

Ephesians 14-06-01a

This is Sunday, the 1st of June, 2014. We continue our study in the book of Ephesians, which is the letter to the Laodicean church to be shared with those over in Colossae. We resume this morning in chapter 4, verse 17.

We'll take this moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are as we come before You united in fellowship and in appreciation for the Lord Jesus Christ, for the wonderful things that You have done for us through Him, for His representing us at Your right hand, demonstrating that human beings who have a relationship with You through faith in Christ are acceptable in Your sight and can stand in Your presence. We thank You for the Lord Jesus for His example of faithfulness and obedience, for showing us how a life can be lived in human flesh, empowered by Your Spirit and guided by Your Word.

We pray this morning that as we study this passage that Your Holy Spirit will lead us into the truth, help us to understand it, to see its pertinence and its relevance to our lives, and that as a result we will be motivated and encouraged and have a clear view of how we can live in the hours and days ahead in a way that pleases You. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen. Ephesians 4 verses 11-16, the preceding section, told us that when the Lord Jesus came to earth, lived His life, accomplished our salvation, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, He gave gifts.

He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for a purpose. These are all communication gifts, right? What do they communicate? Truth. Not scientific truth.

Notice the fossil impressed in this sedimentary rock, walking the dogs yesterday going past where they've dug up, they're redoing the whole creek along our walking trail, and it's a massive project. They've had great big earth-moving claw digging machines in there, I don't know what you call those things, it's like a giant backhoe, but they busted up the bank. I think a big part of it is erosion and they're afraid that the thing is just going to turn into a little mild valley instead of a walking trail with a creek in the middle.

So they're building massive walls and places where you can get down and actually approach the water and so on. It's going to be beautiful. Your tax dollars at work.

But anyway, all of this busted up rock is there and if you look closely, you can see impressed in this sort of chalky looking sedimentary rock. And those of you that have walked that creek before know that there's all kinds of sea life impressions in it. But I was walking by yesterday and looked over and at first I thought I wasn't seeing any fossils and I thought maybe this is too old.

Then just as we were leaving I looked back and I saw this brown fish shape just compressed into that white chalky rock. I didn't tell you I saw it because I actually went back and had a dog dragging you off. But there it was.

And I thought, you know, that's kind of neat. And I thought to remark on it, but I had just been in a, we stopped at an antique store on the way down from Oklahoma and there were shelves and shelves and shelves and shelves of these fossils for like five bucks, ten bucks. They're as common as dirt.

You know, the oceans covered the planet at different times and there was life, you know, fossils are easy to find, but they're just neat. So I saw this and it reminded me that there are different kinds of truth. It is true that the planet is very old.

It's true that life has been here a lot longer than 6,000 years. I'm sorry, you know, King James only people, go be warm, be fed. Most people have a combination of beliefs that all cluster together.

They are King James only. There is no inspired English translation except the authorized King James version of 1611 with spelling corrections. They believe in a 6,000-year-old earth and they believe in six literal 24-hour days of creation, which I don't, I wouldn't argue with that part, but a 6,000-year-old earth, sorry, no.

And remember, scripture itself tells us that creation is one of God's witnesses to truth. You cannot be Bible only and ignore the witness in the rocks, the witness in the heavens. Science is good.

We like science. We love science. Science displays the handiwork of God.

We do not fear science. We love science. What we dislike and what we oppose is taking scientific fact and deriving philosophical conclusions that there is no God.

That's a philosophical conclusion. There's no scientific evidence, pro or con, that there's a God. You can't prove it either way.

God designed it that way. Why do you think they can't find Noah's Ark? Why do you think the Tree of Life is not still sprouting somewhere in the Middle East? Why do you think God didn't let them, why is there not still a glow-in-the-dark Ark of the Covenant that when anybody touches it, they get zapped? Why is there no hard physical evidence for philosophical truth? Because the whole issue is faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

If you can see it, it's not faith anymore. If God rips the heavens open and pokes his face through and says, hello there, I'm God, faith is no longer an issue. That'll be the Millennial Kingdom.

