

The True Church Culture Part 1

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: 20 October 2020

Preacher: David Antwi

[0 : 00] Thank you for choosing to listen to today's message by Reverend Dr. David Entry. We know you will be blessed as you seek and serve God. We believe that this message will stir up a desire for more of God even as you listen.

Be blessed. The true church culture, or I almost wanted to call it Christianity 101, the real church culture, the true church culture, what makes fellowship work, the things that make the Christian fellowship work.

We have been called into fellowship. Bible says that in Ephesians, sorry, 1 Corinthians 1, who has called us into the fellowship of his son. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 9 or so.

Christ has, God has called us into a fellowship of his son. He said the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the koinonia and the fellowship.

We have been called into fellowship. That which in 1 John 1, verse 1, that which we have seen, our ears have heard, our hands have handled, that which is of the word of life.

[1 : 12] That is what we communicate to you or we bring to you. Then it says that ye might have fellowship with us. Why? Because our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son.

That means that by the mere fact that you are a Christian, means that you have been introduced into a fellowship. And once you join us, there is an already ongoing, existing, incessant, unbreakable, unending, constant fellowship between us and the Father and the Son.

So he said our fellowship is with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the current that causes this fellowship to happen. So he says, and the sweet fellowship, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, 2 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 14.

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. So we are in fellowship in Acts chapter 2, verse 42. And they continued in the apostles' doctrine, breaking of bread, apostles' prayer, their doctrines, their fellowship and breaking of bread.

There is a fellowship that must continue. So the scriptures say, let brotherly love continue. There is a fellowship. And for fellowship to continue, for us to have the true church life, for us to have the true fellowship.

[2 : 39] The true church life is a fellowship life. It's a life of fellowship. That is why privacy, it's very detrimental, and it's very dangerous to true Christianity.

Privacy. There cannot be a true Christian fellowship in the world of privacy. It does not exist. True Christian fellowship is antithetical or is opposite to the world of privacy, which has become the norm of our day.

I'm going to go into that a little bit. But we've been called into fellowship. They continued in the fellowship of the apostles. They continued. They continued. So fellowship, we must continue.

That is why Jesus said, go into the world and make disciples. Disciple. There's a difference between members and disciples. There's a difference between attenders, churchgoers and disciples.

There are a lot of people who go to church, but are not being disciplined, are not being schooled in the word of truth and within the fellowship of the brethren.

[3 : 52] That the core of Christianity has everything to do with fellowshiping with others and with the Father. There's no way you can have a fellowship with the Father, but not with the others.

The Christianity means, or the Christian life means, Christianity 101, church life 101 means, we have fellowship with the Father, the vertical fellowship, and the horizontal fellowship with one another.

You cannot say, I don't have fellowship with one another, and yet, as for me, I have my relationship with God. That is a hoax. That's fake. That is not real.

It cannot be real. You cannot have fellowship with the Father in the absence of the others. You can't say, I have fellowship with the Father, but I don't have fellowship with the others, because Christianity is an us than you, us, us.

It's an us life. It's an us life. It's not a me life. It's an us life. So, as you have enjoyed the mercy of God, you are supposed to be faithful to the call of God and to the purposes of God.

[5 : 00] Now watch this. When you study the Bible very carefully, actually, in Bible studies, that's what I was teaching the other time. I didn't mention it, but let me just throw that in. When it comes to Bible studies, there's, when you read the scriptures, there's what we call the narratives, so the storyline.

So, most of the Old Testaments, you keep seeing narratives, all right, story. They tell the history, how Abraham did this, Isaac did this, Jacob did this, Joseph did this, they went to Israel, they came out.

It's all storyline, storyline. So, I remember when I was a child, we were taught the stories of the Bible. And so, there are people who know the stories, and because they know the stories, they assume they know the Bible.

No, no, no, no, no, no. Knowing the stories doesn't mean you know the Bible. The storyline is grammar. So, once it's intelligible, and you are able to read, or someone is able to even narrate it to you, it makes sense.

But there are some wonderful, lovely stories in the scriptures. I mean, movie lines are amazing and powerful. All right. But, so, we have the narratives. So, for instance, when you read the New Testament, the New Testament is divided into three major sections.

[6 : 07] We have the, the, the, the history section, which is Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and Acts. Okay. So, the Gospels and Acts, they are just history, telling, narrating, what happened, and this happened, and this happened.

It's just so, it's called the narratives. And then, after the narratives, we have what, the, the letters, or the epistles, not apostles, epistles. Epistles are letters, simply with letters.

So, it's interesting, when God wanted to teach us how to live the Christian life, he gave us letters, not lectures, because letters are personal. Letters are written with certain people in mind.

Letters are written to address an issue, or to communicate something. And so, letters usually are written sometimes as a response to what somebody wants, somebody to know, which needs to be communicated.

So, letters. So, we have the epistles, and then the last book, which is Apocalypse. So, that is futuristic, talking about what is here to come.

[7 : 10] So, the New Testament has this, this three, the, the, the history books, the epistles, and the narratives. Now, watch this. I mentioned the, sorry, epistles and the, the apocalypse.

But then, the, as I said, we have the narratives. So, the histories are just narratives. And then we have the didactic. The didactic are more instructive.

Instructions, do this, do this. So, anytime you read narratives, you can, you can read narratives and make, doctrines out of narratives per se.

