

# God's New Society

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [TrinityGraceAthens.com](http://TrinityGraceAthens.com).

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11, 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 that 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 were once far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace who has broken down, who has made us both one 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 two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

And he came and preached peace to you who are far off, and peace to those who are near. For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

[ 1 : 5 2 ] 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. This is the word of the Lord.

We are all born with an insatiable desire to be on the inside, to be a part of the in crowd, to be in the inner circle.

We all want to be in the know. I know this is true of me. As a young boy, I wanted to be a gangster. I mean, doesn't everyone? Fascinated by the likes of Al Capone and John Gotti, I spent many nights reading about them.

I remember getting Gotti's biography in my stocking. Sure, that really blessed my mom and dad. Imagining what it would be like to be in with them, the sense of importance, the sense of being a part of the gang, the boys.

[ 3 : 1 2 ] In middle school I wanted to be popular, like every middle schooler. For many of the things I did were purely to attract attention to myself and gain the acceptance I craved.

In high school I propelled headlong into this pursuit. I joined a social club at our school called The Farmers. We had an exclusive bond, exclusive t-shirts that you only receive by initiation.

And we strutted around the school in our t-shirts and gloated over our weekend exploits, many of them too shameful to repeat.

From there my life careened from in crowd to in crowd, restlessly seeking to find the rest I found only in Jesus. If you're honest with yourself, your life has not been much different than mine.

This desire to be on the inside or part of the in crowd has shaped you more than you care to admit. You may picture yourself as a lone ranger blazing your own trail, but the trouble is you have a hard time watching the path because you're too busy looking around at other people.

[ 4 : 19 ] It's not as though we left this longing when we lost our acne. This desire drives most of our lives all the way into the grave.

But what if this insatiable desire was placed in our hearts by God? What is this sense that we're not meant to live alone was there from the beginning?

The insatiable desire was placed in there so that we'd walk in close fellowship with him and live our lives in the church. In this chapter, as we've talked about the past couple weeks, Paul is preaching the gospel to the Ephesians, telling them about what God has done in Christ.

And you see the pattern. You've seen it in the past couple weeks. He says, you once were this, but now. You once were dead, but now you're alive.

In our passage, he continues this theme. He says, you once were lost, but now you're found. You were lost.

[ 5 : 22 ] You were strangers. You were separated from God, but now you're found. You've been brought near to find your place among the people of God. These verses unveil to us that God is not just out to save individual people.

God is out to gather a saved people for himself. Christ came to gather this people. He came to build his church. Central to his purposes in this world is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was a plan all along. John Stott helpfully says, the church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. The very center.

It's not a divine afterthought. It's not an accident of history. On the contrary, the church is God's new community. For his purpose, conceived in past eternity, being worked out in history, to be perfected in a future eternity is not just to save isolated individuals, as wonderful as that is, and so perpetuate our loneliness, but rather to build his church.

That is to call out of the world a people for his glory. This is what the apostle wants you to see. This is your story.

[ 6 : 42 ] You were dead, but now you're alive. You were lost, beloved. Now you are found, and found so that you might find your place among the people of God.

This is what he's doing in this world. Main point, where we're going, never lose the wonder of what Christ has done in reconciling all people as one in the church. Never lose the wonder.

I think that's what he's after. Never lose it. Don't let it get lost. The wonder of what Christ has done in reconciling all people as one in the church.

First point, you were lost and separated from God. You were lost and separated from God. Our text begins with two commands. Remember. It begins by telling them to remember that they were once lost and separated from God.

Remember. Call to mind. Recall. Bring it back. There's certain things we're never to forget. Same way we mark our anniversaries and our birthdays.

[ 7 : 48 ] We are never to forget how we once were. Why? Because we'll never remember all that God has done in Christ. He says, remember that you were Gentiles.

Look at verse 11. 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.

Gentile. That's what you were. Now this may be the first time you really noticed the word Gentile in the Bible. Or maybe you've seen it before, but you don't really know what it means.

Gentile is just a word used to refer to all those outside the people of Israel. Way back in Genesis, God called Abraham and promised to make of him a great nation, to give him a land.

And he'd be blessed to be a blessing to all the world. He made a covenant with him, gave him the rite, the ritual of circumcision.