Nothing said at the judgments at the end of the Millennial Kingdom about faith, why? It's not a matter of belief. God is on earth reigning in Jerusalem on the throne. The Lord Jesus Christ and the sons of David are going to be ruling.

There's going to be angels and resurrected glorified church-age saints and people floating around. It's not a matter of faith. Faith is now.

Faith is what you don't see. Don't expect to find scientific evidence for God. There won't be any.

That's a different kind of truth. That's a witness to the age of the earth. That's a witness to the way physics works.

There is certainly manifestations, order and design reflect that there is a God. But it's not conclusive. It's not a proof.

It's suggestive. You can take it either way. You can say, well, this design is apparent, but I don't know where it came from.

Or you can say, well, I know where it came from. It came from God. But that's an argument that will never be solved until God does erupt into human history and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess.

But that's not now. There are different kinds of truth. There's ornithological truth.

Birds have beaks. They have feathers. There's oceanic truth.

There's geological truth. There is mathematical truth. There's geometrical truth.

That's not what's being talked about here. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers don't teach geometry. Aren't you glad? The only geometry you get from me is the one triangle, observation, interpretation, application.

And then go back for more observation. That's the only geometry you're going to get from me is the interpretive triangle. We observe what's in Scripture.

We interpret it to figure out what it means. And then we go and try to live in its light. That's a triangle.

What is it for? What is the purpose of this truth? It's not to make you a geologist. It's not to make you a mathematician. It's not to make you a beautician.

It's not to make you anything other than equipped for work of ministry. How many hats do you wear? No, I don't mean those hats. As a believer, how many hats do you wear? I'm not talking about I'm a parent and I'm this, I'm that.

Every believer has three hats. You are a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Who is your high priest? The Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the book of Hebrews, middle chapters. The Lord Jesus, priest after the order of Melchizedek. Starts at the end of chapter 5, goes through 6 and 7 and along in there.

You are a priest. What does a priest do? If you didn't know you're a priest, now you know and you

need to know how it functions. What are you supposed to do as a priest? You are a priest.

This is a fact. Indisputable, inalienable, scripturally testified fact. You are a priest.

What are you supposed to be doing in your priesthood? What does a priest do? This is the functioning and the operation of a relationship between man and God. A Catholic priest thinks that he is an essential link between Catholics and the Pope. And then the Pope is a link between all of the priests and bishops and cardinals and all these other hat-wearing guys and God.

They insinuate themselves between the believer and God. Well, you can't get there without us. You've got to light candles and do confession and come and do mass and get sprinkled with holy water and breathe holy smoke and listen to our endless Latin rituals, etc.

It's the holy church that is your priest, your broker, your mediator. What does scripture say? There is one mediator between God and men, the church. Is that what it says? There is one mediator between God and men, the Pope.

No. What does it say? There is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. He is our high priest.

We are priests and we represent ourselves through Christ to God. You are a priest. That's your first and most important hat.

You represent yourself. You have the privilege to walk right into the throne room of God. Hebrews chapter 10.

Christ has made a new and living way through the veil that used to separate in the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant, the presence of God. Only the high priest could go in there once a year with fear and trembling, had a rope around his foot so that if he did something wrong and died in there, they could drag his carcass out and replace him. Christ has made a new and living way through the veil.

Let us come boldly before God. We are God's children. The rules about don't approach, you know, how they used to approach the king and then they couldn't turn their back and they had to bow and, you know, back out of the room.

And if they turned around, they, you know, off with his head doesn't apply to us. We are God's children, but we are also qualified and authorized to represent ourselves before God through Christ. That's your priesthood.

Hat number one. Hat number two is the one mentioned here. Ministry.

Every single one of you that is saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is first and foremost a priest. Secondly, you are a minister. You have been gifted.

You have been positioned. You have been given the ability to be a blessing to other believers. Ministry is believer to believer.

It is all of the one another commands. Love one another. Pray for one another.

