

A New Me, A New Us

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[0 : 0 0] be seated. As you all know, we are in the book of Ephesians, so please turn with me to Ephesians chapter 2. If you are new or visiting, welcome. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here at Squamish Baptist Church. We have been doing an expository series on the book of Ephesians. So I'm going to do something a little bit different that I usually don't do, but we're going to read the text ahead of time.

It's kind of set up in a different way this week, but I pray that you'll stick with me through it all. So we're starting in Ephesians chapter 2, beginning in verse 11, and I will be preaching to the end of the chapter. Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision which is made in the flesh by hands. Remember that you were at the time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so that making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

And he came and he preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to one spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. You might not know, but one of the interests I do have is World War II. I enjoy watching just about any documentary, war movie kind of study. In fact, I was so involved in World War II that I actually thought about doing my masters in World War II actually.

So just this past week I'm watching this video on World War II. It's an A&E; special. And one of the things that I like to study about the world is just how the world thought the effects that that thinking that happened so long ago affects us today. It's kind of a geopolitical what's going on, how we think, how we interact with one another and the effects that this war had on us. And one of the interesting things that came up is the study of the Burma campaign. A lot of people don't know about the Burma campaign. Burma campaign was actually a battle fought southeast of India, what is now called Myanmar. And what happens is the Japanese were trying to take the port so they could go into India and come over to China and therefore rule that part of the world. It was a very ugly war. It was in the middle of the jungles and it was a very destructive war. But what was really interesting during watching this video was an interview with one of the commanding generals. And one of the questions asked to him was, what is the most difficult thing about this battle that you're fighting?

Now, if you know anything about the history, it is a very thick, dense jungle. In fact, half the casualties both for the Allied army was through disease. Simply half of the men wiped out through various diseases. There was famine. They couldn't always get food that killed off a lot of the soldiers.

[4 : 43] It actually rained half the year. And it's actually in a part of the world, there's very little infrastructure. So in order to get tanks and planes in there, they had to build airfields.

They had to cross big rivers. So that's what you're kind of thinking. That's what he's going to talk about. So they get to the guy and the guy goes, what do you mean what is the most difficult thing? I'm fighting an enemy that has one language with one objective. I actually have over 16 countries fighting on my side that actually speak over 30 different languages and there's over a dozen different religions. It's kind of interesting. This is the most difficult part of my job is how do I keep all these people focused on the one point, the one objective.

We are now bridging a part of Ephesians where that is the same question that Paul has on his mind as he's coming to this idea of building up this New Testament church. How do I get all these people in this church of Ephesus, there's false religions all around, different backgrounds, different cultures.

How do I bring them together with the point of not only following Jesus, hearing him as his savior. If you've been with us, first chapter one is about salvation. How God interjected himself into our society, how he saves us.

The first part of chapter two is the man's point of view of salvation. And now that we've got all that kind of salvation part figured out, how do all these individuals who've been saved now come together.

[6 : 39] The mission of Jesus Christ is quite simple. In Mark chapter 115, Jesus Christ simply said he was here to declare the kingdom of God and to preach repentance and for people to follow him.

Jesus Christ had a similar mission. He had to take 12 men, train them, prepare them. He worked with them for three years to prepare them to take the message that Jesus Christ had out to the world. Those apostles, as they built in new people, they started creating the church. What we see today is this church they were all to teach what Jesus had taught. They were to baptize each other and to keep his commandments. It's easier said than done. Jesus himself had to constantly struggle with the unbelief, the fears, struggles, and questions that the apostles had. Often they even fought amongst themselves to who would have first standing. In fact, as we get out of the gospels, we come into the book of Acts, which is a description of the early church and how the gospel spread throughout the old world and the new world to the east. The first half primarily deals with Peter and the second half deals with Paul primarily. It is a fantastic book that Luke tells us about both the struggles and blessings that the early church had. Now I want you to jump ahead of me to go to chapter 4 of Ephesians. We're going to look at one of the main goals that Paul is going to be teaching the people starting at verse 11. Chapter 4, verse 11, it says, and he being Jesus gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. It is here Paul is letting us know what his game plan is.