[ 8 : 48 ] So what was going on is the people of Israel were circumcised, a symbol that they were cut off from everything else in the world and devoted to God. But everyone else was uncircumcised because they were cut off from God.

So Paul says, remember, that's what you were. You were Gentile. You were separated from God.

You were cut off from him. You were lost. Look at the way he continues in verse 12, repeating that command. Remember that at that time you were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

This verse lists out five things that were true of us before Christ. You know, Philippians 5, Paul mentions, or Philippians 3, Paul mentions numerous things that were going for him before coming to Christ.

Circumcised on the eighth day, numbered among the people of Israel, careful student of the law, blameless and righteous. The apostle Paul catalyzes here with all the things we had going against us.

[ 10 : 07 ] He had things going for him. We have things going against us. One author summarizes it saying, we were Christless, stateless, friendless, hopeless, and godless.

You were separated from Christ. You were Christless. Now, there's a sense in which all people outside of salvation are Christless, but that's not the point here.

Christ, as you know, is not the last name of Jesus of Nazareth. It's a title. It's a title, meaning Messiah, anointed one.

His point is, before salvation, you were a Gentile. You did not know about the Messiah. You had not read about him. You did not know the prophecies about him.

You were not waiting for him like a teenager going on a camp without a camp. You were going on a camping trip without a tent. You were clueless, oblivious, completely unaware of him.

[ 11 : 19 ] You were stateless and friendless, he says, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise. Because you are not of the people of Israel, biblically, you did not have the rights and privileges and promises of the people of God.

When God called them out of Egypt, he made a nation. He gave them a law. He gave them priests and all these things. But you had none of those. You didn't have the blessing and the land.

You didn't have the laws and the sacrifices, the feasts, the presence of God, the tabernacle and the temple. You had no rights and privileges. You had no promises, he's saying.

The people of Israel knew their lives weren't adrift because they were held by a promise that God was going to bring blessing and make of them a great nation. But you have no promise, he's saying.

There was a nation of Israel, but you were not a citizen of that nation. You were an alien. There's so much talk right now about immigration and this upcoming election.

[ 12 : 23 ] I don't know where you stand. I don't really want to know right now. But it's hard to exaggerate the distress of a true refugee, one who has lost their home. 1975.

That's my family's story. My wife's story. My father-in-law and his wife, their two kids fled Vietnam one day before Saigon fell. They flew out of Vietnam knowing they were leaving behind all of their family, many of which they didn't see for 15 years, all of what they owned, their house, all their possessions except a small bag, all of what they enjoyed of their beloved Saigon.

They were a family without a country and so were you. Do you see it? When it came to salvation of God, you had nothing to claim, no rights, no privileges, no promises, no family history, no background, no inheritance, no promise.

Future, you were hopeless. You were godless. What does it mean? You were hopeless. It doesn't mean that you'd pass the point of doing anything great for yourself.

I mean, he's beyond hope. He's too old to win that basketball game anymore. That's not what he's talking about. You're hopeless in the sense that you are without and separate from the hope of Israel.

[ 13 : 44 ] The hope of living before God as his people and knowing him as your God. You were without God in the world.

You were completely lost. You weren't just dead. You were lost way far away from the purposes of God in the world.

Several years ago, I read a book called All the Light We Cannot See. There are few things that dominate the story of this book than the feeling of being lost.

It's a story about this girl, Maria, who is blind. Maria is living in Paris in the midst of World War II. She's living on the top floor of an apartment building in Paris in the midst of World War II.

The city is invaded by Nazi Germany as it was during the war, and the city is being bombed. Maria lives alone with her father, but he has left to go check on a few things.

[ 15 : 00 ] He was supposed to return last night, but he has not returned home. Maria is desperate to hear his voice, desperate to know what is going on outside, beyond the room, beyond her sight.

She begins hearing commotion on the floors below. She hears bombs going off outside. She hears what sounds like Germans ransacking the apartments beneath her floor.

She runs. She crawls underneath the bed to hide, but she can't hide. Can you imagine how she longs to see, to be freed, to a world of touch and feel?

To see what is really going on and run the maze of roads outside of Paris to safety? She is completely lost. She doesn't know what to do.

