

Exhortations For A Healthy Church

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[0 : 00] Hello, everyone. How are you? Are you ready to hear the word of God? Well, that's a good combination because I'm ready to teach it! That always works well, doesn't it? Ready to hear it and ready to teach. So let me just pray for our time. Lord, thank you for your good mercy.

And would ask that even in these moments ahead, you would use our time here, that you would be glorified, that Christ would be the center of what is said.

And for the people of God to be edified. If there's someone here, they don't know Christ as their Savior, that their eyes would be opened. We thank you in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Turn with me to Colossians chapter 3.

Colossians 3 is our text for this morning. We're actually going to go into Colossians 3, 1, all the way to chapter 4, verse 6.

That's a large portion of scripture, but I believe that it is relevant to the atmosphere here and the time here.

[1 : 11] And when I say that, I mean in the sense of what is happening here in Squamish and the Squamish Baptist Church and these congregations coming together. And I say that also because I had intended.

I was asked a question a couple of days ago what I was going to preach and initiate was from the book of Isaiah. And I thought, do not fear. And that next morning I got up and I was going over the notes and thinking and praying.

And I thought, no, I think really what's most perhaps relevant is from Colossians because I see these principles in Colossians, these commands and exhortations in the book of Colossians are so relevant for you right now where you are as a people, as a group, as a congregation coming together.

And I've entitled the message, exhortations for a healthy church, exhortations for a healthy church. And we see that in Colossians 3 all the way through chapter 4, verse 6.

And just to lay out the passage for you to know what is happening here, there are some divisions that are very important in these verses.

[2 : 28] In 1 Colossians 3, 1 to 4, we see this great idea of Christ as our supreme example. He is our sufficient Savior.

And Paul is saying you need to look above, look to Christ. Don't look to these false ideas of religion that are here on the earth. Look to Christ because he is absolutely sufficient.

Christ is going to transform your body. Christ is going to be there when he is revealed in glory. And you will forever be with Christ. Isn't that good news? I mean, think about it for a moment.

And then he says now, because of that in verse 5, he says, you should now address the sinfulness of your body. That is the habits that still remain.

That's why you have to put sin to death. So he makes this transition because you should be motivated to put sin to death because you're realizing that I'm looking to heaven.

[3 : 27] I'm looking to Christ. I'm looking to this future. And I want to be more like Christ. And this is what he says in really verses 5 to 11, although he transitions even in there and he says, deal with your sin.

And you put off these things and put on these virtues. And then he makes another transition in verse 12. How should we function in the body?

We see that in verses 12 to 17. You need to have a body that peace is reigning in you. You need to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs so that the word of God is dwelling amongst you.

And then he makes another transition in verse 18. And now he says, well, how are you going to behave at home? What about relationships with husband and wife?

What about children and their parents and parents and their children? And then he goes even further. What about in the workplace? How are you going to work? And that takes you all the way from 318 all the way to chapter 4, verse 1.

[4 : 33] And then he introduces something else. He says in verses 2 to 4 in chapter 4, you should be a praying people. Paul says you should pray for me as well, that I would speak in the way that I should speak.

This is what we see in verses 2 to 4. And he finishes this section, if you will, in chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. And he sent you what he's saying.

Make sure that you behave properly and speak properly to those who are on the outside. And it's just another way of saying to unbelievers. And you say, okay, why such a large passage?

Because as you understand the flow of thought, be motivated by Christ. Address sin in your life. Put off certain things and put on the likeness of Christ.

Make sure in the body that you're behaving the way that you should. And then now that you're healthy in the body, you should take this into your home and have good relationships in your home.

[5 : 36] And take these good relationships in your home into your workplace. You should be some of the better workers that exist. Actually, you should be the best workers that exist when it comes to the workplace.

But then he says, pray for me. Make sure that you're praying people. Don't think that somehow if you've determined what are the good principles for church life or are thinking that somehow if I can just work hard and be diligent, that that's sufficient.

No, you must have a sense of humility where you're praying to the living God and you're asking him for grace. And all of this, I believe the passage kind of hits this apex, if you will.

