

## Part 8 - The church as co-workers

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Date: 17 November 2019

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     So, the first reading this evening is from Ephesians chapter 1 verse 15 through to verse 23.

So, as we're led further into the worship of God, Paul is giving thanks for the Ephesians and remembering him in their prayers. And so, he has this to say, For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.

Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you. What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints?

And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might, that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

[ 1 : 4 1 ]     I'd like us to be able to perhaps now come before God in prayer. I'm reading this evening. Almost feels like being back in the Church of England.

You know they have two readings, one from the Old Testament, one from the New. Our first reading is from Ephesians 1, and we'll read from verse 9 through to the end of verse 10, and then chapter 2, verses 1 through 10.

So Paul is here writing to the church at Ephesus, again as we've seen, verse 9, that he, God, has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ.

Verse 10, as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on the earth. And then Ephesians 2, 1 to 10, and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and in the mind, and we're by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[ 3 : 4 3 ]     For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing, it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Well, I hope, I pray, that God would add his blessing to both readings, and that we would be blessed by them. So we are in part eight of the series on original mission.

Now, as we have been doing, we've been following the book, the study guide that we went through as a church, but the messages have been going slightly further ahead each time as a development of each section.

Last time we looked at the message and the method that the gospel is to go out into the world. And essentially, that when we're talking about truth, we're talking about a person.

[ 4 : 53 ] The truth is not just an idea, it's not just an abstract discussion, it is a person. So when we're being truthful, we're being truthful to Jesus. When we speak words of truth to a person, we're loving God properly, because truth is a person.

So being truthful is loving Jesus with all your heart, mind, and soul. It's honoring God in the most truthful way because of who he is.

This time we move from the message and the method, which our focus was primarily on evangelism, to the church as co-workers. And this means that we're moving from a focus on evangelism to all the other things that the church is called to do.

And it's tempting to think that the church, if it does evangelism, then everything else is sort of additional things that can come and go. But there are some things within the church that cannot come and go.

They are as essential as all the other things that God calls us to. Now the proclamation of the gospel is certainly central. It's a thing that God gave to his disciples to go out and tell the world to tell.

[ 6 : 10 ] We're to make known Jesus Christ. We're to make disciples. We're to teach everything that Jesus taught. And that's really the direction that this is moving in.

What does it mean to be a co-worker? And what does it mean to be a co-worker when the focus is moved off evangelism, not because evangelism isn't central, but because we're just going to spend a few moments focusing on all the other things that the church is actually called to do.

And this means as we make our way forward, we have to make a very simple distinction between serving God in the church and serving the fellowship. Serving God in the church and serving the fellowship.

Now someone might argue, well serving the fellowship is how we serve God. We serve one another. That's true. That is serving God in the church. But there is a way of serving the fellowship without it actually being in the service of God.

Okay, there is a way of serving one another and helping one another out without actually serving God in the process. And that's time consuming. It takes up people's time.

[ 7 : 23 ] It takes up people's energy. It takes up resources. And the question, if we dare ask it, is would it be beneficial if we stop doing those things so that those resources of time, energy, and money, and perhaps other things could be spent more purposefully on the mission of God?

And the mission of God in this context is wider than just evangelism. It's everything else that the church is called to do. So this does not mean that we are overlooking evangelism, but neither does it mean that we're overlooking people in the church.

And a wonderful example of this would be in Acts chapter 6, where you've got, for the first time in the church, it has grown to such an extent through the gospel being proclaimed in all of the world, or beginning to be proclaimed in all the world, that suddenly the church has a problem on its hands, and that is the care of the people in the church is now being overlooked.

Okay, because of the focus in one area, you now have the church suffering, okay, as a product of all that conversion. The church is now being overlooked in another area, and so you have the establishment of deacons.

And this is how the church begins to prioritize, how it begins to set its store out and order things, so is what to do first and what comes second.

[ 8 : 52 ] A friend of mine who's a minister once said, you know, someone has to decide what time we meet on Sunday morning. Okay, it's not written in the Bible, but someone has to decide whether we meet at half past 10, quarter to 11, or 11 o'clock.

