

What is the Church?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 December 2025

Preacher: Joe Dugger

[0 : 00] Now, Ephesians chapter 1, I will confess to you from the beginning that this is not going to be a line by line sermon, but it will still be expositional. So we are going to take our meaning from the text. There is no doubt about that.

But we are going to jump over, jump around a little bit in the book of Ephesians. Because the question, what is the church, is an important question to answer. And the book of Ephesians gives us a really solid answer.

So we are going to take a look here throughout this letter because it really matters. Because I think the church has an identity crisis going on.

Where not many people necessarily know what or who the church is according to scripture. I was listening to a sermon this week by a man named Alistair Begg, a pastor named Alistair Begg.

And Alistair Begg said to his congregation, he said, If I gave you guys, if I gave you an essay with the topic, the prompt, to answer the question, what is the church?

[0 : 59] He's like, I would be shocked if anyone would average, or if this church would average above a C. And he's like, and that's not your fault. He took the blame. He said, that's on me and the other leaders of this church for not taking and teaching the doctrine of the church clearly enough to the people.

And so my hope is to, you know, in the same way that he taught his church what the church is or who the church is, my hope is to encourage you today by showing you biblically what the church is. So that whenever somebody asks you, well, what is the church? Why do you go to that church? You'll have an answer, right? Because I think what we have in our world, and actually, let's just localize that, in our city, is we have such a fractured church, right?

If you drive through Lewisburg, I did a search one time, and I'm pretty sure that there are 42 places that call themselves a church in Lewisburg, Tennessee. 42. Lewisburg ain't that big, right?

Lewisburg is not that big. Why do we have 42 churches? Do you know how many Southern Baptist churches we have in Lewisburg? Any guesses? We have at least five, and then one who I think is on the way.

[2 : 17] So we have a handful of churches here that are Baptist churches. We have a handful of Methodist churches. We have a handful of Presbyterian churches. We have all these denominational fractures, and even in our own denominations, we can't worship with other people.

So what's going on? What is going on? We have an identity crisis. We don't understand what the church is. Imagine a person who's recently come to faith in Jesus Christ, and now they're excited. Maybe their co-worker shared Christ with them, and they're excited, and they're looking into, where am I going to go to church? I know I need to get plugged into a church. And so they do an internet search, and they see 42 different churches to choose from.

That'd be pretty overwhelming, right? Or imagine they drive up on a Sunday morning up the road by the high school and elementary. What's that road called? Who's a teacher? What's that road over there with the high school and elementary and all that?

What? Lakeview Parkway? Ellington Parkway. I can't hear. Ellington Parkway. So drive up Ellington Parkway. You pass six churches on a Sunday morning.

[3 : 26] Every single school over there has a church meeting inside, right? So what is the church? Like that person who's seeking to join a church would be probably, presumably, I can only assume, so confused and overwhelmed trying to decide where they're going to worship.

When they drive past those six churches, do they see one unified body of Christ? Or do they see, you know, competing businesses? When you look at 42 different churches on the internet, do you see one unified body of Christ?

Or do you see competing churches? What is the church? What is the church? My question not only is for the person who's seeking a place to worship, but also for us who are members of a local church, what do you see when you see other churches?

When you see Parkview Baptist Church or Mount Moriah Baptist Church or East Commerce Baptist Church, do you see people who might take from First Baptist?

Or do you see brothers and sisters in Christ who are worshiping the Lord and gather together for the study of His word? We have to understand what the church is so that we can celebrate God's work in His church across our city, across our county, and across our state, and across the world.

[4 : 39] We can't have a wrong, faulty view of the church because we enter into dangerous territory. We have to understand what the church is, and we can't reduce the local church to individual houses of worship.

Because when we reduce the local church to just these individual houses of worship, what we do inevitably is we start to see people who worship at a different place than us as maybe wrong or, you know, competition or whatever it may be.

We have to settle this issue. And there's four descriptions of the local church in the book of Ephesians that I want to share with you. The first comes from Ephesians chapter 1, verses 22 and 23.