God gave the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers to equip this church. Now this equipping is to lead up to the building of the body and the end goal is so that we would end up being mature and presented to God himself. Notice the words, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

A few takeaways I want us to keep in mind for this. One, maturity in Christ comes from being a part of the church.

Do you know that? Maturity in Christ comes from being a part of the church. Nowhere is maturity stated anywhere in scripture that it's just about knowledge. Doesn't teach that anywhere in the Bible that you can gain maturity just by knowing your Bible. It's actually a combination of taking the Bible through who God's given us, apostles, preachers, shepherds and teachers to teach us God's word, but maturity is a product of living out God's commands in the context of other believers.

[10:37] The church has the primary role in the unfolding of God's plan. Amen? Without the church, God's plan doesn't move forward. This is his design. It is the means and the method that God uses to reach others for Christ. This was established in the very beginning and the church has been charged to carry on from what the prophets learned and what they learned from Jesus Christ.

And we're going to get into more of that next week, but I want you to keep this in mind. What Paul is now describing for this group in the church of Ephesus is this mystery. Okay, and this is foundational introductory stuff that we're getting in here if we really want to understand this text.

There was a mystery that existed and Paul is now unfolding this mystery that it's a church. Now get this. This church is made up of Jews and non-Jews. There's only two types of people in the world.

Jews and non-Jews. Often we see the word Gentile used in its place. All right, so from the first part, chapter two, we understood we were dead. God loved us. God made us alive in him. If you look back at verse 11, it says, we are his workmanship, or as we learned last week, his creation in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. God has a purpose for you.

God has a purpose for those who are saved. You are now being part of something that God is building.

[12:35] You Jew and you Gentile are now coming together, being a church. No big deal, right? Okay, to a person in Ephesus hearing this word, it's like, you're crazy, Paul. Do you not understand? I hate the Jews.

Then the Jews over here goes, I hate the Gentiles. You have these two factions. In fact, you had Greeks hated everybody. Rome hated everybody so much that they just figured they're just going to conquer your whole country and make you Roman, right? So what Paul is talking about is not just getting, hey, let's get you guys together. Let's talk about my vision for a church, and we're going to form a church. It's not like that what Paul is having to deal with here in Ephesus. There is racial barriers.

There's economic barriers. There's social barriers. There's those who are slaves, those who are free. Hey, we're all going to come together, and we are going to be a part of this building that Jesus Christ is putting together. How great was the hatred? There was actually a Jew saying that if you were actually forbidden to help a Gentile woman give birth to a child because that meant another heathen was coming into the world. God's plan before Jesus was he demonstrated himself, showed himself through the Jews, right? Through Israel. That was the first stated plan. And if you were going to be a part of God's people, it meant, guess what? You became Jewish, all right? You had to become part of the people first, then you could worship God, all right? Had to become that person first, then you could worship. So this is the context that's going on. And how hard is this mission going to be? If you remember Jesus Christ, high priestly prayer in John 17 in the Garden of Gethsemane, before he is to sacrifice, be the sacrifice for our sins on the cross, he prays for unity not once, not twice, but three times.

He understands that there is going to be a major, major upheaval in the world with his gospel. And he needs those who are saved in Jesus Christ to be united. We know that God has always worked through his people, right? From Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the creation of his people Israel.

But now the plan is looking a lot differently. So you're going to notice in this text, from 11 to 22, there's actually three primary sections. The bulk of this sermon is going to be on the third section.

[15 : 47] And the reason why is Dave actually preached this section last year, from 11 up to 18. So I don't want to be repetitive on it, but that sermon is found on our website. So I'm not going to go into the great depth on those first verses, but I'm going to kind of give you just a little bit of an overview to help us understand where we're going from verses 19 to 22. You guys tracking with me on that?