Someone has to do it. And of course, we all come, and that's the time that we meet. That kind of prioritizing or ordering needs to happen in the church. Someone needs to decide when this particular ministry is on during the week.

What time will it start? What time will it finish? And sometimes, those things are up for negotiation. We can move them around a bit to make it easier on the congregation.

So we as a church have decided, or okay, fair enough, I led the decision probably to write winter time, you know, we'll just pause tea and coffee in an evening.

Okay? It has to be, the decision has to be made. And that type of decision making is up for grabs. It could go either way. No, let's keep having it. No, let's stop it for a couple of months while it's dark nights and what have you.

[ 10 : 01 ] So those type of things affect a fellowship. They determine, you know, quite a lot of things within the fellowship, but they're not in the Bible. But nevertheless, there are still decisions that people in the church have to make.

They're not the areas that I'm going to focus on this evening, but I wanted to highlight them to say that they take up time and energy, that they take up quite a lot of time and energy to focus on those things.

Now, it would be short-sighted on the part of the church to think, well, if we take our focus off evangelism, then who's going to do it?

I'm not asking us to take our focus off evangelism. I'm simply asking to put part of our focus on all the other things that God has called us to do, all the other duties, all the other callings, the good work that God has prepared for us to walk in as we read in Ephesians.

God has provided a whole lot of work that Christians are to walk in, and what is that work? I'm simply questioning what that work is, if it's additional or over and above evangelism.

[ 11 : 11 ] So, in Acts chapter 6, as an example, the church has grown to such an extent where people are now are not receiving an even distribution of food. Some people are being overlooked, and this could be because of backgrounds, it could be because of certain groups mixing with other groups and some not mixing, or it could be simply an oversight, but it seems that whatever it is, it needs addressing.

And the apostles are out proclaiming the word of God and they're praying. So, 50% of their ministry is proclamation, and the other 50% of their ministry is prayer. So, they spend 50% of time in the word of God in order to teach it properly, and they spend the other 50% of their time in prayer before God.

And they've decided that that is such an important role and task given to them as leaders of the church that they can't be taken away from that. Though the issue of people not receiving food is a serious issue, and it needs dealing with, that cannot be dealt with at the same time that the leader of the church who prays and who teaches be taken away from his role, the apostles being taken away.

So, they appoint deacons, and deacons take care of the needs of the people within the church so that the people who are missing out on an even distribution of food would suddenly be taken care of.

The church is able to do more because it's not reliant on one person. Okay? The church is meant to have team ministry. It's meant to have people working together. So, the church grows and it's able to grow out of its skin to a bigger simply because more people are brought in serving in areas that previously didn't exist.

[ 13 : 00 ] Deacons become deacons in order to deal with the growth of the church and the needs of the people within that growth. But the apostles are not to give up what they're doing to do it themselves.

And sometimes that happens. In a church where things are tight and people are few, then suddenly people are getting pulled into other areas of the church because they matter.

And then other areas suffer because of them. And you're not going to be able to stop that. The only way you're going to be able to stop that is if more people served. And the church would have to have more people globally and more people in the church would have to serve and that's how the issue would be solved.

But you cannot solve it any other way. If the work needs doing, somebody's got to do it. And so when someone steps down and the ministry still continues to exist, okay, sometimes it can feel like being left, I didn't start it, but now I'm being left with having to carry it on.

And my point is, no you're not. No, you're really not. Okay? We are to understand what God has called us to do and we are to prioritize it so that it gets completed but not to the detriment of the church.

[ 14 : 27 ] Okay? That's not the way it's meant to happen. And God, in his providence, is able to rearrange things so that there are some things that we can do and other things that we cannot do.

Now, when the church began, the first thing that it does in order to prioritize correctly is that they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. Everything flows from that, Acts 2.42.

You find out what the Word of God says and you regulate the church according to the Word of God. Historically, it's called the regulative principle which is simply a fancy way of saying that the Bible tells me what to do and how to do it.

But there are some things that it doesn't tell me how to do. Like, should I put two sugars in Mrs. Brown's coffee or one? Right? Those things you find out in fellowship.