And that is that the church is the body of Christ. Ephesians 1, 22 and 23 says, And He subjected everything under His feet, and appointed Him as head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

The body of Christ is the most common, most widely used, you know, description of the church or metaphor for the church in all of the New Testament. It's really, just so you know, this is referring to the whole church, the corporate body of believers, the universal church, everyone who believes in Jesus, not the local church like First Baptist Church Lewisburg.

[6 : 03] This is the universal church. Everyone who is in Christ is a part of the body of Christ. All right? And my justification for that is in Ephesians 1, 13.

It says, In Him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. It's in the moment of believing in Jesus Christ, receiving the gospel message and believing it is true, trusting in Jesus as your soul, the sole one who can save you from your sins.

When you believe in Jesus Christ, you are now a part of the body of Christ. So this is the universal church. And it describes for us here in Ephesians 1, the headship of the church is Christ Jesus.

It says, He subjected everything under His feet. That's a reference to Psalm 8. And appointed Him as head over everything. Not just the church. Jesus is the supreme reigning Lord of the universe over everything for the sake of the church or for the benefit of the church.

Jesus rules over all for the benefit of His church. He is the head over everything. So we have the headship of the church is Jesus Christ.

[7 : 19] In case there's any confusion, the head of the church is not the one who wears the microphone and speaks to you from God's word, the pastor. Okay? The head of the church is not even the pope.

The head of the church is Jesus Christ and Him alone because Jesus Christ and Him alone is who saved us. He is the one who established the church by His death, burial, and resurrection.

So in Christ, everything is subjected under His feet because of His great victory, defeating death and the grave. The Father subjects everything under Christ so that Christ has this universal reign and being the supreme Lord of the universe, He works things together for the benefit of His church. Now, verse 23 is really interesting because it describes to us how we are the body of Christ and gives us some unique language and tells us what that means.

So everything for the church, which is His body, so the church is the body of Christ, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way. It's kind of unique language.

[8 : 31] What does that mean, right? That's the question. What does it mean that the church is the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way? I did some study on this, and my takeaway is that the church is the direct, or should be the direct expression of the divine nature of Christ, the presence of Christ here on earth.

So if you are a member of the body of Christ, if you believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, then you are a part of this divine expression. You should show the world Jesus by the way that you

live.

So the church is not a building, okay? So when you drive by First Baptist Church, that's not my church. That is where my church family gathers.

That's where my church family worships, right? The church is not a building. If these walls were not standing tomorrow, we would still gather to worship just somewhere else because the church is the people who Christ Jesus died for and rose again, all right?

The individuals who believe in him. And so the responsibility as members of the body is to express or to show the world who Jesus is.

[9 : 43] Now, the issue is that we don't always do that the right way. We don't always do that very well at all. Whether it be because of church hurt, because of poor leadership, whether it be because of bad interpretations of scripture, or traditions in the church, or preferences in the church, whatever it may be, things often get in the way of our stated goal, which is to be the expression of Christ to a lost and dying world.

But there are, I have four ways that I want to point out to you how we can be this expression for Christ. Christ manifests himself through us for the world to see so that others will believe in the same gospel message that we have.

So here's four ways that we can do that. Number one, we show the world Jesus through our unity. We are a unified group of people, unified on one message, which is the gospel, all right?

And we're unified because of the work of one person, and that is Jesus. So this goes across denominational, the denominational landscape, right?

We should be able to worship with other brothers and sisters in Christ who share our same confession about Jesus, right? Even if there are secondary doctrines and third level doctrines that we disagree on, if we line up on the essentials, which is that by faith in Jesus Christ, God saves you by his grace, then we should be able to worship together, right?

[11 : 20] We should be able to be in the same room at the very least. And so all those other Baptist churches, we should gather them together and worship together, right? Like we could do that. We share the same confession about Jesus Christ.

And a unified church points the world to Jesus. In John chapter 17, Jesus is praying in the garden before he was arrested and taken to trial.

And do you know who Jesus prayed for? You. Jesus prayed for you in the garden before he was arrested and taken to the cross.

