

W_55_Ephesians_4_7-17.mp3

[00:00:02] This evening we are recording a study in the Epistle to the Ephesians chapter four. The subject being. The not only the unity of the spirit, which we have already partly considered. But those things that flow out from it, commencing in Ephesians four, verse seven, and actually going right down to 17. It doesn't mean to say we shall traverse all that ground this evening, but that's the portion in front of us, as most of those who take these recordings know, it is our habit to read a portion of scripture together. And so if you care to join us and switch off, our reading this evening will be Ephesians Chapter four. Ephesians Chapter four. We have already seen the balance of truth. In this epistle to the Ephesians. How chapters one, two and three giving us the great revelation of doctrine is balanced by chapters 4 or 5 and six and pivoted on the central word of the Epistle, the word worthy. A word itself which introduces the thought of balance and comparison. We have looked at the first enjoyment upon us first with regard to the type of mind with which you should approach this service. And then the first act of worthy walk itself. The type of mind is with all humility of mind as the word is translated elsewhere with all lowliness, longsuffering forbearance and in love. And then the first act of the worthy walk is to safeguard the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

[00:01:57] We've got to hold it fast. But it's to be bound by peace, not by war. We do not strive in the wrong sense. We strive in the true sense, but we've got to watch our step. But it's so easy to enter into a combat and a conflict and to win a victory at too great a cost. We must never forget that we are stewards and that we must, first of all. Be faithful. Uh, that we do not strive with flesh and blood. A tremendous problem we have in front of us to keep the unity of the spirit and to keep it in the bond of peace. Well, now we pass from the unity of the Spirit to other teaching which arises out of it. And that starts with verse seven. Verse seven says, But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure that the gift of Christ. You remember in the I think it's the gospel, according to John, it says concerning our savior, that the spirit was not given by measure unto him. Not even by measure unto him. Well, if we are going to be graced according to the measure of the gift of Christ, it's measureless. There is no possibility of the source of our supply running dry. You might just as well say to somebody who was sitting down by one of the gigantic reservoirs that contain the millions of gallons for this London of ours.

[00:03:38] Now don't you have another cup? Why? Well, you don't want to exhaust the supply. Colin can't think of it. It's measureless. Well, of course that immediately says what sort of persons ought we to be if we are in touch with this fathomless boundless measureless supply that's at our disposal? But the first thing I think we want to remember is. That we had here in this structure. An emphasis upon a measure three times. You'll notice on the chart that you have in front of you. First of all, we have the measure of the gift of Christ in verse seven. Then we have the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ in verse 13. And then we have the measure of every one of the members doing its part. So the pretty comprehensive. The nature of the gift of Christ giving us grace sufficient. The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, marking the goal to which we press and the measure of each member doing its part, which helps in the building up of that very body in love. The next thing is to observe the way in which verse seven commences. By that little word. But. At other times we stressed the value of watching this word, but it brings you to a halt. It says, now be careful. You may make a wrong deduction. But although I've said this. But do watch your step here.

[00:05:13] So what is the little danger? The little danger and it's very prevalent are being swallowed up in a mess. It's the unity of the spirit. It's one body. And you say, well, I don't count. What does it matter about me? Only just a little speck in comparison. That's wrong, friends. This Bible anticipated a good many words that have been uttered since by champions of civil rights and freedom. But, you know, one of the things that has grown in the course of centuries is the recognition of the right of the individual. The individual, not merely a mess, not merely a state, not merely a nation, but the individual. But it's here, he says. Whatever you do, never forget that a unity is made up of units. Obvious, isn't it, that a million is really a million once. You cannot discount the one because you haven't got a one. You can't you can't start arithmetic. He doesn't matter how much you possess. It's all so many ones. That's what a million is. That's what a thousand is. So many he wants. We all count. So he says, Not really. Every one of us. You get the thought better in English if you say, but unto each one of us, Each one of us. We suddenly forget the unity that may comprehend millions. And we simply look at ourselves for the moment to each one of us. If we are members of the Body of Christ, we are not useless members.