The didactics tell us, they come to explain, or the, the instructions that we are supposed to follow, largely within the didactics. Yeah, there's some of the stories contain some didactic, didactic, sorry, didactic elements.

But, in other words, instructions. For instance, the beatitude, the sermon on the mount. Jesus was telling, do this, do that, do that. So, even though it was a storyline, it was history, record of historical event, it also contains, contained instructions, or contains instructions.

[8 : 18] So, I'm not saying that once it's history, there's no, there are no instructions. But the Bible largely has history and instructions. This is very important. So, when you read the book of Romans, for instance, it tells us about how God saved us, and the things, and when it comes to the instructions, it usually tells us about how things are, how things are, what God has done already.

Watch this. Christianity starts with God, doesn't start with man. Never. So, anyone who is a Christian, didn't start by himself. It was God. Bible says that, for those he foreknew, he also predestined.

Those he, Romans chapter 8, verse 29. Those he foreknew, he also predestined. Those he predestined, he also called. Those he called, he is the one who did the calling. All right.

Bible says, we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 8, royal priesthood, verse 9. We have been called out of darkness, into his marvelous light. He has called us.

So, he called us. Bible says that, 2 Timothy chapter 1, it talks about how, he called, not by things, by virtue of things we have done, but by his own mercy and goodness, he called us, with a heavenly calling, or with a holy calling.

[9 : 30] So, we have been called. He called, he did the calling, and we responded. In Philippians chapter 2, verse 12, it says that, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do.

So, for you to even choose that, I will do the will of God. I'm going to honor God. No, it didn't come from self. It comes, it's extra nose. It's outside of yourself. Any desire to do what pleases God, it's extra nose.

In other words, it's outside of self. It's an alien desire. Hallelujah. It's an alien desire. Also, are you trying to say, I didn't do it myself? No. I'm saying, you did it yourself, but it didn't start with you.

It started with God. God started it in your heart. God sparked it in your heart. Bible Jesus said, in John chapter 6, 44, said, no one can come to me except the Father draws him. So, if you are with Christ, if you have come to God, if you are born again, if you are in church, and you are a genuine Christian, that means that it's God who started it.

It is God who is at work in you, both to do and to, to will and to do of his pleasure. Even the will in here to provoke it within you. That's what I'm saying.

[10 : 34] So, Christianity does not start from earth. It starts from above. In other words, God starts it. Being a Christian is God. You are a Christian because it's God's idea.

You are being a Christian is God's idea. It's not, it wasn't your idea first, but it's God's idea first. But what this, so, in the epistles, usually, tells us what God has done. God has done this.

God has done this. But it's not all about what God has done. You can't be a Christian, there cannot be Christianity without man's involvement. Neither can there be Christianity without God's involvement.

It takes God and man to have the church. Let me repeat that. It takes God and man to have the church. The church is a product of God and man. The church is not only God.

Only God cannot have church and only man cannot have church. Hallelujah. Thank be to God that we are a combination. The church is a combination. It's an amalgamation.

[11 : 28] It's a union. It's actually a union, a oneness. Oneness. Union between God and man. And that is what makes the church a mystery.

Hallelujah. You can take, you can just imagine, holy God taking himself and mingling himself or mixing himself or uniting himself with a fallen man.

Angels look into this and they marvel. Bible says, which angels love to look into? First Peter chapter one. The angels desire to look into this. Wow. Wow. That's why Ephesians chapter three, verse 10, it says that to the intent, that the purpose of God, the plan, the intention is that through the church or by the church, the wisdom of God or the wisdom of God, the multifarious wisdom of God, the complicated wisdom of God, the many sided, many, it's just like an intricately cut diamond.

It has many sides. Any, any, any how you turn it, it will, it will glow. Any how you turn it in light, that's diamond. So any how you look at it, the wisdom of God is very complicated.

It's multifarious, multifaceted, many faces of God's wisdom. Hallelujah. How can that be on display? The, the, the many faces of God's wisdom can only be on display via the church, via the church, according to Ephesians chapter three, verse 10.

[12 : 49] Hallelujah. And then to, to who be on display to their principalities and power spirit in heavenly places, including demons and angels. They all look at it and say, wow, this God is too good.

This God took us by surprise. We never knew this was in God, in the plan of God. The church is an amazing, an amazing entity. So watch this. It is God's idea. It started with God, but it doesn't end with God.

Man has a responsibility. So in the book of Romans, after telling about, about, telling, telling us about what God has done. God has done this. God has done this. God has done this. Then Romans chapter 12, it usually always starts with, therefore, when it's now time for your job.

It said, therefore, you see, I beseech you, therefore, by brethren, brethren, that you present, by the messes of God, that you present yourself. It's not God who is doing it now.

You present yourself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. Before, I beseech you, therefore, Hebrews chapter 10. Hebrews has a lot of therefore's.

[13:48] After he explains something, he said therefore. He explains, he said therefore. He explains, he said wherefore. One of those such places is Hebrews chapter 10, verse 22. He says that, therefore, let us draw near to God with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, and not forsaking the assembly of ourselves.

So because of what God has done, you two, there's a part you have to play. You can say, I'm just an object of mercy. Thank you, mercy. Oh, it's just grace, grace, grace. God, Christ has done everything. Oh, Christ. No, please, please.

Christ has not done everything. He has done everything. It requires for God to accept you. But for you to live in Christ, in God, you have to do it. I'm crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, and the life that I live, I live by faith. You are supposed to live us in a certain way. And so, the point here is that Christ has done it, but there's a part he has left for us to do.