And what it's saying now that you're properly motivated, now that you have dealt with sin in your life and you're putting on the virtues of faith, now that your body life is what it should be, and now that your home life is what it should be, and as you go to work is what it should be, and now that you're praying people, evangelize.

Go out there into the workplace. Go out there wherever you recreate. Go out there wherever you live and make sure that you're representing Christ in the world. And that brings us back to our very purpose in life.

[6 : 53] So there has to be order when it comes to having a healthy church. And let me give you some key words. These six words that we're going to walk through, if you will, the first is vision.

A people of vision. You have to be that. And we'll notice that in chapter three, one to four. And then you have to also be a passionate people. A passionate people.

And that's chapter three, verses five through 11. And our next word is a virtuous people, because we're going to see that in chapter three, verses 12 to 17, a virtuous people.

You have to be that. And then I think number, the fourth kind of breakdown of this is chapter 3, 18, all the way into 4, 1, a family and working people.

Family life is important. When you go into the world and how you work is important. And then number five would be chapter four, verses two to four, a praying people.

[7 : 56] And then the last one is an evangelistic people. So what are these key words? Vision and passion and virtue and family and work and praying and evangelistic.

So let's dive in to chapter three, verses one to four. A people of vision. Now, when we hear that word vision, sometimes it is used improperly.

People talk about having visions or I have a vision from the Lord. The word itself isn't bad. Context, context, context. So very important in everything we understand.

How is it going to be used? Here, there is a vision that we should have of Christ. Notice what it says. And I'll read verses one to four in chapter three. Therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is.

Seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

[9 : 02] When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. So we have to have a proper vision of Christ to motivate us in this life.

Now, notice what it says. Let me kind of break this down and give you some thoughts here. I think you have to have a lofty view of his person.

You have to have a lofty view of the person of Jesus Christ because then that will motivate you in your life. He is setting an example of moral purity for you and that motivates you.

He set an example of obedience and that should motivate you. Who is Christ? Who is the person of Christ? And notice what it says in verse 4.

He is our life. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, you will be revealed with him in glory. This is looking towards the future.

[10 : 02] Some will experience that glory before he comes again in the rapture. That is, for the believer who dies in Christ, now Christ is revealed to them when they transfer from this life into the next and they hear those wonderful words, well done, that good and faithful, what does it say?

Servant. Our son will be transformed when Christ comes again and we'll be caught up with him in the clouds, him being revealed in glory in that way.

But he says that's something that should cause you to be motivated as you look to the future. And it also should be something that gives you perspective on life.

Why am I here? What am I doing? What is most important in life? Am I fixed on the things beneath or am I fixed on the things above? Notice something else you should motivate on, not only his person, but a lofty view of his authority.

Notice verse 1. What does it say? You have been raised up with Christ. That is, when you came to him, you were raised with him in his life.

[11 : 11] Now, because of that, seek the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. So a lofty view of his authority.

What does this mean? He has absolute authority over all things. He is seated at the right hand of God. It's simply a way of communicating he now, because of his sufficient work and life, because of his resurrection from the dead.

He has defeated death. And now he is seated, seated, if you will, at this place of authority. His father is saying, well done.

And now Christ is there interceding even for us at this place of absolute authority. And so in that sense, we should not even fret in life.

Why should I fret in life when I realize that my Savior is at the place of absolute authority? Something else we should meditate on.

[12 : 10] What vision should we also have? I think we should have a vision of our future. A vision of our future. Notice verses 3 and 4 again.

So, verse 3, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. And again, as I read earlier in verse 4, we're going to be revealed with him in heaven.

But notice the language. Verse 1, we're raised up with him. Verse 3, we have died with him. And then verse 3, our life is hidden with him.

And it's beautiful to say here, hidden. That's sort of the language that we find in Ephesians that the Holy Spirit has sealed us. It's also the language you find in 1 Peter chapter 1.

Our life is reserved in heaven and nothing can change that reservation. It is not possible to be canceled. You know, as I was preparing my trip to come here, I was looking at a couple things.

[13 : 12] For the first couple days, I wasn't in Squamish. I was actually, I just stayed in Richmond because I was going back and forth. I went to Chilliwack for a day, came back, and then I actually had to fly back to Los Angeles for a very important elders meeting.