[00:07:05] I don't say there are any useless members in the ordinary body we have. But there used to be saying that a good many spare parts in the body that you could do well

without. And when a surgical operation was performed, sometimes they had a chance. They took the things out that they said were no use. They don't do it now. They realize they have their function. But how much more in the spiritual sense, in the true body of Christ? No member is superfluous. No member can be just done without. On the other hand, there's a wonderful adaptation on the part of the ordinary human body. If you have a limb removed or even an organ, you can somehow manage to live. But that's not ideal, is it? And so in the church, there has been. Members who are fully functioning as I should. And yet the church has survived. But what will it be when it reaches the perfect man? The measure being the stature of the fullness of the Christ. So there's plenty on ahead of us. But we'll begin at the beginning. But to each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. You do know the story, and I think it may be worth repeating for the sake of stressing this point about the idea that all I don't count. It's related about a village in the wine growing district of France.

[00:08:31] In earlier days and the old quarry of the village. He expected as a part of his due that each one of the villagers should bring a flagon of wine and pour into the but that belonged to him and that had been done year after year as they got their crop in and they made their wine, they brought their flagon and poured it into the. But as their little gift to the village priest. Well, unfortunately, one year they all had a brainwave. They all said without telling one another, they all said, Well, my little drop doesn't count. So they all took water instead. Of course, if a few of them had taken water, it wouldn't have been so bad. But they all did it. Well, you see what will happen if every member of the body said, Well, I don't count. Well, nothing would count. This body would be so far as a functioning concerned, dead. So let us remember that it's a false modesty. A false modesty to say I do not count. You know the man who had the false modesty? He was rebuked by the Lord. He said, Oh, he said, I knew you were an austere man. And I only had one talent. Well, he said, if you'd have traded with that one talent and you'd have got one in return, that would have been the same percentage of a man who had five and got five.

[00:09:54] He received a well done. So would you. The Lord doesn't say every one of us are apostles. He says. We've all got different functions and different parts to play. But just as surely as in the one body, each one part relates to another. And from another point of view, the apostle has use the figure and say and says the eye cannot say of the hand. I have no need of you. And so we must remember that there can be a false

modesty which will undo the work of grace just as surely as presumption can spoil it also. Strictly speaking, we move from. The word gift of Christ. To verse 11. Like this. But unto every one of us, or each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, that he gave some apostles, some prophets and pastors, so on for a certain work. He picks out some of the outstanding gifts. But before he does that, he seemed to be under some necessity of stressing the ascension of Christ. By the way, before we leave this, as it may be useful to stress. I've referred already to the talents. It says to every one according to his several ability. And there's a there's a balance in the way that God gives gifts to men. In some cases, we have seen that the most unlikely people have received the most unlikely gifts, but they are generally the exceptions.

[00:11:36] And God doesn't give to a person who has no natural ability a job that would be worrying him and which he did very ineffectively in nearly all ways, has a reference to the several ability. The way in which your circumstances, your upbringing and everything will help you to perform this service. It isn't something that's poured into you irrespective of your being. He uses what you have and you lay it at his feet. You do not see any change in the temperament of the apostle Paul. You only find that it is now dedicated to the service of the Lord of grace and love instead of breathing out, threatening and slaughter because you disagreed with him. But he was the same man. And he doesn't ruin or spoil our individual personality. He just takes us and he uses and graces and enables us to lay it at his feet. Well, now the bit that slipped in between. Is the emphasis upon the ascension. Wherefore he said when he ascended on high. He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Now that is a free rendering from Psalm 68. I think it would be wise to turn to Psalm 68 only because the apostle has referred to it and just see the way in which it occurs and how he has used it. Psalm 68. She. It's speaking about Mount Sinai, particularly verse eight, The Earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God.

