

HOW WE BELONG: Into One Body in Christ |

Ephesians 2:19–22

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church. I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and you're listening to the Sermon Podcast from January 25,!

In today's message, How We Belong Into One Body in Christ, we will be turning to Ephesians chapter 2, verses 18 through 22, where the Apostle Paul reminds us that in Christ we are no longer strangers or outsiders, but fellow citizens, members of God's household, and part of one unified body.

Belonging then begins with a response to Christ, but it does not end there. As we grow closer to God, we are drawn closer to one another, built together on Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, and we are shaped into a dwelling place for God by the Holy Spirit.

And before we begin, I want you to consider this. Have you ever felt disconnected, unseen, or maybe even like you don't quite fit in?

Scripture shows us that God has always been in the busyness of bringing people near, near to himself, and closer to one another. So, wherever or whenever you're listening from today, whether you're a long-time church family, or you're exploring faith, or you're simply searching for something more, I want you to know this.

[1 : 52] You are invited. You are welcome. You are loved by Christ. And you belong. Now, let's open God's Word together.

Well, good morning, everyone. So we're going to go ahead and get started today. Today's sermon is titled, How We Belong Into One Body in Christ.

It's so important for us to realize and to recognize that Jesus Christ extends an invitation to each and every one of us. It's just like how many of us have received an RSVP.

I hope that all of us have received an RSVP at least at one point in their life. birthday party, wedding celebration, you know, all sorts of celebrations that happen. Well, Christ extends an invitation for us, and it's up to us to respond to that invitation, whether saying yes or no.

And in receiving salvation, in responding to Christ, Christ has brought us near to God. And in doing so, as we draw closer to God, we certainly should draw close to one another.

[3 : 08] And because of this, we are to gather. We are to be united in Christ as one body, as the church. And in Christ, we belong to a body, a household, as people who are being molded together in Christ.

And Christ calls for us to draw near to him, to respond to his calling, to respond to salvation, and to be placed on a journey in Christ as you journey with Christ.

It's not just a journey that you have individually, but a journey that we embark on together, united. And we are to focus on the things that bring us together, and we are to seek the higher things rather than the things that divide us and the things that distract us from the Lord.

And as we go into this, we're going to be turning to Ephesians. But before we do, let's go ahead and open in a word of prayer, and we'll go ahead and get started. Father God, I am so grateful for this time for us to gather together.

Friends, visitors, people that are online. I pray for every single person who is here in this place and here online, and even those that will be listening to our sermon recording, that they know that they are loved by you, that you provide a better way for our life.

[4 : 36] When the world is showing darkness, you give us light. When the world is full of lies and chaos, you provide truth. And when the world is speaking about such hatred and hostility and even death, you provide life everlasting, safety and security.

And I pray that this message will honor and glorify you, Father, and that it will be understood by those who are listening and those who are watching and those that are here.

You are an amazing God. You have provided a much better way than what the world has to offer. And we thank you for that. We thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, being the way, the truth and the life.

And you invite all of us to belong, to belong with you, to be united with you as we journey in life together, in our spiritual walk and journey in you.

We love you and we praise you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our faith, that we pray and we all say together, can I get an amen, church?

[5 : 46] Amen. And so, we have this image here. Let's go ahead and put it on. It's after the prayer slide.

But as we're going here, I want you to think for a moment. If someone were to ask you, why do you go to church? I'm sure the answer that you can respond to or give would be very different than the person next to you.

Some people come because they want to experience the presence of God through worship and spirit and song, right? Praising the Lord. And just as Matt was saying earlier, making a joyful noise.

I love how the text says to make a joyful noise and it's not about your ability to sing harmony or to sing melody. In fact, making a noise, we can think of, well, noise, right?

Not necessarily performances, but the heart and the intention of praising God for who he is, for what he has done, and that he fulfills his promises. What an amazing opportunity for us to gather together and for us to worship the living God who changed the course of history by sending his son, Jesus Christ.

[6 : 52] Maybe you might answer differently. Maybe it's not the music. Maybe it's just coming together and being present with your brothers and sisters in Christ. That is something that is remarkable and that is something that is a great way to gather.