John 17, verse 20 says, I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word. May they all be one as you, Father, are in me and I am in you.

May they also be in us so that the world may believe you sent me. I've given them the glory you have given me so that they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me so that they may be completely one and the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.

[12 : 25] The unified, the unity of the church shows a lost and dying world that Jesus Christ is the son of God who lived a perfect life, who died on the cross and rose again so that we could have life.

If we are unified, the people of the world will see the reality of Jesus. The unity of the church affirms the work of Christ. So that is a way that we, as the church, can express the divine nature, the divine presence.

That's a way that we can show people Jesus is if we're unified. Number two is through spiritual gifts. So 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and also there's some other passages too that we don't have time to get to.

Romans chapter 12, and also we'll talk a little bit out of Ephesians. But spiritual gifts are a way that we show people the work of Christ in our lives.

When we use the gifts that God has given us at the point of our salvation, when the spirit of God takes up residence within us, and we have spiritual gifts to do certain things, we should use those things to the glory of God and for the good of the church.

[13 : 36] Okay? So Ephesians chapter 4 says, now there are different gifts, but the same spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different activities, but the same God works all of them in each person.

A manifestation of the spirit is given to each person for the common good. To one is given a message of wisdom through the spirit. Another, a message of knowledge by the same spirit.

To another, faith by the same spirit. To another, gifts of healing by that one spirit. To another, the performing of miracles. To another, prophecy. To another, distinguishing between spirits.

To another, different kinds of tongues. To another, interpretation of tongues. One and the same spirit is active in all of these, distributing to each person as he wills.

So when anyone gives their life to Jesus, the spirit of God takes up residence and also gives you a gift. Okay? Or gifts, you know, depending. And here's the reason for these spiritual gifts.

[14:34] Verse 12. For just as the body is one and has many parts, all the parts of that body, though many, are one body, so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all given the spirit to drink.

So the point is that the body is made up of different parts. But in Christ, by the power of the spirit, we are one. And everyone is useful in this.

Right? Like, if I lost my big toe, I would have a hard time balancing. Okay? It's not a glamorous life being the big toe of Joseph Duggar. I'll tell you that right now. But it's necessary.

Right? I need it. I need it. It's not a glamorous life to be the, you know, the hands and the feet. But we need those things. Everyone who is in Christ has an important role in the church.

You're essential to the church, to the health of the church. So we have to understand that we express the work of Jesus when we faithfully teach, if we're gifted to teach.

[15:40] When we faithfully host, if we're gifted with the gift of hospitality. When we faithfully show mercy, if we are gifted with the gift of mercy. When we faithfully lead, if God has given you the gift of faith and there's some tumultuous terrain that needs to be traveled over.

We should be willing to use the gifts that God has given us. And if we're not doing that, then we're not doing our part in the body. Right? If my big toe was still there, but decided to stop acting like a big toe, I'd be in just as much trouble as if it weren't there.

Right? We have to participate in the work of the church. And in that way, we show people the work of Jesus. Number three, we show people the work of Christ, the presence of Christ through our serving.

All right? So Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11. This is another spiritual gifts statement. It says, And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Right? So everyone has a role to play in the church. Some are gifted to be pastors and teachers. Some are gifted to be, especially back in this day, apostles and prophets. Some are gifted evangelists, people who can have a gospel conversation with a brick wall.

[17:00] Right? There are people who are gifted. And when those people serve faithfully in the local church, the church is built up and encouraged to then do the work of the ministry. So did you guys know that when you hired a pastor, you did not hire a pastor to do the work of ministry?

Did you know that? Sounds a little bit crazy, right? You actually hired a pastor to teach God's word so that the saints are equipped to do the work of ministry.

We're supposed to come together. That doesn't leave me out. I'm part of the body too, right? I should do the work of ministry. I should show people the love of Jesus. I should share the gospel with people, right? I should teach people. I should do those things.

But you should too. That's the whole point, is that God has designed this church so that we can serve together. And when we serve together, we glorify God and we show people the presence of Jesus.