Yeah, all right. All right. So we're going to read over the verses again. I'm just going to make some comments to keep you guys coming with the flow. So verse 11, therefore, okay, he's starting off because of your salvation. Now that we know that we are his workmanship, that there's a purpose for us. God's saved us for something. Therefore, remember when he's using that word, remember, he wants you to think back on a time, not just to any type of memory, but I want you to dwell on this thought where you once were. And this is where he's calling them out. Remember that at one time, you Gentiles, the flesh, that's not a compliment, right? Called the uncircumcision, because that's how they were regarded by the Jews, by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by the flesh by hands. Remember that you are at that time separated from God, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without

God in the world. He's asking them to actively look back at who they once were.

As I said, salvation was only found through Israel, meant that you had to become one of the people. You would be circumcised and you followed the law. It's really interesting. There's two stories, two well-known stories in the Old Testament about two people coming under, remember the story of Ruth and Naomi. Ruth actually says in the book of Ruth, I'm going to become your people and then my God.

She actually uses a very specific order. It's not, I'm going to follow your God and become your people. She actually says, I'm going to become your people first and then I can worship your God.

[18 : 22] Another interesting story is the story of Naaman. You remember Naaman was the Syrian war general and he had leprosy and he had to go see the prophet to get cleaned up. Later he understands that Israel's God is the only true God. He actually takes up that earth and brings it back to Syria and that's where he worships. He's on that land that he brought from Israel to Syria. Again, you needed something from Israel in order to do that worship. And as Gentiles, they were one, separated from God. Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, no hope and without God. Think of what a horrible place that is. We know that the Bible teaches that man has knowledge of God, right? We've learned that. Romans 1 talks about that. Acts 17 talks about that.

Psalms 19 talks about that. With our eyes, we can see the majesty and the revelation that God has created through this world. So here you are as this person, you're acknowledging there's this God that you know is great, that's created this. You're a Gentile, you've had kids, you know even the procreation process. All these things are really amazing. But you sit there, how do I worship this God?

Right? So you might be an artist, you might paint a picture, get a piece of rock and make a stone. Or maybe you're good at wood carving. Or you'll see the sun. Maybe it's the sun that gives these powers.

So all of a sudden you're doing all this false worship, desperately trying to give homage to this God because you know how you've lived. It says that the conscience works against you.

So you know somehow, somewhere you've offended this God. So you're going through life trying to make amends with this God, really in just some made up system. Think of what a horrible and hopeless situation it is. As religious as you are, there's no certainty. You're just really hoping, gambling, gambling that what you're doing is the one way to please God. Your whole life is one big chance.

[21 : 05] That's a horrible existence to be in. That was you, Gentile. That's what Paul's saying. That's where you were. But notice verse 13. Our favorite word, right? But. But now.

In Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen?

We know that story. Some of you know very well in your old lives how far you were from God. Then when you first heard that gospel, it was like fast forwarding your whole life to that one moment.

And now you're right near him. He's your God. No more guessing. No more hopelessness. No more agonizing. So it says in verse 14, For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one.

Now he's talking about us. He's talking about I, the Jew, and you, the Gentile. And has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law and commandments expressed in ordinances that he might create in himself one new man in place of two.

[22 : 28] So making peace, he might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And oh yeah, you Jews, you knew God. You had the law. And guess what the law did?

Just showed you how far you were from God. These Gentiles, they didn't even know it. They're just guessing, wandering in the woods. You guys had that information. And that law revealed how desperately far you were from him.

But God did something. He's talking about both. So it's not like, Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. We got it good and you're bad. No, no. We were both done. But God did something.

Verse 17, Jews kind of close. Gentiles far away. And now they're brought together.

For through him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father. This wall that he's talking about, and Dave speaks, that's the primary point of his sermon.

[23 : 35] But in the Jewish temple, there was the wall of a Gentile, which was about five feet high. And that's as far as the Gentiles could go in the temple. To go over that wall meant death.

But the other purpose of that wall is so you could watch what was going on in that church, that religious setting. It wasn't a church, but a temple setting.

So that you would be drawn to it and that you would want to worship as they did. So that's where we are, right? That was called the Gentile court.

So it says here that God made our peace. That God breaks down those walls forever. And his goal is to create one man in place of the Jew and the non-Jew.