And I flew back that day and stayed in Richmond. Then I finally came up here. So my reservations kept changing, actually, because initially that elders meeting wasn't slated.

So I thought, oh, I'll go right, I'll fly right in that day. Then I'll go up to Squamish and no, this emergency meeting comes up. So I had a reservation for a rental car. I had a reservation for a hotel room initially.

And I generally always try to get reservations because my life can be complicated sometimes where I can do what to the reservation? Cancel it without penalty. And sometimes they want to sell me at the end in case there's something that happens.

If you pay \$24.99, it will protect your reservation and you can cancel it at any time. And I thought about that. this idea, I went back and forth. I'm not sure how many times with no modifying.

[14 : 20] I'm going to pick up at this time. Now I have to go to L.A. I'll drop off the car here and I'll do this. All these changes in the reservation. Friend, and it may seem to be a trite illustration, but here's the truth behind it.

Nothing can change your reservation that is in heaven. Amen? Nothing. No. And I changed those reservations because I found something that was better, that was more conducive to my schedule.

There's nothing better than what you have. And for the people who have it, they realize that. So they're no longer looking at the things of this world.

They're no longer looking at false religion. They're no longer looking at their self-effort. They're only looking to Christ. So we have to meditate on our future.

You're not going to be transfixed on the things that are temporary. You're fixed on the things that are eternal. And that will affect your life in the family. It will affect your life in the church.

[15 : 25] It will affect your life where you recreate. It will affect your life where you work. So be a people of vision. Look to his authority. Look to his person.

Look to your future. Secondly, it is this. We have to be a passionate people. A passionate people. Look at verse 5. And notice the transition here.

In verse 5, it says, therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil, desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience. And in them, you also notice what he says, once walked when you were living in them.

So this transition is important. But before I even talk about it, notice something else about being earthly. Verse 2, he says what? Look above, set your mind on the things above, so we must make a decision that we're no longer thinking about our former life, and we're no longer thinking about the things of the world, but we're thinking about the things of Christ.

[16 : 36] and he says, these are the things that are where? On the earth. Then notice verse 5, he also says, therefore, consider the members of your earthly body.

So don't be earthly. Be eternal. Think about things that matter. Think about things that last, contributions that have eternal effect.

This is what he's saying you should think. So important. because every vice that we're going to see here in verses, really, 5, and in verses 8 and 9, they will destroy relationships.

They will. The transition is very strong. And what do I mean by that? Go back to verse 5. Therefore. So what is he said? I'm giving you the motivation in verses 1 to 4.

Now, if you really have your mind fixing the things above, there is an action that should represent how serious you are about thinking above.

[17 : 40] What is that action? Now, I'm reading from the New American Standard and it's not the better translation of this part of the verse because it says, therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead.

And if any of you have an ESV, it's going to say you need to put to death the members of your body. And I would prefer that because what Paul is saying is now that you've thought about Christ and you're looking above the Christ and not on the things of the earth, he said you must make a decision to put to death the things that linger in your life.

And what are some of the things that linger? Well, let's notice what he said. Put to death what? These things that would destroy relationships. The things that would make a church unhealthy.

The things that divide churches. The things that harm families. The things that would give you a bad reputation in the workplace. Well, he says them all here.

Verse 5, what does he say? Immorality and impurity and passion and evil desire and greed. And the words are pretty self-explanatory, if you will. All these vices that come down to a passion, if you will, in the center, immorality and purity, greed, evil desire, and the center is passion.

[19 : 00] But I want to use passion in a positive sense. Here, he's saying you have a passion that is worldly, that maybe at times may be lustful. And we should not always think that lusts have to do with something that's sexual.

Lust can be in the sense of you have an appetite to achieve, an appetite to be recognized, an appetite to acquire the things of the world and these things of the world don't matter because they can be taken away in but a moment.

Several people have asked me since I've been here about the fires that hit in the Los Angeles area. Devastated. And that's such a beautiful area in Southern California along the coast.