She doesn't know how to respond. She doesn't know what is going to happen. That's the way it was with you before Christ. But there's an important difference between you and Maria.

[ 16 : 05 ] Maria knows she's blind, but you didn't know you were. You weren't just blind. We weren't just blind. We were blind to our blindness. We were completely lost.

We thought things were fine. We thought life was flying along as the way it does. But we were completely unaware and unmindful of God. Point two, you have peace through Christ.

In proclaiming the gospel, he then turns to proclaim that you have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. This wonderful section explodes with truths about Jesus Christ.

Paul reminds us that we have peace through him alone. But now in Christ Jesus, you who are once for all have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

In the same way that verses 1 to 10, the great reversal began with the blessed intervention of God. It begins the same way here.

[ 17 : 09 ] The great reversal of our lostness begins with the blessed intervention of God. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near.

Those words are not primarily about spatial recognition or something like that. Those are covenant words. You see, Deuteronomy 7, for what great nation is there that has a God so near to it as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call upon him?

There is only one people that are near to this God. But suddenly in Christ Jesus, you who once far off have been brought near to the place where you don't belong.

Where you have no familial right, no privilege inherited to you or by you in Christ Jesus. All who are far off have been brought near by the blood.

In just a few words, Paul announces the reversal of our lostness. Telling us that through his blood, Christ paid the penalty as we saw in chapter 1 for our sins and satisfied the wrath of God in our place.

[ 18 : 29 ] My notes are out of order here. All right. Paul continues and says, Jesus is our peace.

Functioning a bit like a heading for the verses that come afterwards. He's proclaiming he is our peace. Now, Jesus was proclaimed to be the Prince of Peace, remember? Isaiah 9.

Micah promised in Micah 5 that the Messiah would be our peace. The people of Israel imagined that the promised Messiah would bring a peace by taking out all the enemies and ruling over them all.

Giving the peace and security they longed for back on the land. But that's not the peace that Jesus came to bring. Peace runs through this passage. He himself is our peace.

Look at verse 15. So making peace. Verse 17. He preached peace. To those who are far out. Preach peace. To those who are near. It's all about peace. Words that go with peace are here as well.

[ 19 : 38 ] He came to reconcile. He came to make peace. Not keep peace. But make peace. He came to make one people. One body. Verse 16.

To bring us together in one spirit. Verse 18. What is the peace of Jesus Christ all about? He came to bring peace firstly with one another.

He came as we saw in verse 14 and 15. To bring down the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments. It's hard to capture the hatred between Jews and Gentiles.

When God had made a covenant with Abraham, he promised to make of him a great people. He promised that through him, blessing would come to all people. He promised.

God set him apart. Wanted a blessing. That he would be a light to the nations. But it's clear in the New Testament that many Jews had forgotten the purpose of God. The plan of God.

[ 20 : 45 ] They assumed that they were chosen because they were best. They assumed they were special because of who they were. Because of their family or something like that. They assumed the Gentiles were mere dogs.

And dogs are not man's best friend in the first century. Assumed they were worthless in the sight of God. There was great hatred and hostility. If you visited the temple in Jerusalem in those days.

There was a dividing wall of hostility. But what exactly does that mean? What is the apostle referring to? Not immediately clear.

But I think it has to do with the temple. In Jerusalem, the heart of the temple was the Holy of Holies. Where the throne of God is established.

And the great high priest would go in to offer sacrifice once a year. Outside the Holy of Holies was the holy place. From which Jews had access to.

[ 21 : 48 ] To worship. There was a massive curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the holy place. But that's not the dividing wall of hostility in my opinion.

Rather, outside the temple there was a barrier that separated the Jews from the Gentiles. The court of the Jews and the court of the Gentiles. On the court of the Jews they said, No foreigner may enter this except at the cost of his life.

They could not enter into this place. They could walk around the temple. They could look into the holy places, so to speak. But they could not enter.

But Jesus Christ came to break down the dividing wall of hostility. Because of this wall there was hostility between the Jew and Gentile.

And Jesus Christ came to break it down. Look at verse 15. He came to break it down by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances.