The ability to talk with those that have the same values. Those that are wanting to draw near to the Lord. Those that are wanting to come closer to God and to be transformed more into what Christ has in store for us.

How you answer that. Why do you attend church? I just gave a couple of reasons. And of course, you may have one that is unique to your own. And that's okay to have a completely different kind of answer.

It might be something that church is much more than something that we attend or something that we do. It is about being part of something that is greater than yourself.

Being on a journey in Christ, not only being transformed individually, but collectively. Scripture gives us a much deeper and more powerful vision for the church.

[8 : 02] And when we think about it in the New Testament, we think about how Scripture describes the church, well, more than a building, more than a service or more than a program.

Scripture describes the church as a people, as a living body, as a household, as we will find in the Ephesians text, and a family that journeys together in Christ.

I want you to think of that image when you think of Christ as the great shepherd and how he journeys with his sheep into green pastures, into safety and to security, right?

You may think that you have, you know, maybe 10 or 100 or however many sheep that are journeying together. The journey, you as an individual person, you're obviously journeying with Christ.

And when you journey together, think of the encouragement, think of the building up, think of how you can see transformation. And even there are times, think about how in your own journey in Christ, how there have been hills and there have been valleys.

[9 : 07] There have been moments where you're journeying and things get tough, right? And there have been moments where things have been easier. Not only does that, is that directly applicable to your individual walk, but we can think of how churches have been through trials and tribulations as well.

Seasons where there may be pressure. There may be seasons where it's just a lot is going on. And we have to think of the importance of that. A family that journeys together in Christ.

And when we think of this idea of how we belong, it begins with response. It begins with you saying yes or no to Jesus Christ and receiving the salvation that is freely available to all who believe.

It is not something that we earn. It is something that has been done for us. It is not something that we can possibly earn on our own.

But it is done. Think of the difference between the word do and done. You think of do, the things you have to do, the endless checklist. How many of you guys have a checklist of things you got to do?

[10 : 23] You can be honest. We can be honest here. Or maybe you don't have a checklist for a reason, right? You still have a list of things to do. You just don't want to admit it. I get it, right? We all have things that we have to do. And we feel accomplished when we do our homework, right?

Or if we don't, we feel bad about it, right? Or if you have your household chores or your... I know when I used to work in a bank, I had a checklist of everything I had to do every day.

And if that checklist was not done, I did not leave, right? Some of us may live in that kind of structure or format. And that's how it is in the world that we live in. But when it comes to the things of God, His ways are higher.

And He has the checklist already done saying, Jesus paid it all. And how remarkable that is. And we praise God for that. Done as opposed to due.

And so belonging is something we receive through Christ. We grow individually and we grow together. And we live out with one another. Building up one another.

[11 : 22] Encouraging one another. And being present for one another. Should something happen in your life. Now, for many of us, we've had good moments, right? We've had bad moments.

Think of the famous saying, the good, the bad, and the what? The ugly, right? It's not the good, the great, and the okay. All right? It's not the good and the bad. It's the good, the bad, and the ugly.

We think about the experiences that we have in our life. And how we, as the body of Christ, are to support one another. Pray for one another. And be present with one another. Whatever it is.

Even in the celebration of the birth of a child. Or if someone is sick, being present for them. Making a phone call and making sure, hey, how can I pray for you?

Or, I don't even know the words to say, but I'm going to be here for you. I'm going to come and visit, even if it's just for 10 minutes. These are the kind of things that the body of Christ we are called to do.

[12:18] So, let's turn to Ephesians. It's going to be Ephesians. Open your Bibles. Ephesians chapter 2. Verses 19 through 22.

It's right on the title slide. You are welcome to use your ESVP Bible. Or, really, any Bible of choice. New International. New Living. New American Standard. I just learned that the New Revised Standard Version has an updated version.

It's like the 2021 edition. I guess I was used to the 1989 version. But, that's a whole different story. So, in that, let's turn our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2.

We're going to have verse 19 through 22. But, I actually want to start in verse 14. Are we all there, church? Okay.

So, Ephesians 2. And, we'll do verses 14 to 22. I know it says on here 19 through 22. That's the main crux of it. But, we're going to go to have a little more context here.