[00:13:24] Even Syria itself was moved at the presence of the God of Israel. And then we have. Inverse. 17. The Chariots of God are 20,000, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the Holy Place. Again, he is speaking about the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high. Thou hast led captivity captive? Thou hast received gifts for men. Yea. For the rebellious also that the Lord God might dwell among them. Now it's very obvious as we read Psalm 68 especially, we read it right through there is not talking about ascending up to heaven. He's rather talking about ascending the hill of

the Lord. And here we have an example of the way in which sometimes the New Testament quotes the Old Testament. It takes a passage out of the Old Testament, not because that Old Testament passage is teaching the truth that's in view, but it provides just a jumping off ground. It provides just a few words that enable you to start your story. It's very much on the same line that I took the candlestick out of the tabernacle as a picture of the unity of the Spirit. But I had no intention of teaching that when Moses was given the tabernacle to build and put the branch candlestick in its place, that he knew all about the unity of the spirit. That's nonsense. It's only that it was a convenient illustration.

[00:15:05] Now, that would appear to be strange to us. Unless we acquaint ourselves with the type of reasoning that is very prevalent among rabbinical writers. The Apostle Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. And instead of arguing like the the logic of Aristotle teaches the Gentile, he argued along lines that to us would prove nothing. You must remember that. And so he's lifted out a verse and says, Here we have a passage which speaks about ascending. I want you to remember that. Now he says, I'm going to tell you how that applies to Christ. Verse nine. Now that he has ended. What is it? But is he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? Here again, the must stop. Descending into the lower parts of the earth. At each end, it could possibly mean right down into the bowels of the earth. But it doesn't mean that. It means this. He descended first into the lower parts, that is to say, the earth. I've never gotten as high as the top of Mount Everest, and I've left it too late ever to attempt it. But a person who's standing on the top of Mount Everest is a good deal nearer to heaven than the person who's standing in the valley, isn't it? But what difference is there between the men on the top of Everest and the men in the valley? When you compare the distance between either of them and where Christ sits at the right hand of God, far above all.

[00:16:48] Oh, it makes very little difference wherever you look on the earth from heaven. It's the lower part, isn't it? That's all. Not the way into the lower parts. He descended from heaven, which was, above all, to the lower parts. That is to say, the earth. If you want the grammatical expression defined, it is called the genitive of apposition, the one over against the other. The church, which is the body of him, is genitive of apposition. The church is the body, the lower parts of the earth. That's all. Let's look at this word again, verse ten. He is a descended is the same also that ascended. The same way it is it the he it. You notice this is the argument of Philippians

two from another point of view. Verse six, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant. Was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Even the death of the cross. He is the one that descended. He is a descent here, is there from the high glory of equality with God to the death of the cross. Can there be a greater descent conceived? This one that this ended is assignment ascended far above all wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and graced him with the name which is above every name that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth.

[00:18:30] And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father. He that descended is the same that ascended. Far above all heavens. There are hints in the scriptures that there is more than one hidden. You know, in Genesis one, verse one, the Bible opens with a statement that in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And then when the six days creation is commenced, we discover on the second day that he made a firmament or a stretched out thinness and called that firmament heaven. And that firmament is said to be stretched out like a curtain for God to dwell in. It's a tabernacle that when the work is done, we fold it up and put away. But heaven itself will remain unchanged. It's the temporary heaven that's going to depart like a scroll. And how many layers there are? How many heavens there are. We do not know. All that we know is that Christ ascended up far above all heavens, and Hebrews comes along and supplements it and says in Chapter four that Christ as the high priest passed through the heavens. Our version says into the heavens.