Encourage one another unto love and good works. Sing songs and hymns and spiritual songs with one another. Intercede for one another.

Restore one another. Forgive one another. All of the one another's, and there are dozens of them in scripture, that's ministry.

You are a minister. There's no question. There's no doubt.

There's no exception. Every single believer is a minister. Now, how can your ministry function if you're not around any other believers? If you don't cultivate fellowship, if you don't find and spend time with other believers, your ministry hat just sits on a shelf and collects dust.

And the grace that Jesus distributed to each when he ascended on high and gave gifts to men is dead in the water with you. Therefore, scripture says, forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the habit of some is. There are people who don't appreciate that Jesus gave them the opportunity and the privilege of both being a blessing and receiving blessing from connection with, contact with, fellowship with other believers.

That's ministry. Second hat. What is the third hat? Ambassadorship.

You have, as a part of the body of Christ, the function of being the presence of Christ in this world. And Christ is his own message. The message of Jesus Christ is Christ.

That's what he preached. He preached himself as the son of God, as the savior of the world, as the one who can bring peace through faith in Christ. Human life achieves its purpose.

We are fulfilled. God's glory is reflected. Everything good happens from that.

And the opportunity to reflect that and on those occasions that God designs and that God creates and that God the Holy Spirit has laid the groundwork for, we get to share that truth verbally. But it is primarily a witness without a word. It is the life we live that is a testimony.

Our hope, our confidence, our stability, our integrity speaks louder than words. We are never told anywhere in Scripture to confront and accost people about faith in God or faith in Christ. Never.

Find me a verse that says, where Paul writes to the Corinthians and says, I hear that you all have not been going door to door and knocking and asking people if they're believers in Jesus Christ. What is the matter with you? Or he writes to the Romans and says, go forth, tackle the atheists, tackle the idolaters, shake your finger in their face and tell them they're all going to blaze in hell

for eternity. Scare them into the kingdom, confront them with hellfire and brimstone.

I mean, does it not strike you that this is conspicuously absent from any part of the New Testament? It never says. And you never see anybody doing this. Paul didn't stand up on Mars Hill and say, you hellbound sinners, you're all going up in flames.

You're going to roast like marshmallows and I'm going to stand on the edge and watch the smoke arise forever and ever. You'd better come to faith in Christ or you're all going to roast. He never says that.

Never. And he never encourages anybody else to do that. It is not a confrontational, accosting, get in other people's business witness.

That's not in Scripture anywhere. And yet that's the center post of evangelical Christianity today. We live to reproduce.

We're a giant spiritual amway. Go forth. You became one.

Now go be a distributor and get other people and it's like a giant pyramid scheme and you'll just get all kinds of spiritual blessings from multiplying. Listen, it's a wonderful thing. It's a privilege.

All of us were evangelized and came to faith in Christ because somebody shared the good news with us. But I for one was not tackled by somebody in a restaurant who came over and said, you look like a godless sinner to me. Let me tell you that, you know, here's the salvation you need.

Priesthood, ministry, ambassadorship. These are our functions. This is our identity in him, in Christ.

If you're not in Christ, none of those pertain. You're hopeless, helpless, useless. You're alienated from the life of God and you are in fact headed for oblivion.

You're going to have a useless, fruitless, empty life ending in nothing. In him, we have all of these things. But these are our specific privileges in this age.

Israelites, run-of-the-mill Israelites living in a tent, you know, married to a gal, having some kids, couple of sheep out there. They weren't priests. The Levites were priests.

They weren't ambassadors. God didn't say, Israel, go forth to the Hittites and hand out leaflets and if they don't respond, then kill them. God didn't say that, did he? He didn't say, well, you got all these wicked Amorites living in the land, so when you get to the Jordan, send across an evangelism team.

Have them show a film and have them, you know, really make faith in the God of Israel attractive. Have some celebrities. Find a giant that's converted to the faith and bring him over there and, you know, impress them with how wonderful it is to be an Israelite who believes in the God of Israel.