[13:22] Church, can we read this together? Verse 16.

Verse 16, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Christ, thereby killing hostility, right? It's talking about one body, right? Verse 17, and he came and preached what to you?

Peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. This is very important. Those that were near and those that were far, right? This message of peace is getting preached out.

Then in verse 18, through him, we have what? What? Access in one spirit to the Father. So you are no longer what? And there's two words that pop up. Strangers and aliens, right?

But you are what? Fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. That's beautiful language, talking about the invitation that God has for us to be a member of the household of God is powerful language.

[14:35] Verse 20, built on the foundation of the what? Of the who? Apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the what? The cornerstone in whom the, this is important, the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple of the Lord.

Talking about the building up and the establishment of the church. We think of Christ as our foundation. We think of the apostles and the prophets that's all being laid apart. And this idea, this imagery, we can go ahead and put that on the screen.

That image where you have Christ as the cornerstone, right? Being built together through Christ. You see that the, I tried to find as accurate of a representation, but the cornerstone being the most important stone that is bridging together two sides, right?

And we think about this, the prophets then representing in the Old Testament and then the apostles of the New Testament and Christ is bringing it together, right? So it's just, we can think of the image of a bridge.

We can think of the image as the cornerstone, but Christ being the most significant part that brings the two together. And when we're thinking about the text, when it says, if you go back in scripture, when it's mentioning in verse 21, in whom, right?

[15:44] In Christ, the whole structure is being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. So we have the foundation then, and what we're seeing in this kind of imagery is a building, a structure, a temple for the Lord.

Isn't that beautiful imagery we think about that? That it's being constructed, right? When we think of the language throughout scripture, that the kingdom of God is being established. The kingdom of God is here, right?

And we're thinking about how we're to spread the gospel to all the ends of the earth. It is the continuation of the building, in this sense, the holy temple, or the building of the kingdom of God.

We can see this kind of parallel language that exists, and it's beautiful language nonetheless. So, verse 22, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by who?

The Holy Spirit, right? So we see this kind of language that's happening, right? And the important piece, as we are observing the text, right? Because here at Ontario Community Church, we have a three-prong process.

[16:51] Observe the text. We're going to read it, by golly. We're going to read the word of God. Amen? Right? And we're going to see what's exactly going on here. Then the second is the I. It's the interpretation. What are the lessons that we can learn from this?

And then third is the application. What can we do about this? And so, being no longer strangers and aliens, but being fellow citizens.

Now, it's very important. If you still have your Bibles open, in verse 19, I always find it very interesting where it's giving this distinction between strangers and aliens. Have you ever wondered why it specifically says that?

You think, well, can you just all lump them into one? Just say, you know, you're all aliens or you're all strangers and it's a done deal. It's talking about something that I think is very interesting and it's very important. When you're talking about both of these categories are talking about the Gentiles.

So, for those of you that know scripture much better, you have Gentile and you have the Jews, right? You have the people of God, which salvation was originally available for them.

[17:52] And then when Christ came, salvation became available to who? To everybody, right? So, you have the Gentiles then, which you have the stranger, which are, these are people that are completely outside of the people of God.

They're physically away and they're also outside of the covenant of God, okay? And then you have aliens, which is being represented as those who are wanting to become Jewish or want, or they're living and doing life.

They may even be worshiping the Old Testament God, but they're not a part of the fold yet. And that's how it was in the Old Testament. There is still this distinction of physical separation from the Jewish people and also the covenantal separation from the people.

And what's happening here is you have the Jews as members of the household of God. That is the old system, this separation between Gentile and Jew. But some of you may be thinking of the verse that in Christ there is neither Gentile nor Jew, right?

And so this is interesting. Here it's showing what the separation used to be like, right? Physical separation as well as covenantal separation. But it is not so anymore that when we are considering the new covenant, in other words, when Christ is coming here to the earth and he changes the course of history by his miracles, his teachings, his death, burial, and resurrection, the fulfillment of prophecy, all of these things that were happening, it is providing a new way where Gentiles and Jew can enter into the new covenant.

[19:24] Amen? Does that make sense, church? We can see that there is a new system that is being provided by Christ. And it's just such an interesting distinction because I've read that verse so many times and I'm like, strangers and aliens.