[00:19:49] But the word dire diakhaby doesn't mean in. It means through. Always means through. He passed through the heavens, and Hebrews seven says that he's made higher than the heavens, and yet he's in heaven. So we must have one heaven, which is the superlative place where God's throne is, and then heaven beneath it, where his administration goes on temporarily for this world of sin and his purpose of salvation. And the she said that he ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. Can I take you back again in mind to Philippians? Don't turn to it. But in Philippians it says he made himself of no reputation. Now, do you know, I think you do that the actual word is he emptied himself. He entered himself when he descended and when he ascended, he filled all things. Can you understand when it says that in him dwells all the fullness of the

Godhead bodily? It's that which he voluntarily gave up. He now takes back again and unites us with him. The emptiness of Philippians is its glory. The filling of Ephesians or Colossians equally, is its glory. Whether Christ empties himself or whether he is the fullness of all, it's just wonderful. Now this is associated with the church to which we belong. The end of Chapter one. He has put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.

[00:21:24] The fullness of him that filleth all in all. Just now the headship of Christ is limited. To the body. He is not universally accepted yet. It's much the same spirit that we read in Hebrews two. We see not yet all things under his feet, but we see Jesus. He started. We see. Not yet. Christ accepted as head over all things, but to the church. Yes. So we are the are the sort of an anticipation of the great goal to which God is pressing. We are called not only the body of Christ, but the fullness of him. That one who in his turn fills. All in all. What a title. What a breathtaking thought to think that we can be in some measure related to Christ as God is, as Christ is related to the invisible God. If it weren't said in Scripture, we should hardly dare to take these words into our mouths. Now we get to the BET brackets closed. We receive gifts. And these gifts are from the Ascended Christ. Now, he says he gave some apostles. Perhaps you begin to realize now that he had a reason for slipping in the Ascension. If you were asked to, what chapter in the New Testament would you turn to discover the names of the 12 Apostles? I suppose you know that you would turn to Matthew the 10th chapter. Shall we do it? Just to make sure it isn't? Every one of us could give the names of the 12 apostles.

[00:23:11] We know a few of them, but not all of them. Matthew Kane. And when he had called unto him his 12 disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the 12 apostles. Are these the first Simon who is called Peter and Andrew, his brother. James, the son of Zebedee and John, His brother. Philip and Bartholomew. Thomas and Matthew the publican. James, the son of Alphaeus and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus. Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. These 12 Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans. Enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Now, this company of 12 were called and chosen by Christ when he was here on the earth. On the earth. And they had a limited ministry.

They were to not go into the way of the Gentiles. They were to go to Israel. Now after the apostle. I'm an apostle. And some may say to him, but you weren't there when our savior called those 12. No, he said. He that called name when he was on earth has since called then after his ascension. And Paul was the first of the apostles to be called after his ascension.

[00:24:48] Others are named. It's not quite possible to say how many apostles belong to the new order, but I think you can count seven. There's Barnabus, who is also associated with Paul by the name of an apostle. And then he sometimes speaks about us apostles when he's writing the Epistles. So there's a few in the offing that have been mentioned before, but it's very clear that there is an intention on the part of Paul to draw your attention to the fact that there was one order of apostles, the 12 which are associated with Israel and the New Jerusalem, and sitting upon 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel and another set who were not called until Christ ascended and sat down at the right hand of God. And who Paul is the chief. The 12 were forbidden to go to the Gentiles. Paul was definitely chosen to go to the Gentiles. And so we have a clear cut definition that there were more than one order of apostolic ministry. Should we now look at this a little closer. And he gave some apostles the word apostles. Apo Stello has come over into our English language, but it's, strictly speaking, still a Greek word. Apo means away from. And Selo is the verb. I said. An apostle is one who is sent. Now. Christ is the apostle. Hebrews Chapter three says Consider him the apostle and high priest of our profession.

[00:26:34] Christ Jesus. He was the apostle because he was sent. He's the high priest because he's gone back. He that descended is the same as ascended. He's the apostle and high priest of their profession. He's the apostle and head so far as we are concerned. Over and over again in John's gospel. You read that the word, the words saintly. He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life. And in the great prayer of John 17 that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And this he says I send you. Even as he hath sent me. He that receives you receives me. And he that receiveth me receives not me with him that sent me. He is apostolic succession friends if you want one that every one that the Lord sends. It ultimately goes back to the father that sent him for your only representing him, however small that representation may be. Or to make a difference to our attitude, to one another and to the world and to our witness. To think that however small the embassy we may be

conducting, however slight the work may be. We have been shaped. So why do a saint who represents the father to this poor world? So we were not all apostles except in the widest possible sense. He gave some apostles. He gave some prophets. Now, would you notice that the apostles and prophets were both inspired people? The Apostle didn't need or wish to read a book.