And my wife and I were out. It was actually an anniversary dinner. We went out. We went over to Malibu. Malibu Beach is a beautiful coastal area in Southern California.

Just full of very stately, beautiful homes and properties and some right on the beach. And there was sort of an irony because we saw there were probably four homes that were right there.

[20 : 08] I mean right on the shore and they were barely the frame of the homes were left. And even one car, and this is months later, one car just incinerated.

It looked as if I could just go up to it and touch the door. It would just crumble. All gone. And there was sort of an irony to it because here are these homes and knowing that area they had to at least go between 10 and 15 million dollars that were right there.

All gone. All their possessions gone. All the memories gone. And the irony of it was this. Here were these homes that went up in flames and countless, countless, countless amounts of water right there.

But it did no good. None. I mean right here on the Pacific Ocean. I mean some of the homes you could walk out your door and it's right here. You're right in the sand and you're right in the water but all incinerated.

The scripture tells us that and Peter that even in this world it's going to be burned up and it's going to be rolled out again. we have to make sure that we're not striving for the things of this world because they won't last.

[21 : 23] They won't matter. The things that matter are what Paul is talking about. Life in the church will matter. Family will matter. Your reputation in the world will matter.

Your influence to witness to people that they might come to Christ will matter. And there are other vices here as well. Notice verses 8 and 9. anger and wrath and malice and slander and abusive speech and lying.

How many of those vices have destroyed churches and relationships? Not speaking truthfully. Slandering other people. Explosive anger. Malice.

Something that is in the heart and that causes relationships to just disintegrate. Just like those homes that were burned and they're unrecognizable. If these vices are not addressed properly, if you're not passionate about striving for Christ, these passions will control you.

And that's what sort of I want to use this play on the words. Paul says here, here are passions that you have, but I'm proposing you should have a passion for Christ to counter this.

[22 : 33] This is what will happen. They will destroy relationship. Here's a third consideration. Go with me to verses five, I'm sorry, verses 12 to 17.

12 to 17. And what does it say? You have to be a virtuous people as well. Virtuous. That's their next word. 12 to 17. Let me read all of it. So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other.

Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks through him to God the Father. So how do we know that we are living the Christian life?

[23 : 54] How do we know that you are in a healthy church and it's a good environment? The test is here in verses 12 to 17. We have to be a virtuous people.

I believe this is what he is communicating in this text. And let's take it apart just ever so briefly. Notice what he says. Again, another transition.

Three, one to four. Look to Jesus Christ and think about things that are eternal. Realize that your hope is secure. Then in five through 11, address sin in your life. Take off certain things and put on Christ is what he's saying.

And then in verse 12, he says, so, notice verse 11, he says, but Christ is all in all. He is sufficient in everything.

So in view of that, he says, you are a what sort of people? You are a chosen people. So now the motivation is this. Behave according to your calling.

[24 : 55] Behave according to your calling. You are chosen of God, holy and beloved. And since you are holy and beloved, behave accordingly. What's going to motivate you to behave accordingly?

Jesus Christ will. And what should you put on that's going to counter some of these vices that he's talked about? Compassion. That is a heart for people. You have pity for them.

Kindness. You do things that are practical for people. Humility. You see yourself properly. You don't think more than yourself than you should. Gentleness.

That is you can operate with someone with a soft touch. Patience. That is your long bearing with individuals. Thirteen, it says bearing with one another.

And why is the word here bearing with one another? It's a very interesting word here. Some translations will even say tolerating one another. Because when we hear the word tolerate, that can sort of maybe have a sort of negative connotation and say, okay, I'll tolerate it.

[25 : 59] Is it what you're saying? Like us, some of us had to tolerate a golf game the other day because it wasn't going very well. So you can tolerate it. But the word is saying you bear with the person.

And what Paul is, the implication is this. Listen to me for a moment here. The implication is this. Sometimes in the church there will be difficult people. Did you know that? Now some of you are like, no, that's just difficult people in the church.

That doesn't exist, does it? That's out there in the world. No, by no means it is people in the church. This is why Paul has to write certain letters to address certain issues because difficult people will be in the church.

So he's saying you must learn to bear with them. Why should you learn to bear with them? What did God do with you? Hmm.