It's just kind of a strange thing that's happening in here. And you go on further within the text, right? To be made a fellow citizen, to be welcomed into the household of God.

And we think of how important it is for us as Christians to remember the fact that not only are we supposed to focus on the unity that exists within Christianity, but also the fact that no matter who you are, no matter what it is you have gone through, no matter what you are going through, no matter how tall or skinny you are, no matter what the color of your skin is, no, all of those different kinds of things, the invitation is for you.

The invitation is for you to respond. And only you can decide if you're going to receive salvation in Jesus Christ. Can I get an amen in that one? How powerful that is.

It's not just one select people group. It goes beyond that to everyone. And we can think of how, for many of us, you may know a person who has an incredible, tragic, insane, crazy, you can put whatever word you want, backstory, right?

[20 : 46] The life before Christ. And then in knowing Christ, how that was the moment that changed everything. Think about that.

I think of in my own personal life, how before I was a Christian, I was a very different type of person. And in receiving salvation and letting God work in and through me, much like how the Lord should work in and through you, mold you, transform you, follow in the footsteps of Christ as Christ leads you.

And you will be transformed to be more like Christ. And I think of this image that we have, our stained glass and this invitation, his arms being wide open for all of us.

How many of us seek for security? How many of us seek for safety in this life? And I don't know about you, I can't find a lot of security in the world, right?

Even banks close. How many of you guys watched It's a Wonderful Life, right? Where the bank closes and Mr. Potter, right? He wants to give, what is it, 10 cents on the dollar. That's not a good deal there, right?

[22 : 02] But we think of institutions. We think of how so much just fades away in the world. But when we are standing on, we think of that building, right?

I want you to look at this image here. To be welcome. Welcome to the household of God, right? You have this image of this older guy. And I actually put in here white garments.

And that's actually a very biblical thing, right? You see that not only in parables. You see that within Revelation. You find that throughout Scripture about, many of you will know this language, from filthy rags, right?

To going into new garments. I love how in Revelation, I think it's in Revelation 22, where it mentions, blessed is the man who washes his robes. Such a weird verse in there. What in the world does that mean, right?

Well, in Christ, our robes are going to be washed then, and they will be made white. And we can also even think in parabolic language, in the parables, the wedding feast, right?

[23 : 00] The great banquet. How you put on new clothes. Or when you think of putting on the new self. There's all these kind of connections that we can think of when we are being received into the household of God.

And what a powerful image you can think of. To be welcomed. No longer a stranger. No longer an outcast. No longer someone that people may say, oh no, we don't want your kind around.

Not any longer. But it is Christ welcoming you into that household. To be treated as a brother or sister in Christ. To be members of a household.

Not visitors. Not guests. But to be a part of the family of God. And to think of this imagery as people are entering into the flock, as it were, or the family.

You can think of all this different imagery. How we're being built up together. And what a powerful celebration it is when someone receives Jesus Christ. When someone receives salvation.

[24:03] Or when someone gets baptized. That's a time for us to celebrate another person as they are receiving salvation and growing in Christ.

How powerful that is. And that imagery being built together. And Christ being the cornerstone. Powerful and beautiful language. And this passage tells us from then and even now that belonging is individually you enter into a community.

And what community can we think of than the local church? For us to be present with one another. To help one another. I always love when in times when I've entered church throughout my walk with the Lord and you have a Bible study and the Lord reveals something, a truth to one person and it gets shared to another and you just start learning and helping one another grow.

It's a remarkable thing. That's one example. Sometimes it's the laying on of hands.

Sometimes it's just, well, when we think of bearing one another's burdens, it's okay to be present with one another.

[25:26] That's what we're called to do. And let me tell you something. Is the world like that? Maybe a support group might have something like that, right?

But even at that, it's still not the same as the intentionality, as the healing, the spiritual healing that happens in the church.

And that's something that, let me tell you, the world does not offer that. But it's something that is different. Because God provides a better way for us.

And so in all of this, we are welcomed. We go on this journey. We get built together in Christ. And it all begins with that decision in Christ. It's part of, we are being saved by grace through faith into the family of God.