[00:28:17] He spoke what we say Ex-cathedra. He spoke as an apostle. He didn't merely read scripture. He wrote scripture himself. End of profit. He didn't always have to turn to the book and read what was there. He spoke by inspiration. And if you turn to chapter two, you'll discover that the apostles and prophets are spoken of as a foundation ministry. Verse 19, chapter two. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. There is no idea that the apostles and prophets are usurping the place of Christ. He is the one great platform upon which all must build. You see, Paul speaks of Christ as the chief cornerstone, and Peter speaks of Christ as the chief cornerstone. And they are both building different parts of a building, but they're all resting upon the same Christ. He underlies all redemption, whether you belong to Israel or whether you belong to the Gentiles, whether your kingdom or church or body or bride. The chief cornerstone. But unto that foundation was the lesser lower lowlier foundation of the apostles and prophets. They were a foundation ministry, and they haven't been continued. All down the ages have been false prophets and there have been false apostles.

[00:29:49] But no real ones. No genuine ones. They were given they did their work and they finished. Well, what follows are we now left in this present day with no ministry? Oh, no. We haven't got apostles and we haven't got prophets, but we've got the apostles words in these epistles. We've got all the Scripture has to say with regard to things to come, whether that's the main meaning of the word prophet or not. So what do we want now? We want faithful men whom the Lord will give some measure of natural ability, who will be able to help others to understand what's already written. So what does it say? He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. Will you turn to second, Timothy, just for a moment? And you know that second Timothy is the last epistle that Paul wrote. So this is sometime after Ephesians was written. Paul is now about to finish his course and he doesn't say to

Timothy, Now, Timothy, you've had hands laid upon you, Timothy. So you're going to be another an apostle. The Apostle Timothy. Oh, no, no. He never called an apostle. What he is called is an evangelist. Two. Timothy four. Verse five. But watch thou in all things endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. So Timothy was the second order. He wasn't the first.

[00:31:29] He wasn't the apostle. He was the evangelist. Now, what about the teachers? Chapter two. Now, therefore, my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me. Among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. So we've got all the ministry there. See, we've got the foundation Ministry. The beginning, the apostle and the prophet. And then we have the subsequent ministry for the continuation and the building, the evangelist and the teacher. The evangelist is a sort of a lower order of an apostle, and the teacher is a lower order of prophet. If I had any gift of teaching, I don't know. That's a matter of conjecture yet. I don't speak out of my own heart and out of my own head like the prophet might have spoken straight away. No, I have to go to what the book says, and it's a matter of faithfulness. And you do notice that it says apt to teach. Of his earlier saying it was according to their several ability and it may have flashed through your mind or no, God can overrule all our difficulties and all our objections. Of course he can. But normally, normally I say that's all God gives. The gift of teaching to a man is act to teach says so. God doesn't work, unnecessary miracles. And a person who is absolutely struck down when he says that to speak to anybody.

[00:33:00] Well, God can use him. Of course, with stammering lips, but in the ordinary way. It takes what you bring to him. I decided if I didn't use it and if you have if you want you to be a teacher, I think it will give you an access to teach. And if he wants you to speak in a building which is a fair size, he will give you a voice that will reach the person in the back seat. I think so. Generally. Normally, sometimes it may be the other way around because we can't leave it gone. Well, now there's one other title slipped in here that you notice. He gave some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. Pastors and teachers. Now, you might know as possibly you do already that the word pastor is just the ordinary, everyday word for shepherd. When it says in John ten of the Lord Jesus Christ, I am the good shepherd. That's the word, pastor. So let's put it in. He gave some apostles and some prophets. That was the foundation in history. And that work's done. And suddenly the angel lists and some shepherds and teachers. Two thoughts seem to

be here. First, without labouring the point that it is a shepherd. Because you see, you've got to be a little bit watchful about these figures if you are going to be absolutely rigid with regard to the word shepherd.