Colossians chapter one, verse 24. It says that, I rejoice in my suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh the afflictions, what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.

[14:52] So, when Christ suffered his afflictions, some things were left, which we are supposed to do it. Okay, for the building of the church. When it comes to the building of the church, there are two types of, two stages of sufferings.

The first one is the redemptive suffering, redemptive suffering. That brings justification and redemption. That brings forgiveness of sins. And no one can do that apart from Christ.

That is what he came and did. And on the cross, according to John chapter 19, verse 30, he hanged on the cross and he said, Tetelestai, which means it is finished. What is finished? I've finished paying the price. I've finished sorting everything out.

Everything that is required for man to have access back to God and for God to be in man, everything has been paid for. Now, that is why he said, upon this rock will I build my church. He came to build the church in Matthew chapter 16, verse 16. He said, from verse 18, he said, upon this rock will I build my church. I tell you, Peter, you are Peter and upon this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell.

[15:54] So, he came to build the church and when did he start building the church? When he went to the cross and it was finished, now the curtain was torn in the temple, now the church will be built after the resurrection.

So, when he resurrected, now God's spirit can live in man which is the beginning of the church. Now, the beginning of the church was initiated by Christ but we have to now, also, there is a part of the suffering that has been left for us to go through in building the church so that he will reward us for what we have done in glorifying his name and in building the church.

Hallelujah. So, I've said a lot in this while. So, when you read Romans like that, in Hebrews, you can see, therefore, you to do this in Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 1 to chapter 3 talks about how, what God has done.

So, I always talk about it, what God has done in chapter 4 to chapter 6. Ephesians is six chapters. So, the first three, what God has done, the last three, what we are supposed to do in the light of what God has done.

We can't do it in isolation. We do it in the light of what God has done because there's no way you can honor God if the cross is not in view. All right? But Paul says that, from this time forward, let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks of Christ.

[17:10] And he says that, forbid it, that's what actually Galatians, he said, forbid it, chapter 6, forbid it that I should boast saved in the cross of Christ through which I am crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me.

So, the cross is in view. The cross is in view. You can honor God. You can live the Christian life in the absence of the view of the cross. The cross must be in view.

That is why he said, therefore, looking unto Jesus, the utter and the finisher of our faith. You can only do it looking unto Jesus. Remember, he says that, if we turn to him, if we turn to him, the veil is taken off in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 17.

So, you have to turn to him for the veil to be removed. If you don't turn to Jesus, if you don't look unto Jesus, there is no way you can live any effective Christian life because it's not about

self-discipline.

Christian life is not about self-discipline. It's not about moral uprightness, even though all those things will also be a resultant effect of an effective Christian life. It's not just basically self-discipline. [18:12] It's not basically moral Christian life. It's not basically just being niceness and having a good relation with others and being a nice person in society. That is not basically what Christianity is about.

Christianity is about Christ living his life through us, through our heart as he lived his life through us, by us beholding the word. Behold, we all with unveiled faces, as you look up to Christ, with unveiled faces, beholding us in a mirror, the glory are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

Hallelujah. And so, in Ephesians, it talks about first part of Ephesians, salvation worked in, second part, salvation worked out. First part, what we have been saved by, and second part, what we have been saved for.

God has saved us for something. So you can't say, I'm saved, so that's there. No, you have been saved for something. We have been saved by something. Salvation has been worked into us. We have to work it out.

So, when you look at it very carefully, there's always the human responsibility of every effective Christian living. That's what I'm trying to say. There's always a human responsibility of every effective Christian living, and it's throughout in the scriptures.

[19:22] But, today I want to just zoom in on one part. Actually, what I'm going to do is I'm going to, by God's grace, expose it. First Thessalonians, chapter 5, reading from verse 9.

For God has not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. God has appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, this is talking about verse 10. The word of God is so sweet. Verse 10, talking about Jesus. Who died for us? Jesus died for us. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 15, it talks about He died for us all so that we who live must live for Him.

He died for us. Christ died for us. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 21, says it's similar that He became sin.

God made Him who knew no sin to become sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. So, He was on the cross. When He was on the cross, He wasn't dying His own death.

[20:29] He was actually dying our death. Don't forget this, brothers and sisters. He died for us that we will live for Him. He died for us so we will live for Him.

He died for us. In Galatians, Galatians chapter 1, verse 4, Galatians chapter 1, verse 4, says that, Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father?

He gave Himself for our sins. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. He gave Himself for our sins, not for His sins. He gave Himself for our sins. That's why our sins are covered.

That is why in the first place we can't even be in Christ. That's why we can't have a relationship with God. Why? Because someone who loved us enough gave Himself for our sins.

Bible says that Christ died for the ungodly. Christ died, Romans chapter 5, that Christ died for the ungodly. I think verse 5 or verse 6. Christ died for the ungodly.

[21:35] Verse 8 says that God commended, God demonstrated, God displayed, He put on display His love for us in that whilst we are yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ died for the unrighteous. Christ died for the unrighteous. It's a serious statement. Christ died for the unrighteous. He died for the unrighteous. So once we come in knowing that our sins have been paid for, somebody paid a heavy price for our sins and we are not meant to be alive, we are meant to be dead, but we come and acknowledge that because of mercy we have been saved, then we don't have a choice but to live for His honor.