Should I serve the tea and coffee to one o'clock or to quarter past one? Okay? Those things are worked out as you go. But they take time and energy.

[ 15 : 30 ] But everything is to flow out of the apostles' teaching. When it does, then fellowship happens. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread into prayers.

But you're meant to understand that as one flowing out of the other. Fellowship happens because of unity over the Word of God, the taught Word of God.

And the breaking of bread within fellowship happens because you have fellowship and you're able to pray together because of fellowship. And fellowship happens because of the Word of God.

So everything flows out of this very central issue of the Word of God directing the life of the church. And therefore, this touches on the most important issue.

And that is the distinction between commitments and biblical commitments. The line of distinction has to be drawn. What is a biblical application? That is something that I'm doing in light of the Word.

[ 16 : 33 ] And what is simply something that I like doing in the church? Now, there are some Christians who won't make any kind of commitments simply because they don't lose anything if they don't.

And there's more to be gained in a church, okay, without wasting your energy of not serving. I can benefit and be blessed of everybody else serving around me, okay, without losing out.

But if I start serving, then suddenly I have to give up certain things. I have to give up time. I have to give up energy. I have to give up resources. And those things are at a premium sometimes.

And so because some Christians think, well, I'm not missing out. I'm not really losing anything. If I don't serve, okay, I'm not really at a loss if I don't serve. They're not thinking like a fellowship because when one person doesn't serve, the whole fellowship is affected.

You may not feel the effect of you not serving. And now I'm saying this not because you don't serve. We're in a church where a lot of people serve and have done so for a long time. But when one person doesn't, yeah, it doesn't affect them, but it does affect others.

[ 17 : 51 ] And this comes out of Psalm 1. Remember the man who devotes himself to the word like the Christians do in Acts 2.42. He devotes himself to the word of God, prays to God, lives before God, and he's described as a tree planted by streams of living water bringing forth its fruit in its season.

And I've often said that trees don't eat their own fruit. Okay, the tree produces fruit, but everyone else gets to enjoy it. That's the definition of a Christian who remains close to the word of God and who produces fruit in their life so that the people around them benefit, the people around them flourish.

Now imagine you have a fellowship of let's say 500 people with only 200 people fruit bearing. You've got 500 people eating, but only 200 people producing.

It doesn't take long to work out that you're going to have an issue there. And so it's absolutely important that the church understands that their individual contribution, their own close and personal walk with the Lord, is that they may not feel as though they're missing anything, but everyone else around them will because the way God has designed fellowship, the way God has designed the church, is that as we stay close and clean to the Lord, we produce blessings and fruit, but they're for other people.

And that's why the church here, so many people are blessed. Now I know that some people are not in the position to be able to serve. You know, I understand all the qualifications, but I'm simply saying that as a principle, this is how God has designed fellowship.

[ 19 : 40 ] You stay close and clean, you stay close to the word of God and as your life produces the applications and the implications of God's word, people around you are going to be blessed. Right?

They're going to be blessed because there's going to be things coming out of your life because of your relationship with God and they will be blessed by it. Does that mean that there'll be people blessed by it in the church who don't do anything?

Yes. And that's an issue that Paul had a face in Thessalonica. He says, you know, if you don't work, you're not going to eat. Okay? This isn't socialism.

Okay? It's not an even distribution of somebody else's hard work and Margaret Thatcher though I would, what a surprise that I'm even quoting Margaret Thatcher in the sermon, but Margaret Thatcher got one thing absolutely right.

She says, at some point you run out of somebody else's money. Okay? At some point you run out of somebody else's money. You know, you can do all the hard work and if you're spreading it out thin, it's when that person's gone, okay, so is their contribution gone.

[ 20 : 45 ] And Paul understood this and he says, no, if you don't contribute, it doesn't mean that you have to work and earn money, but if you don't contribute, you don't eat. That point of contribution is absolutely fundamental in the church.

So, having understood what fellowship is, having understood that it comes out of the ground as a result of the fruit of God's word, that God's word is the seed that produces this tree of fellowship and everyone benefits from it.