[ 22 : 54 ] Now there's a lot going on here that you'll just have to read more and get some more insight onto. But the idea is Jesus did not just give the Gentiles access into the court of the Jews.

He didn't just invite them in. Give them the VIP slot, so to speak. No. Jesus came to fulfill the law and bring an end to all the right privileges that were peculiar to Israel.

All the laws and sacrifices, feasts and worship days that separated Jews from Gentiles. He came to fulfill and bring to an end so that he might create in himself one new man.

So he says, a Jew, Paul says, a Jew by birth, speaking in the first person. He himself is our peace who's made us both one.

Creating in himself one new man in Christ. There is no longer Jew or Gentile. But only one new man.

[ 23 : 56 ] But why does Paul speak so much about the peace that Christ comes to bring between Jew and Gentile?

Why does he talk about this first instead of talking about peace with God? Because disunity and division seem to be a clear issue in the church of Ephesus.

Because it's easier to have peace with God than it is to have peace with others in the local church. It's hard to be. It's not hard to be of the same mind.

Political parties are of the same mind. School boards are of the same mind. Gangs are of the same mind. But unity is different. Unity is different people with different personalities.

Different backgrounds. Who should be enemies. Coming together because of a shared love for Jesus Christ. D.A. Carson helpfully says. Articulating what the local church is.

[ 24 : 59 ] He says the church is not made of natural friends. I hope this one is. Not made of natural friends.

It's made up of natural enemies. Wait. What? What binds us is not a common education. A common race. A common income levels.

Common politics. Common nationality. Common accents. Although that might be true here. Common jobs. Or anything else of that sort. Christians come together because they have all been saved by Jesus.

And owe him a common allegiance. Do you see? The church. This is the unity of the church. This is what Paul is after. This is what he's confronting in that church in Ephesus.

Because this type of unity is hard to secure. And easy to lose. Fights have been happening in churches for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years.

[ 25 : 57 ] In the 1600s the church of England issued a new prayer book in the church of Scotland. And them's were fighting words to the Scottish. If you know anything about the history of the church of Scotland. You know they didn't like England messing with their churches.

When one pastor began a service with the new prayer book. I mean a prayer book. A lady in the church threw a stool at him. An all-out riot broke out.

The pastor barely made it out of church alive. In a neighboring town another pastor heard his story. And when he began the new service with the new prayer book.

He held out two loaded pistols pointing at the congregation. Go ahead. Try that shenanigans like they did up the road. Now maybe you didn't bring two loaded pistols this morning.

But do you still have love for your brothers and sisters in the local church? Do you still find it easy to encourage those who aren't like you? Do you find it easy to honor others?

[ 26 : 57 ] Rejoice with others? Easy still to comfort others. Surely that's not what the church at large is known for. It's known for biting and devouring one another. Gossip and slandering one another.

Tearing one another down. Are we biting and devouring behind closed doors? Do we see criticism everywhere we look?

What about those who've sinned against us? We are going to sin against one another, right? We are after all a congregation of sinners.

What about those who've sinned against you? Are you still walking with them? Are you avoiding them?

Are we still amazed at what God has done? Six years. Six years. God's made us to be one people.

[ 28 : 01 ] Are we still amazed by that? Are we beginning to splinter out? I don't have a burden on my heart. But I know that 40 years after the Apostle Paul planted the church in Ephesus, the Lord Jesus wrote a letter and said, you've lost your first love.

Wait, this is planted by Paul. If Ephesus can fall, we can too.

We must be vigilant. We have peace with one another through our Lord Jesus Christ. The dividing wall that matters has been broken down by him.

Is there any other wall you're erecting that should be torn down? Through Christ we have peace with God. Look at verse 16. These wonderful realities.

He might reconcile us, both of us, to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

[ 29 : 06 ] The hostility here is not a reference to Jews and Gentile hostility, but the hostility of God against our sin. This he has canceled and reconciled us both to God in one body, killing the hostility.

One way of salvation for all people, through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We both have access. He comes and celebrates. He preached peace to you for all, for through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

The only way to the Father is through our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the gospel we've committed to proclaim Sunday after Sunday.

There is one mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ, being made like us in every respect, yet without sin, and yet mysteriously being put forward as a sacrifice for sin.