[00:34:27] You've got to be absolutely rigid with regard to the word sheep. And if somebody says baa to you, you mustn't be upset because that's what a sheep says. What would you say? Oh, no, we're not actually sheep. Oh, you're not? I see. Well, they're not actually shepherds then. It was. It was cut both ways, wasn't it? So all through the Old Testament Scripture, you get the idea of those who have the care of God's people. It's the one figure that stands out more than another in the scriptures is the shepherd. Oh, what a picture it is. The rod and the staff that is spoken of by Psalm 23. The defense of the flock against the attack and the staff, the shepherd's crook to pull them back, to lead them to correct them just a little if needs be, the shepherd. And now there are those who spoken about us false shepherds and shepherds who feed themselves instead of looking after their flock and hireling shepherds who leave the flock defenseless and so on and so on and so on. Then of course, there is a very intimate relationship because the people of Israel particularly are called sheep. We are the sheep of thy pasture. And it's also to be admitted and acknowledged that no time do you read in Paul's prison epistles that the church of the one body, the church of which Ephesians stands at the forefront are ever called sheep? So what? We have in our gift of ministry.

[00:36:02] To a church. We've got a shepherd given and he's got no sheep to look after. Now, I do know some few people. Who say that's an ideal job. You know the place where the work is given out. All you'd have people queuing up for that today. But I'm sure of this, that our savior never gave anybody an office that was a mere sinecure. If he gave him a pastor's job, there were sheep to look after. And if there are no sheep inside the church of the one body. Do you mean to tell me there are no sheep outside? Isn't that the very function of John's gospel? To put a great ring round the smaller ring of the church of the one body and say, See, you are the privileged people inside the small ring. You are members of the body of Christ. You are not cheap, but outside you at your have any door in the very street in which you worship and live. There are sheep and you can step out from your glorious calling of the church of the one body, and you can go to those poor sheep and you can teach them all that John's gospel teaches and you're not betraying the truth. That's what God wants you to do. You can always step down from

your high position and lift somebody up a little bit as long as you do not betray the trust that's been given to you.

[00:37:22] If by doing that, you have to break the unity of the Spirit, then God forbid. But it doesn't follow. So I don't know whether you've ever criticized some child of God who saw the truth of the mystery, who rejoiced in the high calling of Ephesians. And yet he spent most of his days down some dingy back street in a tin chapel, and all he could do was to preach John 3:16 to the other sheep, which John Ministers do or don't think criticize him any more for it. He may be may have been one of the gifts of the Ascended Christ. So we've now got so far that these gifts have been given for a purpose. You won't notice there are three ministries involved in this section. We've already looked at the three measures we have. What I will try to explain in a moment in verse 12, the Ministry of Readjustment. That's verse 12. Then in verse 15, we have the Ministry of Growth may grow up into him in all things. And then in verse 16, the Ministry of edification or building. Now, first of all, let's have a look at this goal in verse 12. All these gifts were there apostles and prophets at the beginning or the subsequent evangelists, pastors and teachers afterwards? Say in front of them a goal. For. The perfecting of the saints. Now there are two words which are translated perfect, and they must be kept apart.