Hallelujah. We live for His honor. And so, when you have that in view, no Christian duty becomes too much. When you have the cross in view, no Christian duty becomes too much.

But when you shift your focus from the cross and you begin to consider what your entitlement, we live in a generation an entitlement-minded generation.

A generation that is always just defined or is influenced by entitlement-mindedness.

[22:51] It's my right. This is what that must be done for me. Even that pastor who is preaching, he must preach me happy. Why is this? That's what I don't like. Entitlement.

So, 1 Thessalonians, Christ died for us. It says that who died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

This is powerful. Hallelujah. Now, when he says that whether we wake or sleep, he's talking about the Christians, we don't die, we sleep, we sleep. Okay?

So, usually, it's a euphemism for saying a Christian is dead. He's gone to sleep. So, we are asleep because we will wake. We will wake up. When we sleep, we will wake. So, in fact, the previous chapter in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, you remember, he speaks of how from verse 13, but I will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning, concerning, concerning them which are asleep, that you, you do not sorrow even as others which have no hope.

So, I'm telling you, so you don't sorrow. So, when a Christian dies, he's actually asleep. He's gone to bed. He's sleeping and he's going to wake up. So, for a Christian, it's good night. It's good night.

[24 : 08] It's not, oh, that's the end. It's not the end. No, no, no, no, no. Watch this. I'm going to show you something in a minute. It says that, verse 14 says that, for if we believe that Jesus died, Jesus didn't sleep, he died.

He died and rose again. Even so, them also which sleep, not die, which sleep in Jesus will be, will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent and not prevent them which are asleep.

So, those who are dead, we who are alive will not have an, excuse me, have an upper hand, an advantage over them. No, they will all rise and we shall be caught up in there.

So, I'm just trying to let you know, when he said sleeping, he's talking about, he's talking about dead. So, now, back to the text, he said, he died for us that whether we wake, so we are alive, or sleep.

[25 : 08] So, when he's talking about, wake, he's talking about, we are alive or sleep. We should live together. Watch, this is a very interesting point. We should live together. When, how can a person who is dead live together with him?

No, when we are alive, yes, when we are alive, we live together with him. Well, wait, see, he's with us. But, you see, it's interesting. On one hand, he's not with us and we are expecting his coming. Hallelujah! Because, you remember, what I just read in chapter, chapter 4, verse 15, for this I say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain, we remain unto the coming of the Lord.

So, the Lord will come. But, I thought you said he's with us. Yes, on one hand, in a sense, he's not with us. He is, he is going to come. We are expecting his coming. But, on another hand, in another sense, he's with us.

He said, Lord, I'm with you. In Matthew chapter 20, verse 20, he said, I'm with you always.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! He said, I'm with you always.

[26 : 12] So, him, who is going to come, he's already with us always and yet, he will come.

Hallelujah! And yet, we are expecting his coming. It's called the parousia, the blessed parousia.

We are expecting the coming, the coming of the Lord. The parousia means that his presence, his actual presence, where we are going to see him physically. We are going to see him as we, in 1 John chapter 3, verse 1, Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called the sons of God.

And he said, the world does not know us yet because it does not know him. However, when we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him face to face, or we shall see him as he is.

So, when he appears, we shall be like him. He's going to appear. There's a day coming when he shall appear. The Son of Man is coming back. He shall appear. Hallelujah. And we look forward to that glorious day.

It's called the hope of his calling. It's called the hope of his calling. It's actually called the blessed hope. In 1 Peter chapter 1, I think verse 8 and 9, somewhere there, the blessed hope, the appearing, the blessed hope.

[27 : 16] It says that the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He's going to come. He's the blessed hope. Any Christian who has this hope in himself, 1 John chapter 3, verse 3, anyone who has this hope in himself, purifies himself, and the evil one touches him not.

There is a responsibility we have to put in. We have a responsibility. Oh, I like the way Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 16. He said, a charge to keep, I have.

I have a charge to keep. A necessity is laid on me. He said, if I preach the gospel, I can't boast about it because a necessity is laid on me. Verse 17, woe is me if I preach not the gospel.

There is a charge on my life. A charge to keep. I have. There's a song we used to sing. He said, a charge to keep. I have. A God to glorify. A never dying soul to save and fit it for the skies.

Hallelujah. A charge to keep. I have. A God to glorify. A never dying soul to save and fit it for the sky. We as a Christian, we as Christians, if you are Christian, there is a charge.

[28 : 22] The heavenly charge over your life and we have to live the life. So, he says that whether we live, so in a sense, he's not with us but in another sense, he's with us because he said, behold, I am with you always.

I am with you always to the very end. Remember in 2 Timothy chapter 2, look at 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 11, it says that it's a faithful saying, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

Okay? We live, when we feel alive, we are living with him. Hallelujah. And in the book of John chapter 14 verse 19, it says that where I live, I live, and because I live, you will live.

Because I live, you will live. So, he says that if you are alive, he said those Thessalonians, second, first Thessalonians again, he says that we who die, for he died for us, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

So, if we are alive, we live together with him. Hallelujah. In Romans chapter 6, verse 5, it talks about how we, if we are dead, we unite with him in his death, we shall also live.

[29 : 34] Romans chapter 6, verse 5, it says that for if we have been planted into the likeness of his death, we shall be also, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

So, this is actually talking about the resurrection life because Jesus said before I live and you shall also live the same life. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

Verse 8, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Hallelujah. So, that our life on one, Christ on one hand is, is yet to come, but on another hand, he is with us.