We now have to distinguish the church from other structures in the world. So, the structure of the church is totally different or at least essentially different than the structure of the family and the structure of the family and the church is different, again, from the structure of the civil order.

So, we're able to tell the difference, hopefully, between the church government, elders, deacons, you know, how that works out in practice, pastors, teachers, those things.

Family government, where you have a mom and a dad and you have children, that's a different type of government and then you have civil government. All of these operate under God's authority.

[ 22 : 02 ] They all operate under God's government, but they're all distinct. The church's government only has authority within its sphere. The family has authority within its sphere and the civil order has authority within its sphere.

That's how it's meant to work. And so, the civil government, it's their job to make sure that when you walk home tonight, if you walk home, the roads are lit, that you're safe, that you're going to be safe.

that it's their job to make sure that there's law and order. And when someone breaks the law, then justice is administered. It's the job of the civil government to do that.

The church doesn't have that responsibility. We don't take the law into our own hands. We recognize that God has given that to the civil governments to do.

The church is not to do that. the government of the family is the ministry of health, education, and welfare.

[ 23 : 06 ] So, you read through the Old Testament, Deuteronomy in particular, and say, okay, what is the family government? What is its ministry? Well, it's the ministry of health, education, and welfare.

That all happens within a family unit. Now, of course, we live in a country where those things have largely been taken out of the hands of family, and in some cases they're beneficial, in other cases they're not so beneficial, okay?

But that's where God has placed that ministry, that government of health, education, and welfare in the family. And then, of course, you have the ministry of the church in terms of its gospel proclamation.

It's our job to go out into the world and say, all of those other authorities, the family, the civil government, come under God's authority. They come under the Lord Jesus Christ.

He said, all authority belongs to me in heaven and on earth. We're to go out and make disciples. We're to make known the Lord Jesus Christ. And we're also, as Ephesians says, to participate in the work of God in the reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth.

[ 24 : 22 ] And not many of us think about that. We think about the church's evangelism. We think about the ministry in the here and now. But there's a clear focus throughout Ephesians and elsewhere that the church is set up in such a way where our participation in the work of God is the participation in the reconciliation of all things.

All things in heaven and all things on earth. Ephesians 1, verse 10. That's the work that God brings us into. God has ordered everything. He's put everything in its proper order.

And we are called into the future that God has already planned. We are called to work out the works that God has given us to work in, Ephesians 2, 10.

What is that work? Well, the work is our participation in the reconciliation of all things. That's the work that God has given us. It's not just evangelism. It's how do we participate in God's overall work of uniting everything.

Now, for us who have perhaps more of a pessimistic ending of the world, I can only encourage you to perhaps go re-read scripture and come to the conclusion quite hopefully that God wins, that Christ has already won the victory, that all, okay, there's going to be a new heavens and new earth, that Jesus said, pray for my will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

[ 25 : 52 ] None of these things are a negative outcome. None of these things give us the impression ever that God is lost and that we're simply waiting around to be taken out of this losing battle.

That doesn't seem to be the picture that you find when reading scripture. So what are we to do? Well, we're to participate in the reconciliation of all things because that's the future.

That's the way things are going. Okay, we participate in a work that Jesus has already won. We participate in a work where Jesus Christ has already won the victory.

The kingdom of God is coming. Jesus has told us to pray for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now imagine just for a moment that none of that was true.

Imagine for a moment that nobody in the church actually believed that. Imagine in a moment that the church is full of people or majoritatively full of people who don't believe that Christ has won the victory.

[ 27 : 00 ] Who don't believe that there's going to be a new heavens and a new earth. Who do not believe that the kingdom of God has actually come. Who do not believe that God's will on earth is being done as it is in heaven.

What would you expect to find in a church? What would the church look like if you had Christians who believed that? Well one of the things it would look like is you'd have lots of things in the church that are not informed by scripture.

There's lots of things that the church ends up doing that doesn't really get its direction from scripture. It just has its direction in people's preferences or personal desires.