So what now? What are the consequences of this wall being torn down? What are the consequences of this reconciliation process happening?

[24 : 42] What are the consequences of having access to the Father? And that's what Paul answers for us in verse 19. 1.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. That's a great passage, is it not?

For those who are far and there is near, God is going to do something amazing. In fact, through those first sections of Ephesians, which laid out salvation, now that you're saved, now that you have access to God, there's now an us.

It's not just me, and it's a tender word. You are now part of the household of God. You know, a lot of people talk about, well, it's God's kingdom, and there's a lot of different understandings of what God's kingdom is.

[26 : 09] But you guys have heard me use this definition before. God's kingdom is the place where God rules. It is the place where righteousness, peace, and joy reign.

For us, it's in our lives, but as we come together, it's supposed to live amongst us as well. This is big.

Rome ruled by force. They did meet out. They kept the peace. They dispensed justice. But it didn't mean there was unity.

There was still rich, poor, free, and slave, man and woman, Jew and Gentile. There was still separations. But in Jesus Christ, in God's kingdom, all those are dissolved.

Everything changes for us. Not only do we have a new father, but we have brothers and sisters of the faith who share in that same love that God has for us.

[27 : 15] Amen? Amen? That's what joins us, guys. The same love that God has for me is the same perfect love that he has for you.

That's what unites us. That's what brings us from different cultures, different countries, different languages, different sexes, all together. It's something that we are completely united in.

We have privileges. And one of them now is that we're not separated from God by a wall or a big building or a big curtain in that building.

We are now invited into the most intimate place of the Father. And our privilege is to worship him.

That's the same privilege that we're doing right now together. We get to come together and worship him.

[28 : 16] What's even more interesting, the New Testament makes no distinction about being a part of God's family, whether you are born again or adopted.

Isn't that great? Great imagery. Once God says, I claim you, you are claimed forever, and I have an everlasting love for you.

And once you're in my family, there are certain rights and privileges. I don't know. I know some of you guys don't have full Canadian citizenship here, right?

You guys know it's a little bit of a pain in the butt, right? I should not say that word in that context. Sorry, guys. It's a pain. I know. I lived in the States for seven years. There was always problems with banking situations, taxes.

I couldn't get a loan to buy a condo. There was just a whole bunch of different struggles not being a citizen of that country. It's restrictive.

[29 : 21] But here, what he's talking about is you are no longer aliens. You no longer need to experience that. As a member of the church, we have oversight.

We have the combined wisdom of together. We have fellowship. We have prayers. We baptize each other. We celebrate God through the Lord's Supper. Now notice God calls us something.

Holy temple. He is calling us a dwelling place of the Spirit of God.

That's not something to take lightly. So today, I just want to share with you three characteristics of this temple and why it affects us so.

The first quality of a holy temple, a temple has to have the right foundation, right? Like any building, look at verse 20. Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

[30 : 27] Any builder will tell you, you got to get your foundation right. There's this family that I know, they actually built their perfect dream house.

And I remember going over to the house and they have a dog. And what was really curious about being in their house, all the dog balls are down at one corner of the house. You just have to drop the ball and it will make its way to the corner of the house, right?

You know, several hundred thousand dollars later, they had to re-tear out that part, dig back under and reinforce the foundation again. They had a poor foundation. It was cracking their house in two.

That's not a stable building. So what we're here is we need to have a foundation. And that foundation, notice the order it's talking about.

It's talking about the foundation built on the apostles and prophets. Now I know a lot of us are thinking about Matthew and he's talking about Jesus Christ being our foundation.

[31 : 32] That is the same thing what's going on here is the apostles and the prophets are taking Jesus' teachings to the church.

So the proper foundation is God's word, amen? It's being the people of God's word. We want to obey God. It's the no-brainer part.

Now notice when it says prophet, it's not actually talking about Old Testament prophet, but in that time before we had the completed Bible, there was men appointed by God to teach God's truth with help, which helped in the growth of the church.

So as the apostles spread the gospel, other godly men and women were raised who taught, which built up the church in different ways.