And so let's go to that next slide then. So what is scripture teaching us then, right? That belonging into a community, right?

[26:31] The body of Christ, the church. Well, are we all the same? There's one answer to that. It's no. We're not all the same, right? Now, certainly we're all part of the family of God.

I get that. But we're all different parts of the body, right? We all have different spiritual giftings. Where we are at in our spiritual walk with the Lord, it may be different than the person next to you.

You'd be surprised. What is God revealing to you specifically in this moment? Or what has God revealed to you this week? It could be through prayer. The still, silent voice of the Lord.

It could be through the studying of scripture. It could be that random person you met on the street that somehow answered a prayer of something you've been wrestling with. I've had that happen before. It's really bizarre.

But hey, God can work in incredible ways. It's about responding to Christ and being in the community of believers together. A place for healing, growth, and formation.

[27:29] And as well as transformation. The Apostle Paul, when he writes in Ephesians, is clear that we belong because Christ has reconciled us to God.

And through reconciliation, we get bound together. That's why we have to take care of one another, right? I mean, we think of, and I know in a lot of Sunday schools or children's church, they always say like, imagine if you didn't have an ear, right?

You want to have your ear back on, right? Well, we can think about that even as adults, right? Every part of the body is important in the eyes of God. And you need all of those parts to function together well.

And to do effective ministry. Think about that. Like, how remarkable is it that there's different parts of the body and we are to be united in Christ in that? Not divided. I mean, are you going to say, you know, like, I don't need my foot.

I don't need you. You're really bugging me today. Get out of here, right? It wouldn't make, it completely defies any sort of logic or understanding, right? So then why are we doing that with the body of Christ?

[28 : 36] Why are we dividing over things that are unnecessary or things that are elementary? Just as I mentioned in Hebrews, where it gives a list of the elementary things. And we are to go beyond those elementary things.

It's not to say those elementary things are not important. We build the foundation. We keep building upon that. Our foundation is in Christ then. And so throughout the New Testament, Paul repeatedly uses the body language to describe the church, right?

Different gifts doing life together. A place for encouragement, love, and unity. And just as I mentioned, you don't need your foot anymore, right? There's no isolation.

Instead, we build up the body of Christ. We build up the church. We build up the community. To belong to Christ then is to belong to the body. And the body needs to come together not to be isolated, not to be divided, not to be separated, or to be alone.

Just like how important it is for us to not forsake us gathering together. But for us to have the intention for us to gather together.

[29 : 46] Now I get it. There's times we get sick. There's times where life happens. But we still have that intention for us to gather together. We are made for greater things then.

And God provides a better way for our own lives, right? For us personally, the transformation that happens within us, but also the transformation that exists in our own church community.

And we think for a moment, as we are being built up, we go out into the community and we share the gospel message. We share our own stories of how Christ has transformed our lives, how the Lord has been there in every season of life.

We have to think we are called to be Christ-like. We are to grow collectively, build up one another, and do incredible things in the name of Christ.

We are to have an active faith. And when we think of being a Christian, a follower of Christ, we think that, let us remember that faith is personal, but it's not private.

[30 : 53] And I want you to understand the difference. You have a personal relationship with Christ, but it's not meant to be private. It's meant to be part of the body. And it's meant to, when we think of all of these different parables and different parts of scripture, right?

Letting the light shine, or being salt and light for others to see, to be the city on the hill. There's so many types of patterns and things that we can see within scripture that helps us with our understanding.

And when we disconnect from the body, we become more vulnerable. Just how important it is, even when Christ mentions that he leaves the 99 to go after the 1.

You think about that because the 1 is vulnerable. Right? How important that is. We now go to the next slide, which is our application then, and how do we live this out, right?

And there's three things. You know, belonging is intentional. It's not just a catchphrase. And you've probably heard that, you know, saying all the time that you belong here.

[32:05] But it's a calling that is lived out. Belonging through presence. We think about this, that presence is more than just showing up physically.

Well, certainly we need to show up physically, right? But it's certainly more than that. It's choosing to be available, to be open and engaged with God and with one another. Think about that.

And consider for a moment how difficult it can be to be present in the moment with modern day distractions, right? You know, I always give the example of the telephone, right?