And if they don't respond, well, you don't want them to feel bad about themselves. Don't tell them that there's impending destruction because of their Molech-worshipping, child-sacrificing, immoral, degenerate, corrupt and destructive way of life. The abuse that they perpetrate on their women and the lack of value they assign to their children and the unholy, despicable, unmentionable things that they do with and for each other in the interest of getting better crops and what not.

Don't talk about that, talk about the upside. Tell them about how I fed you in the wilderness and I'll feed them too. Is that anywhere in Scripture? And yet it is the absolute identifying.

What do you call yourself if you're a conservative Christian today? Well, I'm an evangelical. It's the evangel. It's the good news.

Nothing wrong with the good news. We were all saved by it, but that's not our purpose. Look at verse 12.

He gave truth-tellers, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. An evangelist means a good news teller. Somebody who gets you excited about the good news.

And this is for believers as well. And there's a healthy kind of revival, if you will, where someone comes in and maybe he's from the outside, but he's got a fresh take. He's got an insight into a part of Scripture that the pastor hadn't thought of or didn't know about.

And somebody can be a traveling encourager with good news and can also be those who are detailed to be professional ambassadors. Those who can really make the gospel clear. Billy Graham is our classic example from the last century.

Franklin Graham is doing it now. There have been many wonderful... Billy Sunday in a preceding generation did it. There have been wonderful men gifted with the ability to distill the good news of Jesus Christ and make it publicly available.

It's great. It's truth. But it has a purpose.

What is the purpose? For the equipping of the saints for work of ministry. For building up the body of Christ. It's not to make you a better priest and it's not to make you a better ambassador.

What does it say? It's hat number two. These gifts are not designed to show you how to have a better ability to pray. To show you how to have a better ability to listen in Bible class and think about the truth.

It's not priesthood enhancing. And it's not ambassadorship enhancing. Isn't that kind of surprising? That the gifts that have been distributed in the body are not to help you with your walk with God? They're not.

When people do focus on ministry today and believer to believer stuff, what do they talk about? Discipleship and mentoring. I want to show you how to have a closer walk with God. Do you notice here that the priesthood hat is not in view? Fellowship and the gift to gift blessing that Jesus Christ gave you and me is not to help people have a better relationship with God.

We should not be walking around getting, well, how's your relationship with God today? Have you kept short accounts and have you confessed your sins, this, that, and the other? It is for ministry. It is benefit to the body and building up the body of Christ. So what does enhance priesthood? The truth of God.

It isn't the gift that does it. It's the truth that does it. It's what you do with the truth, what you decide about what is revealed.

That improves your relationship with God. I can't help you with your relationship with God. I can communicate the truth to you.

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers communicate so that the saints are equipped for work of ministry. And the saint to saint ministry is not what we just talked about. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, the communication of truth, what truth does when it hits your soul, that improves your relationship with God.

And then you are equipped for the works of ministry that are believer to believer that aren't involved in improving your relationship with God. That already happened when you got the truth and when you did something with it. You applied faith to it.

You believed it. You decided to live in its light. You decided that you wanted it to make a difference.

You meditate on it day and night. That improves your priesthood. Now you are ready for ministry.

You're ready to be a blessing to other believers. But you're not going back. They needed to get that priesthood thing figured out and, by the way, the ambassadorship thing figured out by their own inculcation and application of truth.

Believer to believer ministry is a different thing. Do you see the difference? Communication gifts give each of us the truth so that we can individually improve our relationship with God, priesthood, so that we can individually be prepared to share the truth with others, ambassadorship. But in that middle ground, that center hat, ministry, building up the body, this is something different.

After Bible class, we're not in the business of trying to show somebody how to walk better with God or how to be a better witness, which is all the church seems to want to do. It is ministry. So what is ministry? Well, we're going to see.

Verse 13, till we come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man. Verse 13 ties back to verse 11. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to teach the truth.

That truth does two things. It equips the saints for work of ministry and building up the body of Christ, and it promotes unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. Doesn't that make sense? It's not the works of ministry that unify the body.