Let's go back to our text. Oh boy, there's a lot to, to, packed in this. There's so much in the word of God. Verse 11, okay, verse 11 says that wherefore comfort, comfort, comfort yourselves together,

all right, wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another even as, even as also ye do.

Did you see the wherefore? Because Christ died for us, therefore, wherefore, let me see how the New King James puts it. New King James says that, verse 11, therefore comfort each other and edify one another.

[31 : 01] Because Christ died for us, because of that, therefore comfort each other and edify. Edify means to build, comfort means to edge on, to help, inspire, because the Holy Spirit is comforter, comforter.

He's a comforter. The other time I was explaining the comfort, the word, English word comfort is made up of original, I think, etymologically two words, com and forte, com and forte.

So com is, the Latin word com means with, forte, the Latin word means strength, it's a fortress, that's where we go, fortitude, fortitude, fortitude, fortitude, fortitude, fortress, piano forte, soft and strong, so forte, so comfort, to comfort means that to come with strength.

And so, when they say, the same Greek word used for, the same derivative for the Holy Spirit being our comforter, okay, is aros paracletos, that's a comforter, but to comfort, I think the Greek word for comforting is something similar, is paracletos, paracletos, okay, to paracletos, is someone who has been called alongside.

So now, when the Bible says we should comfort somebody, that means call somebody alongside the right path. So comfort, comfort is not like, oh, don't worry, baby, don't worry, baby, don't worry, oh, I'm part of it.

[32 : 28] No, that's not necessarily that. In fact, in the British army, those years ago, the actual word comfort means that there is a chaplain who has like, a bishop who comforts the soldiers to go and fight.

So when you go and you fight, like when you watch boxing, the guy goes and is like tired before when he's going, his coach, he's passive, come on, you can do it, come on, go, shake him, go on. You see, so he comforts him, he lets him know that, no, you can't do it, boy, you are strong enough, you can handle it, you can deal with this thing, you can forgive him, you can forgive him, you can stop the gossiping, you can stop the fornication, you can overcome the sin, you can deal with this

life, yes, you can, yes, you can, he said, we should comfort one another.

He said, comfort, it's there, that's the Christian responsibility. He said, because, yeah, we are dancing about all this mercy, mercy, mercy, all this grace, grace, grace God has done, he said, wherefore, therefore, therefore, comfort each other.

You see, the Christian life is an each other life. There is about 58 one another's or each other's in the New Testament, 58 times, one another, each other, one another, love one another, forgive one another, bear with one another, encourage one another, lie not one to another, kiss one another, encourage one another, comfort one another, you know, give to one another, so many, one another, because the Christian life is one another life, is one, that is why I said, you can have genuine Christian fellowship, I'm talking about Christianity 101, I'm talking about the real church, the real church culture, it's a church culture, that must be, but you know, somebody will say, I don't like church, because all people are, all the people in the church are fake, and sometimes, people have, tend to have a reason for saying what they're saying, because they don't see the church culture, that is said, that is prescribed in the scriptures, anything that is negative, that is negative, and contrary to God's word, cannot be church, people in the church sometimes can behave contrary to God's word, it doesn't mean that is the actual culture that Christ has given to us, so don't mix the two, church is made up of natural, normal human beings, who sometimes can be caught in the wrong net, or can be caught in their own, themselves, doing their own things, and lose sight, and lose track with what God is doing, so in that sense, that we can have pastors and people who may end up not practicing aggressively or constantly, but end up doing something that they shouldn't do, that you will be disappointed, we will be disappointed, because we are frail, we are human beings, okay, so that's why there must be the allowance, you must, but our job is not, see, what happens that people are waiting for someone to come and comfort you, no, it's that comfort one another, it's your job, the one listening to me, you, it's your responsibility to make sure someone is growing strong in the Lord, it says, comfort one another and edify, edify means built,

[35 : 27] I'm going to go into that in a minute, but let's continue the text, I'll show you something, I told you today, I'm breaking the text, I'm doing some, I'm, expository teaching here, now, watch this, wherefore, comfort, 11, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as you also do, that means if you're in church, that should be, that element existing already, watch this, then it starts by saying, and we beseech you, beseech means that, we beg, we strongly implore you, we strongly implore you, when you read other parts, of, Thessalonians, in fact, 2 Thessalonians chapter 3, verse, verse 4, look at this, it talks about, and we, we have confidence, in the Lord touching you, that you both do, and will do the things, which we, command, it's not a suggestion, it's like when, a judge at court, gives an order, that's what, the Econote here, when it says, we command, the church leader, the apostles say, we are commanding you, say, so, verse 4, say, we command you, look at verse 6, it said, now, we command you brethren, we command you, look at verse 7, sorry, verse 10, it says that, for even when, we were with you, we were with you, this, we commanded you, you see, look at verse 12, now, now, them that are such, we command, and exhort, by the Lord, we command you, to do something, we command, it's like, you have, we are telling you, this is what you have to do, that is part, of discipleship, discipleship, you bring, you bring yourself, under accountability, and command, instructions, the command, must be based, purely, and truly, and authentically, on the scripture, nothing, by the scripture, it must be based, on the pages, of scripture, clear scripture, authentically, it's important, not by somebody's whims, but watch this, and we beseech you, brethren, to know, we command you, we beseech you, we exhort you, we asking you, we asking you, that you are supposed, to do something, oh church guy, what are you supposed to do, he said, we beseech you, brethren, to know, know what, what should we know, know them, which, which labor, amongst you, and over you, in the Lord, and admonish you, this is talking about, church leaders, so, the first responsibility, the Christian life, it starts with, your relationship, between, the relationship, between the church leader, for that matter, the pastor, the pastors, the church leaders, and the church members, the church leaders, and the church members, they're, they're supposed to be, a relationship going on, and it begins to tell, the relationship, and guess what, when he was going to say, talk about the relationship, this is all within, the truth church culture, there must be a relationship, between, church leaders, and church members, to church culture, and what is the relationship,

He starts by implicitly referring to the responsibility of the church leader, of the pastor. See, he said, and we beseech you brethren to know them.