[00:39:03] And. The first one, the one we know so well, is derived from the word, which means to reach the end. I'll put it on the board and. The word telos. Telos is the word end. Then cometh the end. The word canio's is a person who reaches the end. And so he goes on unto perfection. It's the word used by the apostle in a verbal form when he said, I have finished my course. The course being the the race course that he was running, he touched the tape at the end. And so the word perfect, the one that is often used, means to go right to the end. So we have our word television telescope, telegram. All the words that have to do with telephone, sending a message or seeing something that was a long way off at the end. That's one word. But this word. It means rather to knit together. So perhaps you'd like to see the first occurrence in the New Testament. Matthew the fourth chapter. Matthew the fourth chapter, verse 21. And going on. Thence, he saw other two brethren, James, the son of Zebedee and John, his brother, in a ship with Zebedee, their father. Perfectly as that word is mending their nets. If ever you came to this chapel, I don't think you'd get it just now because our Sunday school has gone down to very, very small number.

[00:41:03] But when there were a little bit stronger, if you were up here and the Sunday school was down there, you may have faintly heard them singing a chorus. I will make you fishers of men. You know that, right? And then they started again. Wait a minute. They're singing something else. I've never seen that in the book. And they sing down there. The second verse. I will make you menders of nets. Menders of nets. The idea was to say to the children, even look, look, God knows what he's about. First of all, our saviour called two men who were casting their net into the sea. He said, I'll make you fishers. And then he called two men who were not casting a net into the sea. They were on the shore, mending the nets. What earthly good? Oh, can't say earthly good when it's a sea, can you? But what good would a net be if it was never mended? You see the balance in God's gifts to men. He doesn't make all of us evangelists. He doesn't make all of us teachers. He doesn't make all of us pastors. He distributes his gifts. Some are catching the fish and some are making the nets. I've had to take that line with some people who in the early days criticized me badly because I wasn't anticipating Billy Graham. But God never gave me that gift. He never told me to do it.

[00:42:33] If he said to me, I want you to be a teacher, am I going to turn around and say, Oh, but what are they all going to say? Because I'm not preaching. Do you think that matters? It didn't matter to me. Thank God. And so we've got this mending. That's a ministry mending. Will you look at another passage which uses the same word Galatians? Chapter six. Galatians Chapter six Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault and always like to remember this as two possible translations and give ourselves the benefit of it. You can be overtaken in a fault, aren't you? You're just caught doing it. That's a terrible position to be in. But you can be overtaken by a thought. It somehow catches you up and trips you up before you know where you are. Well, whichever it is. Ye which are spiritual restore, that's the word made perfect readjust. And it's found in medical works in the days of the Apostle Paul, written by Greeks for the adjusting of a fractured limb. So here's the Ministry for the Readjusting of the Saints. Now, when you say readjusting. It suggests that there been some fracture or dislocation or something, hasn't there? Well, there has been. A most violent dislocation has happened. At the end of the Acts of the Apostles, the people of Israel were given their very last opportunity to consider. The Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Repent and believe.

[00:44:23] The apostle Paul spent a whole day going through Moses and the prophets concerning him, and they disagreed among themselves. And he knew because he was a prisoner. Now, he had been told. He knew that the time had come. Well, spake the Isaiah the Prophet. He quotes that dreadful passage which speaks about their eyes being closed and their hearts hardened lest they should be healed. And then he said, The salvation or the healing, the healing of God is sent to the Gentiles. As a terrible dislocation because you see, up until that moment, a Gentile was a wild olive grasped into the olive tree of Israel. Now the olive tree is gone. Where does he come in? He needs to be a readjusted to his new calling. And so at the beginning, there was this Ministry of Readjustment. But as far as we are concerned, that's all over. There must have been many things explained which we would like to have had explained in the epistle to the Ephesians, but it is assumed in Ephesians that the adjustment is taking place. They know the new calling and we got to start where they left off and say, well, we must take things as they are written. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. We belong to Christ. We are members of His body. We discover no reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and so on. But these had to be readjusted.