It's the truth that does it. Standard of a complete man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men. Remember that, the dice playing, the kubia, K-U-B-E-I-A? It's literally throwing the cubes.

It's, you know, I'm going to give you this thing, and it's hit and miss. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but it works just often enough to keep you coming. Kubia, game playing, cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

You've got methadiah in here. You've got words that talk about intentional deception, intentional deflection, taking advantage of you, sleight of hand. But, verse 15, speaking the truth in love.

All right. I want you to speak a biblical truth. Not now.

I'm speaking in the abstract here. Nobody start speaking in anything. But if I were to say, speak a truth, what would you do? Where would you get that truth? Speaking the truth.

Well, speaking what truth? Where do I get this truth that you want me to speak? Verse 11, speaking the truth that was communicated by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. You learn it. You imbibe it.

You digest it. It becomes a part of your thinking and a part of your perspective. Now you can speak the truth.

It's the same truth. Unity of the faith. Knowledge of the Son of God.

Perfect man. Measure the stature of the fullness of Christ, verse 13. This is the truth.

Everyone is speaking the same truth. Right? Because there is one truth that apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors, and teachers should be communicating. Not many truths.

Not diluted truths. Not twisted truths. Not messed up truths.

One truth. Unity of the faith. Knowledge of the Son of God.

Not, well, I think he's this way. Well, I think he's this way. I think he's, you know, the gentle Jesus.

Well, I think he's, you know, riding the horse with the sword and the blood as high as the bridles. Well, I think he's, you know, the one that provides. Well, I think he's, you know, and you see all these different paintings.

You know, I think Jesus is just, you know, sort of a hail fellow well met common man and aw shucks and can't we all just get along. Well, I think he's formal and waiting for the other Calvinist shoe to drop and, you know, ready to judge and smite. There's no variety in the truth about Jesus Christ.

The truth. There's a variety in what is said about Jesus Christ that is not true. But there should be one truth.

And that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Tossed on the waves. No stability.

We want to be on the land. We want to be the lighthouse on the shore, not the ship plunging into some perfect storm situation where now you see it. Now you don't.

You know, the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald. And that's a long song. As I think one of the I think that almost holds the record for the longest song that ever got on the charts.

Right. What is that like a 12 minute song? Wreck of the Edmund. And what is it? Some guys went out on a ship and disappeared.

Bad storm. Ship's gone. Why you need a 12 minute song for that.

I don't know. I could tell it to you in 12 seconds. But we're not on the sea.

We're not unstable. Tossed about. You know, how do you stabilize yourself in that situation? You can bet the guys on that ship would gladly have stabilized themselves.

These people that disappear in great storms would love to have some means. There is nothing to anchor to. There's nothing to hold on to.

They have a song about our anchor holds and grips the solid rock. Listen, I don't want to even be in the boat. I want to be on the land.

I want to be on the ground. I want to have my feet firmly planted on the rock. I don't want to be on the sand.

And I certainly don't want to be on the water. I don't want to have to worry about my anchor holding. I want to be standing on the rock.

Don't need an anchor. Tossed about every wind of doctrine. Trickery of men.

Cunning craftiness. Cubia. But, rather, speaking the truth in love.

In the sphere of love. Not just raw, hammer on your head truth. It's conditioned by, cushioned by, in the sphere of love.

So that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, Christ. Now, into Him who is the Head, Christ. Think about this letter.

Back up a little bit. Book of Ephesians. Do you remember chapter one? Does your Bible, like mine, when you flip back there, have all of the in Hymns circled? We have all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, verse three.

God chose us in Him, verse four, before the foundation of the world. We have adoption as sons by Jesus Christ, in verse five. We are made acceptable to God in the Beloved, verse six.

In Him we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins, verse seven. We have all things in Christ, verse ten. In Him we have obtained an inheritance, verse eleven.

We have sealing by the Holy Spirit, in verse thirteen. We have a guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. Remember, all of those things.