Suddenly people are doing what they want to do. It would also mean that Christians would never pursue anything with the end in mind. They would simply seek to find a settled place in the here and now without thinking about what their grandchildren or great grandchildren are going to have to face.

We might expect the church not to think that far ahead because we don't think there's anything that far ahead. if we don't believe Christ has won the victory then what are we planning for the future for?

[ 28 : 17 ] Imagine a church that didn't believe any of those things. What else might we see? I think one of the things that you would see is that people would replace going to church with belonging to the church or rather the other way around sorry.

They would replace belonging to the church with going to church and the reason that would happen is simply because again there is no future end in mind. It's simply what I do in the here and now.

The church is something that I'm in while I'm alive and then I'm out of it when I go to be with God. Now that's clearly not the case.

What else might we find? Well we might find that people would desire more and more to find settled life, a settled life in this world.

That if I have to be here until I go or until Christ comes then my immediate aim is to be as settled as I possibly can be. Rather than recognising now that Christ has won the victory my job is to participate in the reconciliation of all things and my job is not to be settled but to progress and to walk forward in that mission.

[ 29 : 37 ] So a church that doesn't believe that Christ has won the victory, that we are to participate in the fullness of things, the uniting of all things in heaven and on earth, and that the kingdom of God has come and it's growing and that God's will has been done on earth as it is in heaven, I think you'd find all those things.

And it would be nice to say that those things didn't exist. But they do exist. And I think they exist as the scriptures teach us because people don't live with the end in mind.

They only live with the present in mind. And for that reason, no one's planning things for 2,000 years times. No one's planning that far ahead or even 100 years ahead.

And so what happens is Christians even, and I had this out while I was in America and my sabbatical, a big Christian business, and he let me have one hour with him.

And he sat me down, he says, what would you like to ask me? I said, I've got these questions. He said, go for it. Almost one of the questions near to the end was, why are you selling your business, which is full of Christians, to a secular organization?

[ 30 : 49 ] Why not keep it within the community of faith? Okay? Well, he didn't have an answer. And I wasn't criticizing him, I was simply saying that aren't we told that the direction of all things is to do good, especially to the household of faith?

Isn't that the direction that we're meant to be in? That we keep a Christian influence in the world and that influence grows through all things? But what happens is, is when you reduce the church's influence to evangelism alone, then suddenly my business has got nothing to do with it, then suddenly my house has got nothing to do with it, then suddenly there's a number of things that have got nothing to do with it, right?

Because they're not godly things. No, all of it belongs to God. And all of those things are to be permeated as works and duties and roles that are to participate in the reconciliation of all things.

If we're really considering the reconciliation of all things, why are we leaving some things out? As though it's not there to be taught. about. As we move on then, Jesus gets us to consider in a very simple way with a parable in Luke 18, that he's looking for one thing when he returns, and he questions, will he find it when the Son of Man returns?

The issue at hand is the church and God's people have often spiritualized parables to the point where they no longer have any practical use, where they no longer have any practical application.

[ 32 : 28 ] For instance, Jesus giving out talents and the charging of interest and why that's immoral and wrong and a number of other things, Christians don't pay any attention to that because they spiritualized it to such an extent that it cannot mean that.

It just cannot mean that in practical terms, that Jesus would consider a Christian businessman giving a loan out to another Christian and charging interest on it as wrong.

Jesus cannot be talking about that because we've taken a parable and we spiritualized it to such an extent that it cannot mean those practical issues when it does mean those practical issues.

So Jesus in telling the parable of the persistent widow who comes and prays and she wants justice and she's not getting it and day after day she goes and she's asking for justice and in the end she gets what she's been persistent for.

And God says that his people ought to be like her and at the same time recognize that God isn't going to be so slow to answer. I'm not going to be like an unjust judge.



[ 33 : 38 ] And so your role in the world according to that parable is to how do you deal with the injustices that you see? How do you deal with all the injustice that you see?

Well, Jesus says you're to pray against it. You're to be persistent in your prayer to God for those injustices to be dealt with. Why? Because there's going to be a reconciliation of all things.

No one gets away with anything. Jesus comes and everything is dealt with. And Jesus says, but when the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on the earth?