Were you this prized possession that God realized that, oh, I must have them. They must be my child. I must save them.

[27 : 01] No, not at all. All we were like sheep that have gone astray. Do you agree with that? All of us were. All of us, according to Romans chapter 5, we were godless and ungodly and we were helpless and we were enemies of God.

So God did bear with us and so now we have the privilege to bear with other people is what he's saying. And if you bear with other people, what else would you do if you want to have a healthy church and family and good reputation in the workplace and in the world?

Notice verse 13. Forgiving each other. People will hurt you. They will offend you. They will do something that disappoints you.

And you have to be willing to forgive. And notice again the motivation. The motivation again is Christ. Just as the Lord forgave you, so you should do.

We started with Christ as a motivation and here is motivation again. We forgive just as the Lord forgave us. And in fact, if we were to pause right now and take a moment and say, well, how much has the Lord forgiven me?

[28 : 09] How many times has the Lord forgiven me? If we were to pause now and if we were to have the raising of hands and say, how often has the Lord Jesus Christ forgiven you?

Who would care to give us a number? What would that number be? Oh, yeah. Did I hear 100,000 out there? Hundreds of times, has it not?

Thousands of times over the course of our life. And sometimes, even the course of a day, Lord, forgive me. And it's not always for an action.

It's for a thought. I thought something that I should not have thought. Forgive me. I have an attitude that I should not have. Forgive me. I've acted now on that thought and that attitude and I acted on it.

How? I cannot believe I acted on it. Will you forgive me? And it's not just sinful actions that we seek forgiveness for. Sometimes, we must seek forgiveness because we have omitted the things that we should do.

[29 : 13] I've not spent time with you. Forgive me. I've not prioritized my Christian life. Forgive me. I've looked too much on the things that are on the earth and not on the things that are above.

I've fixed myself too much on the temporary and have not thought enough of the things that are eternal. Forgive me. And we come before the Lord. And when we come with sincerity and a broken heart and as Psalm 51 would say when we come with a contrite spirit, what does he do?

He forgives. And that's the beauty of the Christian life. That is indeed the beauty of it. So we have to be a virtuous people. But notice what else he says.

Notice verse 14. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. So we ask ourselves a question when he says beyond all things, what things?

I believe what he's communicating here is what he just said in 12 and 13. Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing, forgiving. Beyond all of it, put on love.

[30 : 20] Why does he say put on love? Because the scripture would tell us in 1 Corinthians 13, yes, there's love is superior to all. And why does he use the language here the perfect bond of unity?

He's saying if you can love, this will bring all these other virtues together. If you want to be a unified body, learn to love one another. And when you learn to love one another, you will absolutely show compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience.

And you will bear with people and you will forgive. It's impossible. Let's just make it, I'll state it very basically. It is impossible to say that you love and then not forgive.

Yes, I love you, but I have no patience for you. Yes, I love you, but I am really tired of you. I can bear with you no longer. No, I love you, but my heart doesn't go out to you.

I have no compassion for you. Yes, I love you. No, I'm not going to show you any acts of kindness. I will be indifferent to you. Not possible. We all agree with that.

[31 : 31] Do we not? And this is why Paul says it's the perfect bond of unity. Yes, put on these things, but friends, it must be love. This will spur you on.

This will give you a body that's healthy, a family that's healthy, a workplace where you have a good reputation. You'll go into the world and people see that something's different about you.

One of the greatest testimonies we should all have is when we don't let someone know that we're Christian and we don't wear logos and things like that. I'm not saying anything's wrong with it.

And then as you go through life and people observe you in life and especially when they observe you in difficult moments of life and they come to you and say, I knew there was, it makes sense that you're a Christian.

I saw something that was different in you. You behaved differently. You dealt with issues differently. Yeah. That's a great testimony.

[32 : 37] So he goes on to say some other things here. Notice verse 15. He says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called into one body and be thankful.

What's important about verse 15 in this whole section, sometimes people have taken this to mean that this is an individual statement. Paul is writing to individuals saying, okay, individually put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing, and forgiving.