We have that wonderful menorah, that seven-branched candlestick of truths in Him. All of these are gifts and potentials in Him, right? Well, how do you seize and lay hold of those things? They are available, but so many believers that have salvation, quote-unquote, don't enjoy the benefits of those things. It's like having a coupon that comes in the mail, or now you can print them off the web or show it on your phone.

You know, they can scan it off your phone. Have you ever seen that? You can go down and get a coupon on your phone and they scan it and you get a discount. Well, look, they give you a coupon by whatever delivery means.

Twenty percent off at Kohl's. Twenty percent off. Well, we get these coupons all the time.

Do I possess it? Is it mine? Is it my coupon? Good until the expiration date? Yes. But does it do me any good if I don't take it down and use it? I have it. Oh, it expired.

Oops. And usually you find this out after they've rung up the total and you've handed them your credit card and you say, Hey, wait a minute. This is like \$35 more than I thought it was going to be.

Oh, well, you know, your coupon expired. You can have the coupon, but if you do not use it and use it in the right place and time, it does you no good. Chapter 1 tells us what we have in Christ.

And we do have those things. They are absolutely ours, but do they do us any good? Here's the

answer from Chapter 1 to Chapter 4. Look at this. The whole body.

Speaking the truth in love. Verse 15. Speaking the truth in love.

Notice there's a truth sandwich here. Verse 11. Apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers.

What are they doing? Teaching the truth. You get a hold of the truth. What does it do? It equips you for work of ministry.

It promotes unity, the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. So that speaking the truth in love. Truth came from the communicators.

It has gotten inside me and it's equipping me and it's unifying me with other believers and giving me more knowledge about the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that truth and I can... Remember, this is not speaking the truth. This is truthing it.

It's aletheo. Aletheia is the word that means truth. This is a verb.

This is truthing. Imbued with the truth. Reflecting the truth.

Walking in truth. Speaking truth. You are a truther.

You are truth. What does it say in John 1? Full of grace and truth. Christ likeness is truthfulness.

We are truthful. We're walking embodiments of truth. Reflecting the truth.

Living the truth. As the guy says, Alfred and these other Greek guys say, you can't get aletheo into English without using a whole lot of words. But you're a walking embodiment and reflection of an expression of truth.

In love may grow up in all things into him. Circle that. You grow up in all things into him.

What are the all things? Chapter 1. Grow up into him. That's the in him. How do you cash in the coupon? How do you get the benefit? You hear the truth.

You are positive toward it. You believe it. You meditate on it.

You think about it. You take it into yourself. It becomes a part of you.

And now you can reflect it. You can live it. You can express it.

And when you do that, you grow into him. And in him, that's where the coupon is cashed. That's where all of those chapter 1 benefits are activated and become real.

Your redemption is real. Your forgiveness of sins is real. Your inheritance is real.

Your adoption as God's son is real. The coupon was given to you when you got saved. But you

don't get the benefit of it until you take in the truth, metabolize the truth, digest the truth, have it become a part of you by faith.

You've got to think about it. You say, look, I heard that, but I've got a life to live out here. I've got stuff to do.

Is the truth that you heard going to matter or not? If truth matters to you, then you're an Aletheo person. You're going to live in its light. You know what? Yesterday, I might have done that.

But today, I heard some things out of the word of God, and I believe them. And so today and tomorrow and the day after, I'm not going to do what I would have done yesterday. I can't do that stuff anymore because I know better.

I've got a better knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I realize that believers who know what's going on don't do that, don't think that way, don't accept that nonsense. They do this.

I'm going to keep my sights on glory. This is where chapter 1 becomes real. Through the truth, we grow up into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom we grow up into Him and enter the sphere of all of those in Hims that were in chapter 1. From whom the whole body, which is connected to Him, through what every joint supplies, according to the effectual working by which every part does its share.

That's verse 12. Everybody that is actively grabbing hold of the truth, just like you're doing right now this morning. And if you go from here, and it doesn't just leave.