The reality is a church will crumble if it doesn't do this right. I've known two churches in my short lifespan who were, I would call them, pretty sizable churches, between 600 and 1,000 people, who've absolutely collapsed in less than two to three years because they decided to go a different philosophy.

[32 : 49] They decided to adopt the way that, you know what, we want to get more young people in here, we're going to kind of put the Bible secondary, we're going to teach a little about man's philosophy, we're going to teach you how to have a really good marriage, we're going to bring in some different things like that.

Hey, it's not bad to teach about God's marriage using God's principles, but we're going to bring in some secular wisdom, we're going to entertain you. And it's interesting, because I remember being at that church and only 30 people were left after being 600 people.

They decided to fire their pastor and bring in a new one, all under the guise of, we want to attract new blood. It didn't work. The reality is we need to understand is not every well-intentioned thought is God's truth.

So what Paul's saying here is unity needs to be based on sound biblical doctrine. Have a statement of faith that you believe in.

Unity needs to be built on the revealed word of God. So that's the first aspect that a healthy church is to be built on. Number two, notice it says verse 20, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

[34 : 05] Do you guys know what the cornerstone means? Back in, there was actually an incredible documentary. I was watching, my dad sent it to me. It's actually the building of the pyramid, the great pyramid.

And everything in that pyramid is based off one stone. Have any of you guys seen the pyramids? You've seen pictures of the pyramids, right?

This is a massive building. And everything, they were just talking about how the scientists are blown away by how the builders got this cornerstone so perfect.

Because what happens is you place the first stone, you take the second stone, you match it up. Sometimes we think I'm gonna take this other stone and I'm gonna match it next to that second stone, right?

Then my third stone. But next thing you think you're going in a straight line, right? All of a sudden you got this curve. The whole idea is to build, to match up every stone that you have perfectly with the cornerstone.

[35 : 10] And that's what we have in Jesus Christ being the example of our lives. That is who we measure our teaching and our lives are compared to. Isaiah 28, 16 says, Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am the one who has laid a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation.

It's great how Jesus Christ was prophesied centuries before. Psalm 118, 22 says, The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

So that all-important stone, every decision that we have to make, we take it through Scripture, but we have to bring it in the context of the gospel and the message of Jesus Christ.

And the third part of our building, this holy temple, notice verse 22. In him you also are being built together.

The third aspect that Jesus Christ uses to build stones, or temples, is living stones. Guess who the living stones are?

[36 : 36] Us. We are the living stones. God builds a foundation, a cornerstone, then he uses us. 1 Peter 2, 5 says, As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

That's amazing. That God uses us, people who were so far, so lost, so hopeless, that he actually uses us to build this building, which is utterly for his worship.

There's six things to know about us as stones. One, we are chosen and shaped by God. You know that? God is the one who chooses us. God's the one who shapes us. He is the ultimate architect.

Who you are is by no accident. Who you are, just in this body of believers, this temple he's building up, both universal and local church, you've been chosen for a reason.

The second aspect is you're placed in a relationship with Jesus Christ. You cannot attach yourself to the cornerstone if you do not know Jesus. Amen?

[38 : 03] That's why Paul, I said last week, if you don't get the salvation part of Ephesians, all this other stuff is just going to be gobbledygook to you. You need to get that.

Three, these stones are all of different shapes and sizes, right? We all look different, we all act different, and God has different functions for each other.

not everyone can do the same thing. So God has, through his ultimate providence, creates different stones of different shapes and sizes.

The fourth aspect of living stones is that we have to be linked to one another. The stone, on its own, in a yard, doesn't glorify God.

The stone, built here, put together, with other stones, is the place where worship happens.

[39 : 09] This is God's design. The fifth aspect, the stone is not the goal of the temple.

And what I mean by that is, there is no stone in a building that draws attention to him or herself. It's about the building, not the stone.

There was this interesting article on how incredible the temple that Solomon built and how perfectly measured it was.

But they would actually, you'd think they'd bring the stone, oh, it's a little bit off edge. We would, you know, get our hammers, make some noise, and fit that stone perfectly in. But they wanted that temple to be so holy and perfect, that would have been an unholy act to be banging away on this rock where God's temple was.