It's a yes and no statement. What do I mean by that? He is writing to the church. This is a corporate statement. He's saying, as a body, this is how you should behave.

So in the body, put on love as a people. And then when he says in verse 15, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. And he's not talking about here like the peace that we gain from say, for instance, in Isaiah 26 and 3 when it says the mind who has stayed on God, he will keep in perfect peace.

That is a truth. But what he's saying here in the body of Christ, since there's potential for conflict, he's saying, you should be a people who let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

[33 : 50] That is, as a body, Christ is going to be the arbitrator. And this is what the word here really means when it says rule in your hearts. The word can even mean to be an umpire.

An umpire in the sense who's going to make the call. Was that a strike or was that not? Was that a foul play or was it in play? And he's saying, Christ is the one, if you will let his peace rule in you, he will decide that for you in the body of Christ.

And then he goes on to say, notice verse 16 and 17. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. Again, look at context. Is it true we should memorize the scripture to let it dwell in our hearts?

Absolutely true. Should we recite it? Absolutely true. Should we listen to it? Absolutely true. And it should dwell in our hearts. But here, again, it's addressed through the body. Let it dwell within you.

And notice the way in which it occurs. It's not even right here so much even from preaching or from memorization or from programs. Interesting enough, he's saying, with all wisdom and teaching and admonishing one another with, notice what he says, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

[35 : 08] This is a statement really here about one's approach in the church when it comes to worship music. It's saying, your worship music should help you, I can say it this way, nurture the word of God.

You're hearing thoughts that are biblical thoughts. It's reinforcing biblical thoughts. And even some of the songs are just biblical songs. It's psalms that you're singing to the Lord.

It's spiritual songs that are being sung to the Lord. And in context, this idea of spiritual songs, most likely what Paul is referring to because culturally the early church, the people of God as they were thinking about heaven and life and at times being persecuted, they would just start singing a song to the Lord.

And that song became something that caught on in the church. In the States, we have something that's called spirituals. And those spirituals are songs that were just created by people that were going through hardship and they would start to sing those songs and they became a part of the life of the church.

And what he's saying here, if we're thinking rightly about God, those songs will be spiritual songs. Sing them to one another. That's why music that is without real content and substance has no place in the church.

[36 : 34] There are some songs that may rile one up, but they don't stimulate the mind. At my former church, there was a time, it was wonderful.

We had a bunch of young people that came into the church all of a sudden and great and they had some talents and a number of them had some musical talents and they occupied a space in the praise band and there was one song that they did that I had to make an executive decision as the pastor said, we will not sing that song again.

It was lively, it had a beat to it, there was sort of people where, you know, had this motion in the church as we would sing it. I'm saying, it's saying nothing though! It's saying nothing!

It's the same thing repeated over and over again. It's not stimulating me to think about God. It's not stimulating me to think about Scripture. It's not stimulating me to think about theological things.

And I said, that's the end of it. Sing it no more. And we replaced it with something else that made us think about things that are biblical.

[37 : 45] There's a lot of that today, I think you would agree with that. But we have to fulfill what Paul is saying here to be a healthy church and we sing things that stimulate us in our walk with the Lord.

So what else do we need to see? Number four is this. Two, three more to go. Number four, we have to be a family and working people. A family and working people. Let me just go through them briefly.

What do I mean by that? This takes us all the way from 18, verse 18 to 4. 1. Wives, submit to your husbands. It's fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives.

Don't be embittered. And it's what's interesting here, the order, I think, makes a difference because here he begins with wives and not with husbands. And perhaps he begins with wives because it's going to be more difficult for them, especially writing to them culturally.

It's going to be more difficult for you to take on this role and do it unto the Lord. We're not talking about a silent submission. We're talking about something that can be done to the Lord and you see it as a calling.

[38 : 53] And then notice what he says in verse 19. Husbands, love your wives. Such a tall order, such seemingly an impossible task because the person that sets the example for us is the Lord Jesus Christ.

But nonetheless, we still strive for it. But notice what he says in verse 19. And don't be embittered against them. So here, Paul is being very realistic.