As Jesus said, either you come to him or the wrath of God remains on you. The only way to flee the wrath to come is through our Lord Jesus Christ alone.

- [ 30 : 20 ] Point three, you are found and joined to the church. You are found and joined to the church after reminding us that we were once lost, reminding us that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul reminds us that we've been found. If you notice, Paul began, he's speaking in the second person, you, you, you. He says, we in that, that second section there, but this one, this time he referred, returns back to this, to the second person.

Again, you are no longer strangers and aliens. He's looking in the eyes of the Ephesians, so to speak. He's looking, God is looking into your eyes, so to speak, this morning and proclaiming, you are no longer strangers and aliens.

These next three verses, the apostle pulls together three vital metaphors that explain our relationship to the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the divine plan of God.

in the church, you are citizens of God's city. You are no longer strangers and aliens. Those are citizenship language, but you are fellow citizens with the saints.

- [ 31 : 43 ] Once you were lost, you were separated from Christ. You were strangers and aliens. You had no rights or privileges, no access to God by nature of your family or background, but you are a citizen now.

You have papers. Your citizenship is in heaven. From heaven, you await with all of God's people a savior. You are a citizen of the city of God.

The end of the Bible is all about this breathtaking city to which your papers have already arrived. That's actually where you belong.

He continues, in the church, you are members of Christ's family. Look at verse 19, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are emphatically fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Paul moves quickly in the same verse from citizenship to sonship. You are not just saints and members of the household of God. You are a son.

- [ 32 : 53 ] You are a child. Surely the sense of privilege has increased all the more. Surely it's better to be a child than a citizen. It's wonderful to be a citizen in the town in which Christ is king, but it's so much more wonderful to be in the house in which God is our father.

Wonderful privilege to call God my king, but it's all the more wonderful privilege to call God my father. These metaphors just keep exploding out of the apostle's mind to capture the stunning reality of what God is doing in Jesus Christ.

He continues and says, you are stones of God's temple. Look at verse 20, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Christ Jesus being the cornerstone, moving to this structural analogy in whom the whole structure being joined together grows, but it's a temple that's growing.

Why? Because the vine in Isaiah 5 and the vine in our Lord Jesus Christ, it grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Back to the building language in him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- [ 34 : 20 ] Paul moves quickly from citizenship to sonship, from sonship to the temple. It seems that Paul moves from the city to the household, and the household made him think of the house of God.

What's the house of God? The temple. The signification for the people of Israel that God was with them, that he was near, that he had not left them, that he was among them, that they were his people, and he was their God.



And he says, you are stones of that temple. You are the material in which the temple, this temple, is built with. You're a living stone.

You are laid upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ being the cornerstone, just the one who sets it plumb and straight.

You're built together. There's so many threads of the Old Testament that are coming together in these verses. One is from Jeremiah 1. Look at these verses we have for you.

[ 35 : 35 ] The prophet Jeremiah was called by God. The Lord said, I put my words in your mouth. See, I've set you this day over nations and over kingdoms to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.

If you've read Jeremiah, you know that's what he did. He's the weeping prophet. Why? Because he proclaimed that judgment was coming on the house of the Lord. That the Lord who had planted them on the land was going to pluck them up.

The Lord who had built the temple was going to break it down. He was going to destroy and overthrow. Why? Because they had rejected him and strayed from him. They had rebelled against him and chosen to rule themselves.

Surely the people of Israel said, who is going to come and plant and build? Who is going to build? We see how they came and mowed down.

But who's going to come and plant and build? And Caesarea Philippi, the Lord asked his disciples, who do you say that the Son of Man is? They said, some say John the Baptist, other Elijah.

[ 36 : 47 ] Others, Jeremiah, one of the prophets. But Jesus said, who do you say I am? Peter said, you're the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

I find this so striking. Jesus was a builder. He built the universe by the word. He is the word that built the universe. He's also a carpenter.

How many rooms? How many houses? How many benches? How many tables did he build? How often did he think that he was not sent to build things with his hand but to build the church that will remain forever in the Spirit of God?

That's what's going on here. He's not building. He's building his church. Paul said, it's being built right now. Not with bricks and mortar. Not like an earthly temple but with lost souls saved by grace.