Will he find Christians actually living in that way? Where they're thinking about the future? Where they're praying about the reconciliation of all things, the justice that will come at the end of the day?

Or is it the case that we don't have that kind of faith and we're simply looking to be as comfortable as we can before we leave? That our participation in the reconciliation of all things just doesn't happen.

[ 34 : 40 ] We focus on evangelism, rightly so, but we do so while we neglect some of the other matters. Well, as we conclude, as we wrap this up, there's a few things to consider.

The first is this, that the church has its identity in Christ. We belong to him. Secondly, the church gets its marching orders from Jesus. Out you go.

And the church finds the content of the work that it's to do in the word of God. And the church's workplace is the world that we live in.

That's the structure that God has given us. It's right that we should emphasize the Great Commission. It's right that we should emphasize the importance of gospel proclamation, evangelism, making disciples.

But it's also right that we acknowledge the next bit that Jesus says. which is to teach them everything that they had been taught. If it is the case that people can only live the parts of the Bible they know, then it seems to make sense that we ought to know all the Bible.

[ 35 : 53 ] That seems a fairly simple thing to arrive at. If Christians are meant to live the whole of the Bible, then it requires the whole of the Bible to be able to live it. We need to know what God requires of us.

This applies to the participation in the fullness of all things. That Christ is uniting all things in heaven and on earth.

That's the direction the world is going in. The work that we have been called to do as co-workers is not just evangelism, but it's the participation of that reconciliation in everything.

Business, marriage, schools, health care, social care, everything needs to be addressed. But we leave these things alone often because we've over-spiritualized parables and we tend to concentrate on spiritual matters.

It's all spiritual. It's all practical. It all belongs to God. So here's the exhortation. The church grew because it proclaimed the word of God to people who did not belong to God.

[ 37 : 01 ] That's how the church grew. Disciples took the word of God out and made new disciples with the word of God. That's how God grew his church.

But God in the church takes care of the people on the outside by providing people on the inside to go ahead and speak to them about Jesus. And then he takes care of people on the inside by providing additional deacons to take care of them on the inside.

Nobody gets overlooked, but there are different roles and different ministries. And this is the emphasis that God places in his word, where our focus and attention ought to be.

And so what's happened is while the church over the years, especially in the West, has increased in power, certain types of power that is, it's most definitely increased financially in money.

It's increased in comfort, no doubt about it. Only a few years ago you were on pews, and now look at the comfy seats you have. It's increased in insurance that there's a great benefit to the church, but as it's increased in all of these areas, it's lost its influence.

[ 38 : 15 ] The church does not have the influence in the West like it used to have. It's increased in many other ways, but it's lost its influence in the areas that it was meant to have, because the church has also forgotten that we are to participate in the reconciliation of all things, including the evangelism and the proclamation of the gospel.

I spoke of Obadiah Sedgwick this morning, saying that he quoted God and saying that God withholds no good thing from those who love him, but then he qualifies it and says, yes, but not every good thing is good for me.

Okay, not every good thing is good for me. It seems that the church has had all these blessings, which have been good, but then they've not handled them properly. As they've increased in one area, they've diminished in another.

So here's the final thought. If Christ hasn't won the victory, then just live as you please. Do what you like. Fill your time with whatever you want to fill it with.

If Christ hasn't won, then none of this, what I've said, should make any difference. Just carry on. If it is the case that Christ is not going to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth and unite all things together, yeah.

[ 39 : 35 ] Book time. Go enjoy yourself. Eat, drink, and be merry. Just go ahead and do it. If that hasn't happened, then there's nothing to plan, there's nothing to work for.

There's nothing to work towards. We simply tell the gospel and do what we like. But that doesn't seem to be the future that God has promised. Paul is convincing the church here in Ephesians.

In chapter 1, he says, realize that Christ in time, in the fullness of time, is going to unite all things in heaven and on earth.

And then in chapter 2, verse 10, he says, you are God's workmanship. You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

I am simply trying to get you to consider that walking in those good works, what those good works are, that it is our participation in the reconciliation of all things.

[ 40 : 39 ] Amen.