The fourth way that we can show people the presence of Jesus is through growing in Christ. If you keep going in Ephesians chapter 4, it says, until we all reach the unity in the faith and the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness, then we will no longer be little children tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness, in the techniques of deceit.

[18:22] But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head, Christ. From Him, the whole body is fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament.

It promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part. Here's the thing. We have to grow in our walk with Christ.

By growing in our walk with Christ, we will then obey the command of God from His Word to properly work as whatever part of the body we may be, right?

We will be able to use the spiritual gifts that God has given us because we'll have, you know, a spirit of discernment, of understanding, of wisdom from studying God's Word. We can apply the very gifts that God has given us.

And by growing in our walk with Jesus, we will show people, again, the presence of Christ. The church is designed and called to express Christ to the world so that more people will believe in Him for salvation.

[19 : 24] So that's why the body of Christ, in case you're wondering, is not designed to be an isolated group, you know, completely separated from other churches and other people who claim to be Christians unless they come to our church.

We're supposed to be a unified body, the universal body of Christ with a shared confession, okay? And I'll talk about this in a second, but it's very important. Doctrine does matter, right?

A shared belief in Jesus Christ absolutely matters, okay? So we'll move now into the second thing here that we see, the second description of the church in the book of Ephesians.

And that is that the church is the temple of the Lord. So first we're the body of Christ. Now, the metaphor here is that we are the temple of the Lord. So from Ephesians chapter 1, I told you it wasn't going to be line by line, but I can't leave out context.

I might have a heart attack up here. Okay, so from Ephesians chapter 1, Paul goes in in Ephesians chapter 2 to explain to the church that everyone is on a level playing field. He says, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins before you knew Jesus, right?

[20 : 32] Before you knew Christ, you were just as dead as anybody else. It's only by the grace of God, through faith in His Son, that salvation occurs. Now, by God's grace, through faith in Jesus, when a person becomes a Christian, that person, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, background, culture, any of those things, if somebody believes in Jesus, then they are in Christ and a part of the, a member of the body of Christ.

All right? So Paul talks about this unity again, specifically as it pertains to the issues that they had there in Ephesus related to the Jews and the Gentiles.

That the Gentiles are just the same in the sight of God in the sense that they are all believers. All right? Paul makes this clear also in Galatians chapter 3, verse 27 and 28. It says, For those of you who are baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.

There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, since you are all one in Christ Jesus. So, that's how he explains what's going on here from Ephesians 1 to Ephesians 2.

Now, at the end of Ephesians 2, Paul gives us this second metaphor for the church, where he says that the church is the temple of the Lord.

[21 : 48] So, verse 19 through 22, it says, So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, but built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

In him, the whole building being put together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him, you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

So, real quick, verse 19, there's a beautiful picture here. So, he says in verse 12, that at that time, meaning before you believed in Jesus, at that time, you were without Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.

And now, in verse 19, he says, So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household.

So, there's a beautiful picture here. So, Old Testament Judaism allowed for foreigners, for resident aliens to live in the land of Israel. But there were certain restrictions that they had.

[22 : 58] They couldn't enter the temple into the place where the Jews were able to go and worship. They weren't allowed to go in there and worship the same way that the Jews were. They could believe in God, they could be God-fearers, but they couldn't, they didn't have the same access to God.

And so, now Paul says, that is no longer the case. In Christ, everyone has equal access to the Father through Jesus Christ. There's this beautiful picture of, basically, access to the Holy of Holies. Everyone is able to stand now in the presence of God because of the work of Jesus. So, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but your fellow citizens. Citizenship gives you certain privileges, right?

It's, it's not very personal. It's more of a civic, you know, title. But, it does give you certain privileges and rights. But then he goes on to a very personal, very familial description for this relationship. He says, and members of God's household. Now, when you are a part of a family, there's an intimacy, there's a closeness, there's a kinship.

[24 : 03] And in Christ, that is available to those who believe. It says, this household is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

Built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. Again, doctrine matters, right? If there is a church that does not hold to the apostolically preached, prophetically delivered word of God in the New Testament and the Old Testament, then that is not a church.