Called out from every nation. It's not made in the flesh by hands. It's made by the Spirit of God. It is this temple of which Haggai said, the latter glory will be greater than the former.

[ 37 : 58 ] Why? Because it's all nations, not just one. All peoples filled with the Spirit, not just the prophets and priests and kings. All having access to God without fear through Jesus Christ.

This temple is built on Jesus Christ alone. These Jews and Gentiles, the apostles saying, this is what I was talking about.

This is what the Lord was talking about. All alone. He's building a church. He's building a people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to worship Jesus Christ.

Now you may say, this is a little anticlimactic. Citizens to children, that was pretty sweet. Children to bricks, that's a letdown.

But Paul's pressing home his point. It's possible to be a citizen and yet reside in another country to be an ambassador, to be a man or a woman without a country.

[ 39 : 08 ] It's possible to be a son or a daughter and yet not be that close to the family. They'll always be your family, but you may move far away.

But it's not possible to be a stone in the house of the Lord unless you're laid there, unless you're still a part of the building.

Do you see? There's no rolling stones in the house of God. Every living stone is laid in the house in this world and in the one to come.

Don't go it alone. Don't pull apart. You have to see. Do you see what he's done? Are the eyes of your heart enlightened to see what is the immeasurable greatness of his power, the glorious inheritance, the riches of the glorious inheritance that await us, the hope of all that he has done in so many ways.

What were you made for? You were made for this. Everything else will soon pass away. Every other title will pass away. Engineer, teacher, doctor, student, they're all passing away.

[ 40 : 32 ] Boyfriend, mom, dad, sister, brother, they're all passing away. But this is what you're made for, a citizen. Of the new Jerusalem, a son or a daughter of this glorious father, a living stone in the house of the Lord forever and ever.

We're all born with this insatiable desire to be on the inside. I'll never forget when I was 21 years old, after being saved by grace, several months later, I entered a normal Sunday morning worship service of a local church, not too much different than this one.

I realized that desire to be on the inside was placed there by God, meant to help me find my place among his people. I felt as if my whole life had prepared me for that moment.

I was literally speechless. I was literally speechless. Amazed at the manifold wisdom of God.

Struck by something I saw as utterly unique. A bunch of different people gathered around Jesus Christ. Are you still amazed?

[ 41 : 54 ] Are you still in awe? Do you love the church? Never lose the wonder of what Christ has done in reconciling all as one people in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have a burden. You got a lot of titles that you might think about yourself. I don't know what your Twitter handle is or your Facebook handle is or whatever.

But I want to add one to it. I want you to think of yourself as a churchman or a churchwoman. This is not my church.

This is your church. There's going to be a church preaching the gospel for the next generation. It's going to become because you thought of yourself not merely as a son or a daughter or teacher or coach or something like that.

But you thought of yourself as a church member. As a churchman. As a churchwoman. And you said I'm giving my life to her. Charles Spurgeon healthily says give your life to the church.

[ 43 : 10 ] You that are members of the church have not found it perfectly. I know you didn't find this one perfect. And I hope that you feel almost glad you have not. If I had never joined a church till I found one that was perfect I would never have joined one at all.

And the moment I did join it if I had found one I should have spoiled it. For it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still imperfect as it is it's the dearest place on earth to us.

Why? Because it's the place where Christ is King and Lord while we await the day when all eyes will see Him.

Give yourself to the church to maintain her. Nothing in the world is dearer to God's heart than His church. Therefore being His let us also belong to it that by our prayers our gifts and our labors we may support and strengthen it.

If those who are Christ's refrain even for a generation from numbering themselves with His people there would be no visible church. You want to go to England and see what happened? There would be no visible church.

[ 44 : 28 ] No ordinances maintained and I fear very little preaching of the gospel. So come with me. Build the church.

and that's not a company line or anything like that. Don't really care about Trinity Grace Church in some respects but build this church I pray there'd be a light here for generations proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ the only name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Father in heaven we thank you for these precious precious words thank you for these truths we pray that you'd help us to live in light of them we thank you that we were lost but you found us may we never lose the wonder what you've done what you're doing in the church through Christ we thank you we praise you in Jesus name Amen You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee For more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at