it in two very, very simple ways. There's other ways to talk about it, but let's just look. So what happens? He gives gifts. And what are the gifts?

Verse 11. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and the teachers. Just pause. What I think Paul means here, the Bible does not support cessationism.

[ 32 : 33 ] I don't think you can read the Bible properly and come to a belief in cessationism. The Holy Spirit gives gifts, and one of those gifts will be the gift of prophecy.

But in the book of Ephesians itself, there's three times in the book of Ephesians where apostles and prophets are put together. And I think just in this case, the way to understand it is that Paul is saying that what will ultimately turn into the New Testament is a result of this one-time outpouring of prophets and prophetesses and apostles that will cause the Bible to be written and recognized as the Word of God.

That's not saying that there's not prophets that's taught in other places in the New Testament. Just I think in this case, you can disagree with me, that's fine. But what he's saying, look at it again, verse 11.

And he gave the apostles the prophets, and then these three ongoing offices are the gifts. They're offices and those who hold the offices. And it's the evangelists, which is not just what we would think of evangelists, would also be something like church planters in its original context.

Shepherds, a better word, would be pastors and teachers. So he gives these three, two that are so important for the New Testament to be written and recognized, and then these three ongoing ones, which are described as evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

[ 34 : 03 ] And why does he give them? He gives them, verse 12, to equip the saints, and the word saints means a Christian, to equip Christians for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.

Why? Verse 13, until we all attain together the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood or womanhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be, and a more accurate way of translating children would be toddler, so that we may no longer be toddlers, tossed true and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

So God, Jesus, is Emmanuel. He's God with us. And one of the ways that he is with us is the gifting of certain people to teach the Bible, to proclaim the Bible, to share the Bible.

In our church, it would mean, in terms of the pastors, it means Sean, it means Jonathan, it means Daniel. I'm trying to find him, Daniel. It means me. In terms of teachers, it means the Sunday school teachers who are going on right now.

It means those who lead small groups and teach the Bible in small groups. It means church on Wednesday. It means the interns. It means the youth group. It means the women's ministry, and Shirley and others in the women's ministry who teach the Bible.

[ 35 : 35 ] It means every single parent who reads the Bible stories to their kids and tells their children about Jesus. That's all included in this word of teachers that God gives us, propels, the gospel creates these roles to teach the Bible.

Why? So we'll know Jesus. Not just truth about Jesus, but know Jesus. Both. Truth about him and know him. Why? So we aren't like toddlers that will believe anything, but that we will just know the truth and love the truth and love Jesus and live mature lives that can handle the ups and downs of life wisely and well to the glory of God.

And then he concludes verses 15 and 16. And this is how we're always to teach. It's how we're to preach. It's how we're to teach our children.

It's how we're to teach in Sunday school and in small groups. It's how we teach one-on-one when we share the Bible with a neighbor. We're rather speaking the truth in love. In the original language, it's a very powerful thing.

In a sense, we're to love in the truth and we're to know the truth in love. And we're to be the type of people, it's actually a character word trying to get across here, that we are to be people of love and people of truth, that we seek the truth, desire to know the truth, desire to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, to be truth speakers, but not truth in a way that it wounds and belittles and derides, but that all of our knowledge and all of our understanding of truth is to always be permeated and saturated with a love of God, a love of Jesus, a love that comes from the Holy Spirit, and a love for the other person.

[ 37 : 25 ] And then we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

In love. So the implications of the gospel. Please stand. Remember at the beginning I said, if you are here and you don't know really where you are with Jesus, maybe at one time you had lots of faith and you've wandered away and you're not really sure where you are, listen, don't worry about the spiritual realities in the moment of your, don't worry, just, if you feel any pressure on you at all now, that is Jesus calling you to be His.

And I invite you just even now, stop listening to me, speak to Jesus and say, Jesus, I open the door to my heart and my life. Please come in, be my Lord and Savior.

Thank you for dying for me. Make me yours forever. Make me your child by adoption and grace. And there's no better time than right now to just call out to Him and do it. And for all of us who are here, we each know how hard it is, those aspects of self-possession and self-forgetfulness based in the gospel which are really hard and those aspects of pride and arrogance and vanity which so powerfully rule within us and we know our impatience, we know whether we're impatient around a particular person or a particular group, we know when we might be able to be gentle with our kids and harsh with somebody else.

Just take a moment and we're going to ask the Holy Spirit to do a wonderful work in our midst to grip us with the gospel so that these implications of the gospel become more of who we are.

[ 39 : 31 ] So let's pray. Blessed Savior, Heavenly Father, we ask that you would pour the Holy Spirit deep within your children.

if there is any here, Father, who has called out to you that Jesus would be his Savior and Lord or her Savior and Lord today, Father, may the Holy Spirit flood them at this time, flood them and help them to know that you have made them your child by adoption and grace.

Father, for the rest of us, you know those things within us. You know the idols of our hearts. You know our impatiences. You know those things of which we are ashamed. You know those things which preoccupy our mind.

And you know the different ways that the gospel is not real to our heart. And so, Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would make the gospel more and more real to us at the very depths of who we are, at the level of our affections, at the level of the command center of our lives.

Father, may the Holy Spirit make the gospel more and more real to us, that we live out of the gospel, that we are propelled out of the gospel to become more humble, to become more patient, to become more gentle, to bear with one another in love far better, all for the good of others and your great glory, knowing that since we are yours in Christ, we will never, you, that your love, Father, is the ultimate word about us, that the end of the day, when we see you face to face, it will be just to dwell in your presence and partake of your glory and drink of your love for all eternity.

[ 41 : 17 ] So, Father, we ask that you would do this work in our midst and all God's people said, Amen.