You are supposed to know them. You have to know them. Knowing here doesn't mean you notice them. Oh, that's one. No, no, no, no, no. He said, knowing here means that somebody you have been around, that's why it's good for a pastor to be around a church for a long time. Pastor a church for a while so that people have seen you grow through the time. People have seen how you react to betrayal, how you react to difficult Christ, how you react with your family, with your wife, with your family, with your children, with your leaders. People must learn from, they must know you. They must know you. And it takes a while. It takes a while to know people. He says that, know them. So it takes time. Stay in a church long. [39 : 23] Know them unless there are issues of doctrines, sin in leadership, and doctrines, sin in leadership.

These are the two main reasons why someone might. Oh, lack of spiritual development. Carnality is raining in the place.

All right. Let's leave that. So, know them which labor. So, one, the job of a pastor. Labor amongst you.

Labor means to work till you are exhausted. Those of us who want to be pastors, the way you are spending so much time on social media, I don't think you can do the work.

Pastoral work requires a lot of, it's actual work. Pastoral work is so demanding. It's on call. It's an on call job. It's so demanding. Demanding.

[40 : 20] But you can do it very lazily. So, it's very easy to be a very lazy pastor. Couch potato pastor. Couch potato pastor. Sorry.

It's very easy. It's very easy because when you say you are inside your house, inside your room, praying and studying, sometimes no one can say you are not. Because you are not writing your exam on it, so no one can say you are not studying.

But a pastor must labor. A pastor must labor. So, listen. If you are not performing, if you are underperforming professionally, okay, maybe you work somewhere, circular work or normal work. You work and you are underperforming and they suck you. Don't say, oh, no, I think I'll just go and do a pastor. You'll be a failing pastor. Because, you see, the church work doesn't work in the hands of people who don't work.

So, if you are failing, I think in the Ecclesiastes of Proverbs, is that if you have run with footmen and they have around you, outrun you, how can you run with horses?

[41 : 25] The ministry work is so demanding, it is not a job for a lazy person. It's not. Else, it also shows. Oh, somebody says, oh, if it's the will of God, the church will grow.

It's the will of God for every church to grow, okay? All right. So, if you want to be a pastor, it calls for laboring. Labor. You work hard.

In 1 Timothy 5, verse 17, it said, let the elders, the same, be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor.

And the labor has been specific. You labor in the word of God and doctrine. Labor, tirelessly working hard. Search the scriptures steady hard.

And whilst you are standing, Paul said, above all these things I've been through, the daily necessity, the daily care of the church. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 28, somewhere there.

[42 : 23] I've been through sober. I've been through shipwreck. I've been through danger of bandits. I've been whipped and all that. But he said, above all these things, what is even stronger? The daily care of the church.

It's a lot of work to take care of God's people and help them grow. And guide them. Let them grow in God's word. Teach them. How can you teach what you don't know?

How can you teach? Being a pastor is a very hard work. It's not about suits. It's not about ties. It's not about personalities. It's not about style.

It's not about gimmicks. It's not about techniques. Techniques don't grow a church. Anytime someone tries to use technique to grow a church, what you see is not church growth.

It's swell. And it's actually not church. Because church Bible says, I planted upon us what that God gave the increase. Church growth comes from God. When the man of God and the leaders have worked hard.

[43 : 21] And sometimes the work is so hard, you will feel tired, but not bent out. Because the fire of God doesn't consume people. The fire of God keeps people fresh, but physically you will feel it.

Physically. You have too much time. You want to be a pastor. Young man. Young lady. You want to be a pastor. You have so much time. Every time you're on social media. And then, I don't understand.

Sometimes, when somebody is supposed to be a pastor and you always see him on social media. Everything you comment. Everything you like, comment. Like, comment. Every time.

Don't you have anything doing? You have become addicted and attached to gadgets. Gadgets. Every time. Gadgets. And not that you are even studying on the gadgets.

But you are just watching what others are doing and commenting on pictures. And commenting on things that is not even relevant. What I'm trying to say is, if you have a lot of time for social media, you'll be a very bad and a poor Christian leader.

[44 : 22] Too much time. Too much time. Too much time. That is a lazy way of doing God's work. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. There's, there's, so, okay. Oh, oh, my time. It says that, um, labor. Okay. So, them, know those who labor amongst you and are over you in the Lord.

So, number one, when the Bible says, know, um, know those, the verse, the verse 12 again. It said, know those who labor. The word know. Okay.

The word know is important to understand that it also means acknowledge. When you read the, I think because of my time, I will leave it. The English standard version is uses, the English standard version uses respect.