Just like earlier, he's saying you have to bear with certain people and you have to tolerate them, not in this negative sense that, okay, I'll put up with you, but yes, let me bear with them. Let me be patient.

And here he says, I've heard either he, just by his own experience, or actually hearing reports, he's saying some of you husbands have become embittered towards your wives.

Unacceptable. Address the issues of your heart. And this is why he said back in verse 5, you need to put that to death. Now the same can be true. He could easily have said, and some of you wives have heard, some of you are embittered towards your husband because they're not doing the things that they should do.

[39 : 59] They're not leading in the way that they should. Guard your heart is what he is saying. Verse 20, children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

And it's also this command that has a promise that your life will be blessed. Fathers, don't exasperate your children so that they will lose heart. But of course, what do we do?

According to Ephesians, we rear them in the admonition and fear of the Lord. We set an example for them. And fathering isn't just instruction in a way that's programmed.

It's living a life with them. It's enjoying life with them. It's spending life with them. We have five adult kids and they range now from 30 to 22 and two grandkids now.

And I think about this new phase in life and now being able to give some input to grandkids and spending time with them and even our adult kids. And sometimes now there's a text message that comes through and say, hey, dad, what do you think about this?

[41 : 03] And I'm enjoying it for even my boys at now 29. They're still asking for advice. A relationship that are there are the times that Joanna is getting a phone call from another kid and there's one that she's been talking to a lot recently because of relationship issues.

And he thought this was the one and it wasn't the one. And now walking them through that as a parent because you have relationship.

So it says, don't exasperate them. And notice what it says. Fathers don't exasperate. It doesn't say mothers don't exasperate. Why? Because the tendency, not always the case, the tendency is dads are going to be the ones that are doing what?

Pushing. Dads are going to be the ones that are saying, what's your last name, son? Behave like it. Dads are the ones that are pushing a little bit more.

Behave like a man. Be a man. Now I'm not saying you shouldn't say these things. Let's not misunderstand me. I've said it to all, well, all my boys, I've said be a man. Absolutely.

[42 : 10] Because we sometimes need more of that. Behave like a man. Play the man. That's thoroughly biblical. First Corinthians 16, 13. Because it says you're supposed to act like men.

This is what Paul says to the church. But it can get to the point where it's exasperate. It's tiring. Because now, it's not that you're pushing them in a way that's godly in biblical principles.

You're pushing them based on your preferences and your desires and that becomes exasperate. And you're also pushing them in a way that's not charitable.

When God was charitable with you. And so now you're showing no charity. You're not showing compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience and bearing and forgiving.

It must take place. So then he goes on to talk about workers and how they should behave. And even those that are the employers or the masters and how they should behave.

[43 : 11] Realizing that they have a master. That should motivate them to behave properly. Now, here's a next consideration. You have to be a praying people.

Number four. A praying people. Notice verse two. A praying people. Devote yourselves to prayer. Keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

Praying at the same time for all of us that God will open for us a door for the word so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ for which I have also been in prison.

That I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. So here is this call to prayer. The word devoted. You really in one sense can't improve upon it.

The word is intense. It means that one is intensely committed to. It means that you're fixed upon. It's what it's saying.

[44 : 07] That you must be devoted to prayer. The question is the biblical church began with two things and it was the word and it was prayer. And the question for us then is will we continue that attitude and even the principles of the early church and that we say the word of God preach matters but prayer surely matters too.

Now I come from my training at the Master's Seminary expository preaching expository preaching. The reputation of Grace Community Church preaching expository preaching.

But we must be careful even there and here in any church that wants to be a healthy church that it's also a praying church filled with praying people. And we have to be careful that sometimes I hear it said well they were a person of prayer as if this is this other category.

I'm not really a person of prayer they're a person of prayer. No, everyone should be a person of prayer. We should all see the privilege that you can go before your Heavenly Father and you can cry to Him on behalf of your church and your family and your friends and your co-workers and those who do not know the Lord.

We should see the privilege that we can have because we were people who were once enemies of Christ and ungodly and separated from Christ and we walked in the futility of our mind and now we can cry to the living God what a privilege let me be devoted to prayer to be persistent in prayer.