If they don't hold to the truths of scripture, that is not a church. Not according to the New Testament. If an individual claims to be a Christian, but rejects the truths revealed to us in God's word by the apostolic message and by the prophetic utterance, then that person is not a believer.

You don't get to have your cake and eat it too in this sense, right? You can't claim to be in Christ, but then pick apart the things that you hate from the New Testament.

And it's funny, whenever you see people doing this, what they do so often is they take out the parts that are really challenging to hold up, right? They're really challenging things. Like there's no way that was actually written by the apostle Paul.

[25 : 11] No, no way, no way. But that's not an option. We have to hold to the truth delivered to the saints once for all. So we have this unity in Christ.

We have this opportunity to be the temple of the Lord, to be in part of God's household, built on the truth taught to us. And then it says in verse 21, So that is a construction metaphor, right?

You put a building together. It doesn't just grow, right? Like a building, you have to put it together.

Okay. You guys are awake, right? Some of you are.

That's good. Anyways, you build a building. It doesn't just pop up out of nowhere. Okay? So the buildings being put together, it grows into the holy temple in the Lord.

So there's, he's mixing these metaphors, right? A body is an organic, an organic thing, right? A body grows, buildings do not.

[26 : 14] But now, as Christ has grown in us, as we have grown in Christ, the temple of the Lord now grows. The point here is that the church is not static, right?

The church is always, in some way, growing in Christ. So you can use a building metaphor, or you can use a body metaphor. At the end of the day, Christ is the one who builds, and Christ is the one who gives growth.

All right? And now, it grows into a holy temple in the Lord. All right, trivia question. Let's wake up a little bit. Trivia question. In the Old Testament, where did the Spirit of the Lord dwell?

Where did the Spirit of the Lord dwell in the Old Testament? What? The ark. Yeah, over the ark of the covenant, and the holy of holies, right?

In the temple. In the temple. Okay, now, if we, being the church, are a holy temple for the Lord, where does the Spirit of God dwell now?

[27 : 14] In believers. Good job. That's good. So, we have this beautiful hope, that not only are we the body of Christ, that we're unified together in Him, but also, that God literally takes up residence within us.

Right? God literally dwells within us. In Him, you're being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit. That's why there are certain things, certain behaviors, certain actions, certain thoughts, that are unbecoming of a Christian.

It's because this is God's dwelling. We should take that seriously. 1 Corinthians 6 talks about how our bodies are the temple of the Lord, and we should honor them as that. Right? So, so that's how we have to think about the church, is that the church is the temple of the Lord.

Right? And in that way, that's how we express Christ again to the world. I've got to hurry, I think.

Okay. Number three, the third description of the church, is that it is the display of God's wisdom.

The church is the display of God's wisdom. Jump now to Ephesians chapter 3. So, the first two chapters, Paul's talked about the church, and what they need to understand. And now, at the beginning of chapter 3, he tells them his personal calling as an apostle.

[28 : 25] All right? I'm going to start in verse 6. It says, The Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of His power.

This grace was given to me, the least of all the saints, to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of Christ, and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.

So, real quick, Paul's mission as an apostle was to the Gentiles. But he also had this role of teaching everyone else that this gospel message is for the Gentiles.

He's explaining this mystery that the Gentiles would be in Christ to the entire world, this mystery which had been hidden. And now verse 10.

This is where we see the role of the church. This is so that God's multifaceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.

[29 : 32] All right. Real quick. Here's the thing. Did you know that when you believe in Jesus Christ and you become a part of His body, you are the display of God's eternal wisdom?

That from eternity past, God had outlined and planned and ordained the entire process of things that would unfold so that Christ would live, He would go to the cross, He would die, He would rise again, and that salvation would occur.

God had all of this planned and worked out, but He hid it. So it was revealed in some ways in the Old Testament, but it wasn't revealed fully in the Old Testament. It was so hidden that it says the authorities and rulers in the heavens.