Of the cell phone. Sometimes when I am answering a text and I'm playing with my kids and I'm sitting down and I'm playing blocks or whatever and I'm doing, you know, I'm doing a little text.

I cannot tell you how much it impacts me if my kid grabs my face, right? Yeah. Grabs my face and is like, no, dad, look at me.

[33:07] Not that darn phone, right? And that's just one of many of the distractions that we have, right? For some of us with our cell phones, we know the exact sound when a text comes through or the exact sound when you get a email message, right?

It's like we've been programmed to know exactly those kind of things, right? We just have to be intentional when we're being in the present moment and being mindful of any sort of distraction that we have. Well, we think that God is present with us today.

Well, we should be present with one another and present with the Lord. Let us respond to God's call in our life, right? To be in the presence of the Lord.

We think about that. You think God gets distracted with a cell phone? No. We want to be in the presence of the Lord. I mean, that doesn't make sense, right? But we want to be in the presence of the Lord.

But we think about, for us, being present with one another. And that requires intentionality. That requires effort at times. And certainly, it can get so easy to get distracted.

[34:17] I get it. So let us respond then. Begin our spiritual journey in Him. Being present, being intentional, mindful to God, and mindful to others as well.

And belonging begins when we make the simple but the decision to show up. When we show up and when we're intentional, does that mean you've got to be perfect?

Well, no. It's just like when you show up for someone who is in need. You know, you may not be wearing the cleanest clothes. You may not, your hair may not be in the best, you know, you may not even be smelling good, right?

Whatever it is. Being present does not mean you have to be perfect. Showing up and just being there.

Being aware. You don't have to have everything together to belong into the family of God. You have to turn to Christ, being the way, the truth, and the life.

[35:17] And I want you to think about that question then. Am I truly present? Or am I not? Just something for you to think of. The second thing then is belonging through participation then.

In 1 Corinthians 12.18, where it says, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as He chose. That Christ invites us to come and see who He is, and that Christ offers a better way for our lives.

From coming and seeing that the Lord is good, to joining, through joining comes action. That we are to participate in the body of Christ. Some of you may remember when I went over the parable of the children in the marketplace.

How many of you may or may not know what I'm talking about, and that's all right. That parable was talking about how there are these children in the marketplace, and there was a time of mourning and a time of celebration.

But the children, what did they do? They just sat there. The scripture says that we played the lute, we played the heart. There was even a time of mourning, but you did nothing.

[36 : 29] And it's such an unusual parable. You're like, don't be like idle children. Some commentators say, don't be like spoiled children that are just sitting by and letting life pass by.

But in any sense, we have to think of this idea of participation. Discovering that God has given all gifts and abilities, not just for recognition, but for the health of the body.

that we contribute, right? When we think of stewardship, contributing our time, our talent, and our treasures, as well as our testimony, our story. We're to help one another and to do great things in the name of Christ.

And we have to think, a body needs all of the parts. Otherwise, if you're missing certain parts of the body, you're going to be in trouble. I mean, that's the reality in the physical world.

When we think of the spiritual world, we need all parts of the body. And so participation then includes serving, right? Serving in the local church or serving in the community, praying, learning, giving, doing life together.

[37 : 39] So don't just be idle. Be active. And so belonging through participation. And we think about it that belonging, right, it deepens when we serve side by side.

You know, I love being present and I love participating as best as I can. It helps in my faith journey. And I hope that it does for you as well. Ask yourself the question then, where is God inviting me to participate?

The third thing then is belonging through partnership, right? As Ephesians is saying, join together, being built together. It's a shift from in mindset to I am a part of the family of God.

And what a big shift that is, right? We not only are receiving the word of God, but we are actively giving.

We begin asking, how is God calling us to build up the church, to build up one another? Because God wants us to grow, right, like a tree and to produce what?

[38 : 48] Fruit, right? It's a pretty easy one. We think of, if you got an apple tree or an orange tree, apricot, or, you know, you got grapes on the vine, you'd be pretty frustrated if it didn't produce fruit, right?

You might be patient with it, hoping, you know, eventually you're going to produce something. But we think of that kind of imagery. We are designed to produce fruit. What a beautiful image that is when we think of this.