Okay. And some, I think, let me read from the, um, amplified. Yes. It's right here. Open it. The amplifier says, now, now also, we, now also we beseech you brethren to get to know those who labor amongst you.

[45 : 27] Recognize them for what they are. Acknowledge and appreciate and respect them all. So, acknowledge, appreciate and respect. Okay.

So, it says that, know them. You have to know them. To know them means you have to acknowledge them. Acknowledge them. Respect them. That's what the scripture says. Respect them. Acknowledge their church leaders.

Watch this. It says that, um, know them. Know them. That, let me read from the amplifier. Let me still continue from the amplifier. I think it's, it's a good one.

It's a good one. Okay. Recognize them all. Your leaders who are over you in the Lord. So, what's the second job of a pastor? To be over the people.

To rule. There's, um, there's, uh, some translations. You say who rule over you. Okay. So, rule. There are people who rule. In Romans chapter 12, verse 8, it talks about if you are ruling.

[46 : 25] Okay. Rule with diligence. That's seriousness. In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17, it talks about how those who rule over us, um, we should, um, we should make their work easy.

Some people, when you are pastoring them, it's a lot of work because they are unruly. Oh, it's true. The Bible knows that. So, I both, if you are unruly, the Bible has already spoken about you.

So, you have to change so that you can leave. This is Christianity 101. Okay. The true and the real, the real, the true church culture. That's what I'm talking about. Um, Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17.

Let me read it. See, it says that obey them that have rule over you and submit yourselves. There are people who have, that's discipleship. There are people who are rule over you.

It said obey them and submit yourself. So, when the Bible said, those who have rule over you, it said know them. Uh, let me read it again. It says that, um, they labor and they are leaders over you.

[47 : 27] Leaders who are over you in the Lord, not in the house, in the Lord, not in the government, in the Lord. So, their job is to be leading you. Now, that word rule also means to lead, to lead.

So, you lead, when you lead, others follow. You, leading them means that setting the pace or being an example of what is right. Being an example of how to do things.

So, when the Bible used the word lead, it said, set an example in doing things first. So, you are doing things first. You are the first to do it. You set an example. Then, you, your example becomes the ground for your admonishing others.

Your example you set becomes, that's what it means to rule over people in the, in church, in Christ. To rule over people means to set, to lead by example. So, they follow.

And so, the Bible actually, Paul, the scriptures tell the members, the leaders tell the members, follow us. In 2 Timothy, no, 2 Thessalonians, the same, chapter 3.

[48 : 31] No, 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. Look at chapter 3, verse 6. This is interesting. Verse 7. Let me read from verse 6. There is something interesting there. We now, now, we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye redraw yourself.

Oh, did he say that? Redraw yourself from every brother. Ah, every Christian. Hey, that's a serious one. He said, redraw yourself. Why? Redraw yourself from every brother that works disorderly, not after the tradition which we have, which he has received from us.

We, the leaders, we, the apostles, we, the, your pastor, he says that, redraw yourself from some people who are not working the way we have taught, we've been taught.

He said, redraw. It's in the Bible. He said, redraw yourself. He said, we, some we suggest, we command you to redraw yourself. He said, put you on the screen, can you see? Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus, that you redraw yourself from every brother.

It's not the well people. Even the well list, even well. The brother who, every brother that works disorderly is working not according to the order. And then look at verse, verse, verse seven.

[49 : 40] For, for yourselves know how you ought to follow us. You are supposed to follow us. Why? Because a leader can tell us, can tell the congregation, follow me.

Why? Because he is following Christ. In first Corinthians chapter 11, verse one said, follow me as I follow Christ. 1 Corinthians chapter four, verse 16.

It talks about follow us. So, 1 Corinthians chapter four, verse 16, talks about follow us. 1 Corinthians chapter, chapter, what did I say earlier?

Yeah, chapter 11, verse one. Yeah. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse one says follow us. 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 16 talks about follow us.

Follow us. Ephesians chapter 1 chapter 5 verse 1. Follow us. Ephesians chapter 5 verse 1. Follow us. What I just read. 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 7 says follow us.

[50 : 41] 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 9. Verse 9 says not because we have not power but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.

Did you see that? So when you say lead, it means that rule means that leading by example so others can follow you. And then governing the local church.

Giving instructions. So it's all part of it. It's not only just the leading but be in charge. Make sure things. Give instructions. Give command. That's why I say we command you. But the commanding doesn't start with your suit.

The commanding doesn't start with your big English. The commanding doesn't start with your big tone. School abakutukutu. The commanding starts with your example. As a leader, you lead by example.

May God give us all leaders grace to lead by example. And those leaders God is raising. May God give us all strength and grace and comfort to lead by example.

[51 : 43] So number one job of the pastor is to labor. Number two, responsibility of one responsibility of the other to labor. Number two is to rule. Number three, let's look at the text again.

All in verse 12. Now also, I beseech you, brethren. Let me read it from James. It says, and we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor amongst you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

So they are over you in the Lord. And what do they do? They admonish you. They instruct you. They guide you. They teach you. They guide you. They direct you. They give. No, you can't do this. You can't marry such a person.

You can't be doing this. You can't talk to your mother like this. You can't treat your wife like this. You should be doing this. It's good to be a faithful tither. It's good to be a giver. It's good to serve in the church. So I'm, oh, I don't want anybody to tell me what I want to do.

And you have heaped your, people have, we live in a generation of people who have heaped to themselves certain type of teachers. This is what I don't understand. You know, there are some people who have made themselves pastors, cyber pastors.