That is, think about like the angelic beings, demonic beings. The devil himself did not know how God was going to pull this off. They knew the promises, but they didn't know how God was going to pull it off.

And now, if we believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, we show off for eternity that God is ultimately wise, that He is ultimately sovereign, that He is the Lord who offers salvation.

[30 : 41] They never knew how, and yet God pulled it off in a powerful, powerful way. So we are exhibit A of the grace of God for all eternity. The church is the display of God's wisdom.

Now that is, both here on earth and in His presence in glory for eternity, we will stand as the display, the demonstration of God's wisdom through all of the ages.

It's a powerful reality. The church is the display of God's wisdom. So here's the thing. If we think about the church in those terms, my opinion is it makes it a lot harder to look negatively at brothers and sisters in Christ who attend a different church.

Right? It makes it really challenging to think poorly about churches that aren't Baptist. Right? We have to be convicted doctrinally.

That's fine. We should have our convictions. If you're curious about why we're a Baptist church, I'll be happy to explain it. I'm happy to explain why I believe in the Baptist doctrine, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, why I think that it's a good representation of the one true faith delivered once and for all for the saints.

[31 : 52] But, we should not look down on other people who go to other churches. We should celebrate that they are in Christ because they are also the display of God's wisdom.

You are also the display of God's wisdom. It's a powerful reality. It should change the way that we think about others in this world and especially in the church. Now the last thing that I want to talk to you about is that the church is the shout of God's glory.

The church is the shout of God's glory. I read this before. Ephesians 3, 20 and 21 says, Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

We serve a big God. We serve a big God who's able to do more than we could ever ask of him to do. He's able to save more, save more people than we could ever share the gospel with.

He's able to do more in the life of this church than we could ever comprehend. We serve a big God. And because of his amazing, magnificent work that's been displayed in Christ for all generations, he is deserving of shouts of praise for his glory.

[33 : 09] We should glorify God. He's worthy of our praise. And the role of the church is to be that shout here on earth and in eternity.

We'll stand in his presence one day singing his praise because at that point the things that we'll know, the things that we'll understand that we can't comprehend here now are going to blow our minds.

He's going to be unbelievable and we should shout his praise. We should shout his praise. Now, here's the thing. As I'm going through this, I want you to think, as I'm wrapping up here actually, I

want you to think about these four realities, four descriptions of the church.

The body of Christ, the temple of the Lord, the display of his wisdom and the shout of his glory. And I want you to consider if you are in Christ. Think about that for a minute.

Are you a member of the body of Christ? Now, we're distinguishing that from are you a member of First Baptist Church? If you got to heaven and showed them your attendance record at First Baptist Church as your proof to get in, they might laugh.

[34 : 18] I don't know. That's not enough. That's not enough. Alistair Begg also made a joke about how he went to a church one time that had very small numbers of people, like 12 or something like that.

And the pastor said, church attendance is not the point of the church. And he said, yeah, I think they got that point. No one was there. But seriously, church attendance doesn't get you into heaven.

Are you a member of the body of Christ? Do you believe the gospel message that Jesus Christ is the Lord of all, that he lived a perfect life and died on the cross and rose again so that you could have life?

Are you a member of the body of Christ? And if you are a member of the body of Christ, do you live as if your body is the temple of the Lord? What kind of habits, what kind of behaviors, what kind of actions, what kind of things do you need to remove from your life so that you can reflect that the temple of the Lord, that you can express the presence of Christ within you?

Are you a proud representative or display of the wisdom of God? Do you revel in the opportunity to share the message of hope with your friends or with your family?

[35 : 33] What about you shout his glory? You shout praise to his glory, for his glory. And I'm not talking about like the colloquialisms. You know what I mean?

We've all heard these types of things like, well, I just know the big man upstairs has my back. That's how I make it through every day. And I know that Jesus loves me and so that's enough.

Yeah, those things are great. I wouldn't call him the big man upstairs. But those things are great. But I'm saying, do you shout praise to God when you see his creation, when you see his work of salvation?