So, remember that image. Can we put that image of Christ as the cornerstone back on? We think about this being built up. We have, we're building up the church and the body and in the process.

As the church is being built, as the body of Christ, as you individually are being built up, not only are we being transformed individually and collectively, but the world can see that.

You want to know how to change culture. Let God transform you. Let God transform all of us. And in so doing, people will see. They will know.

[39 : 55] They will know us by our love, just as the song says. They will know us by the words that we speak and the actions that we do. Being more Christ-like. I don't know about you, but if there's anyone I want to follow, it's Christ.

Because when we think of all these other people, politicians, I'm not going to go too much into this, right? Celebrities. You want to follow them?

I mean, yeah, they're famous or whatever, right? They have policy, whatever it is, but it's nothing compared to what Christ is showing. A much better way for our lives.

And so, belonging matters, and we've got to make a commitment faithfully and relationally. And ask yourself the question, do you see yourself as a part of what God is building up?

reflect on that sometime. And so, in this, let's go to that next slide then. Have that same image.

[40 : 55] Welcome to the household. And how important it is that there is an invitation for you. There is a better way that Christ has for you.

Think of how that, what the text is talking about, no longer being a stranger and no longer being an alien, but becoming a member of the family. We think about this not only in the text, but in our own lives, being received, receiving salvation, being welcomed into the local church.

This is how someone becomes a disciple of Christ. This is how someone is molded and formed, becoming a part of the body and being active in that.

Let God mold you and let us build one another in faith. We all need a place to belong. We all need a place where we can feel safe and secure. And Christ offers us for a way to belong to him and to one another.

And let us respond to that calling. Let us belong to the family of God. And we think about this, belonging is God's gift. It begins with response.

[42 : 09] And I want you to think about this as we close today. You were not meant to do life alone. You were not meant to be separated from people.

You were meant to be connected with a community as well as with the Lord. You were not meant to. You think of that saying that no man is an island, right?

How many of you heard that one before, right? Be a part of something greater than yourself. Receive salvation and grow in him and be transformed and belong to a community that cares about you.

That is called to love one another just as Christ has loved us. And so, Christ has made a place for you.

May you respond and let us belong together. Let's pray together. Father God, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to gather as we have gone over this text in Ephesians about belonging and the importance of this, that you extend an invitation for each and every one of us to respond to salvation, to your calling for our individual lives and to belong in a community of believers that help build up one another.

[43 : 27] May we join together as the body of Christ. May we not be divided. May we not attack one another, but may we seek you as the source of life. May we be molded by you.

May we be transformed so that others can see, to come and see that the Lord is good. May we be a beacon of hope that shines your light, the light of Christ through us so that others can see.

We thank you so much for this time once again. I pray for everyone that is here in this place at this moment as we are broadcasting live, everyone that's in person, everyone that's online, everyone that will watch or listen sometime in the future.

To you be the glory. And it is in the name of Jesus that we pray and we all say together, Amen, church? Amen. Amen. Thank you for joining us for today's message from Ontario Community Church.

Today, we reflected on what it truly means to belong, not as visitors, not as outsiders, but as members of God's household and part of one body united in Christ.

[44 : 45] Ephesians reminds us that through Christ, the dividing walls have been torn down. We are brought near by grace and we are joined together by faith and we are built upon Christ as our foundation.

Belonging, then, is not passive. It is lived out through presence, participation, and partnership, walking alongside one another, bearing burdens together, and growing in Christ not just as an individual, but as a community.

You were never meant to do life alone. You were created for connection, for transformation, and for a faith that is personal, but it is never isolated.

As we move forward together, may you know that your place in the body of Christ, it matters. Your story matters, and your presence matters.

If you'd like to explore today's message further, you can find this sermon as well as other sermons, sermon notes, slides, Bible studies, and additional resources at sermons.ontariocommunitychurch.org.

[45 : 53] You can also connect with us on YouTube, Rumble, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as wherever you listen to your podcasts. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He draw you closer to Him and closer to His people. And may you continue to discover what it means to belong to Christ and to one another.

God bless you and thank you for listening. and thank you for listening.

God bless you.

God bless you.