[45 : 44] And he says keeping alert in it alert in what way realizing what's around you where society is changing what those needs are what the needs are even in the body of Christ and be a praying person.

And Paul asked for prayer because he said pray for me that God would open up opportunities for the word to go forth pray for me that I would speak boldly as he says in Ephesians 6 and here he simply says that I would speak as I ought to speak.

Pray for your elders pray for your leaders pray for your pastors that they would be men who are committed to this and remain committed to these principles of praying people.

I was just ordering a book last night last night on Audible by Leonard Ravenhill and he wrote a book and it's entitled Why Revival Tarries?

In that book he is questioning why is the church not revived? And in part what he's saying the central part of his thesis is revival tarries in the church because people think too much about this earth and not heaven revival tarries because people invest too much here and they don't invest time in prayer.

[46 : 58] You won't find any revival in all of history that took place without a praying people and sometimes it was a praying people that started in a little pocket of a little area it's just this small church and those people began to pray and it was like a fire that was lit that was going through a forest but it began with prayer.

Here's our last thought you have to be an evangelistic people and this is where it all leads all of this is leading to this point in verses 5 and 6 conduct yourselves with wisdom towards outsiders making the most of the opportunity let your speech always be with grace as though season with salt so that you will know how you should respond to each person everything leads to this how are you going to behave with those in the world outside the world we see the moral collapse around us and what's happening in the world it's evident we see confusion about the family we see confusion about gender a what I'll call it a recategorizing and even defining of God himself but remember that's our mission field these people without Christ and they need Christ so Paul ends this section before he just sort of gives these final greetings here your speech has to be seasoned properly with salt why does he say that because salt is a preservative it adds flavor to it how can your words be that way by living out all of these virtues that are before you

I was sharing with the leadership team some stats that have been on my mind so much because I just spoke at a convention and my topic was Jesus Christ the ultimate evangelist and I shared with them in these three sessions I kept going back to these stats and I leave them with you why are you here Squamish Baptist Church well I mean why are you here what is your purpose why do you exist why are you here on this very corner what is the Lord calling you to do how are you supposed to be this city set on a hill how are you supposed to be the light in the world why should you be this light in the world sometimes people think well we're here because we gather and we fulfill all of these things that you're saying here and it creates this environment and that environment is edifying and I feel encouraged and I feel instructed and I learn so much the learning and the encouragement and everything that you gain from here is meant so that you can be prepared to go into the world not stay here here are the stats so every second in the world statistically every second 1,000 1.8 people pass into eternity we call it two people so every minute and I've had my little watch here I've been at 49 minutes every minute 107 people pass into eternity around the world every hour and it's going to be we're almost coming up in the hour

I'm almost at 50 minutes and I won't be here another 10 so rest assured but every hour 6,400 people pass into eternity 6,400 so generally every time you hear a sermon for the most part thereabouts 5,500 to maybe even 7,000 people going to eternity every time you hear a sermon and then in a given day in a given day 24 hour cycle 154,000 people going to eternity 154,000 so we start this day at 6 a.m.

and perhaps we wake up tomorrow at 6 a.m. think about that 154,000 people went into eternity okay we come here next week one week goes by a week goes by a million about a million 78,000 people going to eternity so from Sunday to Sunday you think about what did I do between this Sunday and the next what did I do that will affect eternity what did I do that perhaps of that 1,078,000 people that will go into eternity did I sow a seed in someone's heart did I speak to someone was my were my words seasoned what saw did I give an account for the hope that is within me in a given year from birthday to birthday 54 million people die and go into eternity think about that yeah we write it 50 minutes right now so about 6,000 people and the

[52 : 26] Bible says clearly there are two roads we know the two do we not there's a broad road and there is a what road narrow road few that find this few and God is calling you to go out there and speak to those few if you want to be a healthy church I think these are the things that you have to follow and at the end if you really want to be a healthy church there has to be some passion that says I'm going to make a difference in whatever my contribution is so that somehow my life can matter that as Jews says we're snatching some out of the fire of eternal separation from God father we thank you for these words you give us pray that they would encourage our hearts spur us on in our faith and that Christ will be honored