That they actually did all the work in the quarry and it was able to fit perfectly in, in the temple itself.

[40 : 18] that stone was no different than any other stone. And the sixth understanding that we have of this holy temple is God is still building it.

Amen? God is still shaping stones. Some of you here are stones, but you know you're kind of, you need some adjusting, right?

I'm the same. God still needs to plane away, chisel away different aspects of our lives so that we're a perfect fit. Sometimes we need to grow in it, sometimes we need to deal with our own sin issues.

But God does not forsake us. And God, as he brings together, fits us into this holy temple in order to bring worship to himself.

The reality is the church here in Squamish is unlike every other church in the world. Amen? Just like the other churches in town, they're all different and they're all created with the purpose of worshipping Jesus Christ, but in different ways sometimes.

[41 : 32] Now, before I conclude this sermon, I want to give you guys a little bit of a pastor's moment. I know for some, church life hasn't always been great.

For some, have experienced great pain in the church, great hurt in the church. You feel you have something to offer, but in the past you've been shut down, you feel like you've been pushed aside, and some have been so frustrated at the church they say, you know what, I'm just going to go be a rock in that empty yard next door.

Hey, it's kind of easy, right? No other rock is banging up against you. You can see the sun from wherever you are, so you get kind of content being in this place.

But God doesn't call you over there a place of worship. worship. You're not called the holy temple over there. You're a part of the holy temple when you're here with us.

And sometimes that banging away that needs to happen in my life, I need you guys to be a part of that process.

[42 : 55] Just the way God shaped you and he shapes me, a little bit of banging going on, right? That's natural. It's normal. And part of one of the, God has put eldership, leadership over us is to help us with that.

One of the things that's very difficult is just conflict. But God has created this really cool, instructive way of how to deal with conflict in the body.

Too often, we quit. We leave. we decide it's much easier to go over in that yard and be the stone of my own. And you know what? Sometimes it is easier.

But often God doesn't use you to bring the same kind of worship that he brings to a church that God has designed to be a place for him.

By heart, for you, if you have been hurt by the church, I'm sorry you have expressed that. Just recently, as pastor, I have had to seek forgiveness for someone, not for a personal sin that I've done to them, but just for the office of elder had to do that had sinned against them.

[44 : 15] That's a part of we own our stuff. We want people to be at peace with one another. Amen? Sometimes a place might not be the perfect place in all measures of our beliefs, but we understand that God is here, we're being targeted towards the gospel, and that's where we want to work together.

My encouragement, if you've been sitting back for the last couple of years and you haven't really engaged in this church, I would ask you to come talk to me, talk to Dave, talk to Carl, talk to Chris.

we'd love to see your gifts being used here to glorify Jesus Christ. If you've been hurt badly in another area, we'd like to pray with you so that you could seek that peace with God and release that.

I can honestly tell you, I have been hurt no more, more severely than in the church. It's crazy, right? I'm a pastor. But it's true, not just as a pastor, but just as a young man growing up in a church.

It wasn't always easy and I faced pain, but that doesn't mean I'm giving up on God. There's some people I want to throw off the boat, but that's okay, right? But I had to come to terms with that and I had to seek forgiveness.

[45 : 38] So anyhow, that's what God's calling, that's what Paul is preparing this Ephesian church for. He's like, hey guys, I got some really good stuff for you. And I recognize it's not going to be easy.

You've been trained since the beginning to hate one another. The whole world has set you as enemies, but what God's doing, he's bringing us here together and it's really a miracle, amen?

That God is the one who reconciles our issues for us, that we all come to him with the same love. That's incredible. I love that.

And it's that one area where we are all unified in. So today I'm just going to close off in prayer here and then I'm going to invite a couple in to come up front.

They are going to be making just their coming members. I want to introduce you to them and give you guys a chance to meet them more. and then we'll sing and we will close off our worship.

[46 : 42] So let me just pray. do here and let me do this for the■ and I'm going to we're all