[52 : 47] You feel you have a cyber church, people you are pastoring. Real Christian fellowship, real Christian fellowship only thrives in real relationships.

One of these days, I really wanted to talk a little bit about this, but maybe I'll continue this message. The next one. The virtual church experience is not real church.

This lockdown, people have been forced. We have been forced to be doing like I'm teaching now, doing virtual, but it's not a real church. There must be a real relationship.

You can, you can, you can start, you can do online dating, but it doesn't end there. Any online dating that stays there is not proper relationship. It must now, you must meet the person physically. You must, if you want to marry the person, meet the person physically. And then how can you marry somebody online? We are married. How do you get married? It's online. We exchange our vows online and he lives in America.

[53 : 48] I also live in Japan and we are fine. We are fine. We are actually making babies. We will email, we will email our connectivity. It doesn't work like that. There must be real relationship, family relationship.

You can't have virtual family relationship. Excuse me. You cannot have virtual family relationship. You cannot have virtual family relationship. When mom travels and during this lockdown, maybe someone got stuck in another country and they missed each other.

And then when they go, you reunited. That's family. Family. Whilst they are away, in the absence of opportunity to meet, it's still family. But the family relationship thrives when we meet together.

And so listen, I hear people say, oh, we have online viewership has increased. All those things, eh? Virtual. Someone is, okay, listen to him and he's in conversation.

He's ironing. He's doing something else. And you are in the background. It's not relationship-able. It's not. We live in a generation where the generation we live in, people don't want accountability.

[54 : 49] People don't want. People are quite narcissistic, okay? People are quite self-centered. People are quite, they don't want any commitment. They don't want anything to risk.

There's no risk. They want this kind of virtual experience. The virtual experience gives you your own space. Gives you your own privacy. You can do it within your own privacy.

And you can do it. You don't give, you don't have to give yourself to others. There's no real commitment. There's no sacrifice. There's no, you know, fellowship. Christian fellowship doesn't thrive in that environment.

It cannot happen like that. Christian fellowship requires sacrifice. It requires commitment. It requires giving of yourself, not just your money. Giving of yourself to make others better.

To make others grow. Bible says that you edify one another. I can't wait for the next session. To make others grow. To give of yourself accountability. But we live in a generation, a culture that does not want private.

[55 : 52] Oh, sorry. All we want is privacy. No commitment. Convenience. Anonymity. I don't want people to know. So you can, people can go to a church room and they put blank space.

Because you don't want people to, what are you doing? Didn't you know the meeting was coming on? Did you not know the meeting was scheduled? And you come into a meeting and blank your face and you put a blank space. That's not fellowship.

Please. That's not. It's anonymity. You don't even, sorry, people have income. They don't want to be seen there. What is your problem? Are you not in fellowship? True church life requires an actual fellowship.

So even in the absence of physical meetings, we go to, we take it as far as we can to make sure there is this koinonia, continuity of koinonia.

I know I agree with that, Pastor, what he's saying. I know you might not. Because the cultural flow has overshadowed and taken over some of us so much.

[56 : 48] We want unaccountability, low commitment, self-actualization, privacy, convenience.

That's all this, that's what we want. And if we are not careful, when you see, I was reading somewhere and I came across a statement about how communication technology, advancement in communication technology has actually broken down communication among a lot of people.

People, they exist in a sub-world. It's like an amoeba, human amoeba. You can't, you're fluid. You can't, no one knows when you are there, when you are not there, when you are, you do your own thing.

You have your own music. You select your own preacher. You select your own preachers. You select your own friends. They call these Facebook friends or Instagram. Those are not friends, so. They are not friends.

Young lady, young man, let me advise you. Don't be, don't be, don't beat yourself because you don't have likes. You don't have likes on social media. It doesn't mean squat. It doesn't add to you.

Okay. Anyway, I think I will have to end on this. Oh boy. I just, I didn't go any far at all. So well, so the pastor's job is to labor.

[58 : 03] Number two, to rule. Number three, to admonish. And that will lead me to the other part. So he started talking about the relationship between the pastor and the congregation, the pastor's job.

And then what the congregation must also do towards the pastor. He says this, let me throw this in briefly and leave. He says, verse, verse four, verse 13. And esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

Not for their personality's sake. Not for their style's sake. But for their work's sake. Esteem them very highly. Some people have problems. So why do you, why? Why are you treating the pastor like he's God?

He's not God. She's not God. But Bible says, esteem them very highly. Some people even treat celebrities, footballers. Footballers. They treat them. Musicians, movie actors.

You are fine when they treat them nicely. But you have a problem. When a pastor is treated with, Bible said, it's in your Bible. Oh. Can't you see? Can't you see?

[59 : 03] Verse 13. And to esteem them very highly. Highly. Very highly. Esteem them. I'll continue from there. Esteem the church leader.

It's the church's, the church member's responsibility. Esteem the church leader very highly.

Christianity 101. The real church life. The true church life. This is important.

The true church culture is what I'm talking about. These things are important. So after God has saved us, there's a responsibility. I pray this has been a blessing to you. We thank God for using His servant, Reverend Dr. David Hitchie, to share this with us.

If this message has blessed you in any way, please spread the word by sharing it and send us an email to amen at charis.org. Remember to stay connected with us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter for regular updates on what God is doing here at Charis Finishing.

Stay blessed.