And tomorrow, you're no different than you were yesterday. The Bible class made no difference to you. Of course, my question is, why did you spend the time? You're here because you recognize that this can and does make a difference.

We should be different people tomorrow than we were yesterday because of what we're seeing in terms of truth in the Word of God. That equips you. You are now tomorrow, even this afternoon, going to be better equipped to be a blessing to your fellow believers and build up the body.

And when the body is built up and draws closer to Christ, grows into Him who is the head, from Him flow chapter 1 blessings. That's what this is talking about in verse 16. From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part, that's you.

Circle part, out in the margin, that's me. Every part. You are one of those parts.

Every part does its share. Causes growth of the body. Causes growth of the body for the building up of itself.

Notice, it doesn't say Jesus builds it up. It builds itself up. We encourage.

We strengthen. We fortify. We support.

We encourage. We forgive. We bless each other.

God's truth gives us the power to be a blessing to each other and to receive blessings from our fellow believers. That's the body of Christ. When the body is healthy, it is going to reflect the glory of God out to the world, ambassadorship.

And it is going to love and appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ and through Him, God the Father, which is priesthood. But this middle part, your place, your part, is essential. Every part.

It doesn't say most of the parts do their work. Or we're dragging along a dead arm that doesn't work. You know, we're dragging along a leg that's paralyzed.

And we're wheeling along like Dr. Xavier, who's in a wheelchair. Wheeling along because the bottom part of the body doesn't work. Every part does its work.

Well, I'll fix it all with my mind. Well, you saw what happened to him. He blew up.

His mind couldn't save him. I just saw that last night. That's why it's on my mind.

The whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies. Notice the universals here. The body is knit and joined together by what every joint supplies.

Not some of the joints or a few of the joints or just the neck joint. Every joint supplies. Every part does its share.

You can't slough off. You can't opt out. Why would you want to? Causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself.

The body builds itself. You are a part of the building of the body of Christ. I am depending on you.

You are depending on me. Look around this room. We are all depending on each other for the building up of the body of Christ.

A better team. A tighter integration of gifts and functions. So that we are in effective presence of Jesus Christ on this earth.

That's what accomplishes priesthood. That's what accomplishes evangelism. And that's what accomplishes ministry.

And ministry is that great center post. And you have been commissioned. You have been gifted just like me.

Your gift is no less important than mine. To the people that God wants it to minister to. You might

have gifts because you're a parent.

You might have gifts because you're a child. You might have gifts because you're a spouse. You might have gifts because you're a co-worker.

You might have gifts because you are in some association with a fellow believer. Whatever it may be. And your gift to that other person or those other people.

Is just as important as a pastor gift is to a church. Or as an evangelist gift is to a group of people who need to hear the good news. Or as the apostle gift was to get these truths down on paper.

You are just as vital and just as important to that part of the body being built up. Don't sell yourself short. Don't take a back seat and say, well, I'm just here to observe.

You're not here to observe. Every part. See the every's and the all's here? That's you.

That's us. That's we. So the obvious conclusion is let's get with it.

Let's take an active part. How do we do that? Focus on the truth. All of this happens by the living and powerful truth of God's word.

It's not stuff on a bible. It's not something to quote or put on a magnet and stick on the fridge. This is viewpoint.

This is perspective. This is how we view life. This is what we use as the basis for our decisions, as the basis for our opinions.

How we treat other people isn't based on the way they last treated us. It's based on this truth. It ought to make a difference.

It does make a difference. Well, we're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, that's just preliminary.

We are going to see seven things. You've never seen these seven things before, but you're going to see them now. And it will blow your mind.

It blew my mind. Let me put it that way. Maybe it won't blow your mind.

Maybe you'll say, just yawn. But for me, it was amazing, particularly in the light of the seven acids of truth decay that we looked at on Friday. I did not see this coming, but the seven acids of truth decay that Douglas Gruthias talks about in chapter one of his book, there are exactly, no more, no less, seven things coming up in this next passage that align with those in quite an amazing way.

That's what we'll see when we come back.