Do you cry tears of joy when you think about the work of God in your own life and the life of your family? Do you share, or do you celebrate more at a football game than you do in church?

I mean, think about the glory of God, the creator of the universe. Members of the body of Christ shout the praise of God.

[36 : 38] And here's the thing, if we aren't loud enough, then rocks will cry out. We have to shout the praise to the glory of God. So, the application for this today is actually, it's also in the text.

It's in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1. If you don't have your Bible open, you should open it and turn to Ephesians 4, 1. While you're getting there, I want to ask the question again, are you a member of the body of Christ?

What evidence do you have to back that claim up? And I'm not talking about baptism, I'm not talking about role attendance, check marks, I'm saying, do you live as though you are a member of the body of Christ?

Does God literally dwell within you? Ephesians 4, 1 says, therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received.

So, Paul does this thing in Ephesians and some other letters where the first three, the first half of the book is doctrine, he explains what the church needs to know, and then the last half of the book is application.

[37 : 44] Now, this is how you live in light of what you know. We just did a pretty good overview of Ephesians 1 through 3. Okay? Those are some of the main points there. So, there's no excuse.

You know the calling that you've received in Christ to be a member of his body. So, if you claim to be a member of the body of Christ and have not lived as if you are, then this should be a convicting word.

this should be an eye-opener. This should wake you up. I urge you with Paul, with God himself, his word, I urge myself, I urge all of us to live worthy, to walk worthy of the calling that we have received.

To be an obedient follower of Christ Jesus. As members of the body, let us express the divine presence. Let us show people Jesus in the way that we act, in the way that we talk, and in our

message that we would share the gospel.

As the temple of the Lord, let us live as if the spirit of the Lord lives within us. As the display of God's wisdom, let us seek to tell others how they can also be that display.

[39 : 01] Let us be a people who are known for our shouts of praise to the glory of God, not for our opinions in the church on the paint color or the carpet color or the pew color.

Let us be a people who's known for being opinionated about the goodness of God, that we would celebrate His glory day in, day out, night after night.

Let us be a people who shout the praise of God to His glory. Walk worthy of the calling you have received.

That's the calling, is to be a representative, to be an ambassador for Christ in a lost and dying world. Now, I'm not talking about changing the way you act on Sundays.

I'm talking about the real transformation that God does in your life that should impact everything you do from Monday through Saturday too. That's how we're called to live.

[39 : 59] And here's the thing. If you believe in Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God lives within you, then the power of God is there to make this a reality. You can walk worthy of the calling that you've received.

You can. That's an encouraging reminder. You can. Like, you don't have to give in to temptation. You don't have to walk as if you aren't living up to that calling. You absolutely can because God's presence makes that a possibility.

God's Spirit works in and through you so that you can walk worthy of the calling that you have received. So, we're going to pray. I'm going to pray and Eric's going to play a song for us.

We're going to close our time together. But during this time of invitation and reflection, I want you to think about the calling that we have as Christ followers.

Right? We're not called to, you know, tell people how great First Baptist Church is. It is pretty great though. I do love you. We're called to tell people how great our God is.

[41 : 09] How amazing the salvation that he offers is. How free it is. How freeing it is. We are called to tell people about Jesus. We're called to advance the kingdom of God not advance this kingdom of this church.

because Jesus is eternal and this church is temporary. With everything else, it will pass away. This building, I'm talking about the building, this building will pass away.

We'll pass away. But in eternity, the church of Jesus Christ will sing praise to his glory. So will you be there to sing that song? If not, come speak with me.

Let's settle that today. Lord Jesus, you are kind and good. Oh God, you have made us yours. You've called us to be your own.

You've set us apart from this world so that we could show this world your love, so that we could show this world your truth, so that we could make known the gospel of salvation.

[42 : 15] Lord, let us be representatives, representatives who work well, who live faithfully, representatives of the body of Christ.

Help us to understand how you've called us to live, and dear Lord, by your spirit, help us to live that way. We love you, we praise you, and pray your blessings over this time now, and it's in Jesus' name that we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.