[00:45:49] They had to be given their new orientation. For the readjusting of the sails. For the work of the ministry. And it may seem to suggest that when once a saint has been readjusted himself, he will not be then put on one side and say, No, you sit there quietly. That's all there is. Matters to you. Oh, no. Now, having been readjusted himself, he could start helping somebody else. Because, you see, the figure is a body. And every one of these folks who are believers and saved every one of them, without exception, is a member. And every member has its place and its function. So it's for the work of the ministry. And what particular work of the ministry? What is the one thing they've got to think of, first of all? Contrary to usual, teaching, not worldwide evangelizing. That must be done by somebody. Friends? Oh, yes, we are saying that. Agree. But what does it say here? That's our first concern for the edifying or the building up of the body of Christ. Supposing we agree. And it would be a dreadful thing if we didn't. But God knows his own business best. Supposing we admit. That it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful, and that if God has said to you and to me now, if you belong to this company and calling, will you leave me? Said God, to look after the worldwide evangelism of evangelizing, will you allow me to send other people, perhaps not exactly on the same ground that you are? Will you allow me to tell you that what I want you to do is to see to it that you build up the body of Christ.

[00:47:42] And if you say, well, it looks a bit narrow minded to do that. In whose mind does it seem narrow minded? Oh, Mr. So-and-so. Well, what does Mr. So-and-so count in the estimate of what God has already said? It's not that we're indifferent, but we must put first things first. And God has put this first. And I have a feeling that if only the church of the one body had been built up, it would have been such an exhibition of the purpose of grace that it would be preaching our gospel more clarion toned than any amount of evangelistic campaigns could ever be. But that's another matter. Now we've got a gold effulgence. Till we all come. Till we all arrive. So we're not there yet. Do we all arrive at something? This time, not the unity of the spirit, but the unity of the faith. It's one of the things that perplex leaders of churches today. It's a sort of anxiety and a great snare. Because there is no yet. No yet. Unity of the faith among the believers. You and I believe certain things. We meet another person. He's most obviously and evidently a Christian. But some of the things we believe he abominates and some of the things he believes we cannot tolerate.

[00:49:13] Well, now that multiplies. The more individuals you meet, the more denominations you know, the more it seems that instead of being a unity in the faith is anything but a unity. And so at long last, the temptation is yielded to it's been yielded to before to meet together and to discuss not what we are to believe, but how much we can give away of the faith in order to attain to a unity. You believe so and so will you drop that? And I believe so and so. And I'll drop that. And you drop that and you drop that. And then we all be united. That's not the unity of the spirit. That's compromise. So it may be much as we would desire it. It may be something that will never attain here immediately. It's something to which we press one day. One day we're going to see eye to eye. One day we're going to know what the faith is and believe it entirely without additions. But whether we're ever going to attain it by our meetings and our books and our studies, here is another matter. But isn't it good to know that it's on the program that even though we may be far from it at the moment, it's something to which we press? The perfect user sites. Do we all come? In or unto the unity of the faith.

[00:50:42] Now, this unity of the faith embraces so much that I want to ask you to allow me to take it as a fresh subject, not to rush it at the end, but we'll read it till we all arrive unto the unity of the faith. And of the knowledge of the Son of God. We'll have to discuss whether that means knowledge or whether it means knowledge, because a little

difference. We'll have to discuss why the word son of God comes here. Because do you know this? That that's the only time that the son of God is mentioned in the whole of Paul's prison epistles? And there's a reason we must seek to find why. And to a perfect man. And this word man rules out children and women. This is the word which is translated husband in the next chapter. And it doesn't it doesn't rule out you, dear friend, you are sitting listening to me. But it does mean that you cannot be a perfect man and be the bride of the lamb at the same time. Because this cannot comprehend a woman. It must be a male. It must be a husband. So the church of the one body cannot at the same time be the bride. We have to look at that and a measure, the measure to which we are pressing or look at it, the measure of the stature. Now, stature is so many feet and inches, but the same word is used in John's gospel.

[00:52:12] When the parents said he is of age, not his five foot ten, but he is of age for grace. Real man is at last attained the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. And if you take this apart and divide it up into its parts with a word of as the break, you'll find it's sevenfold again. We add a sevenfold unity of the spirit. Let me read it again and put an undue stress on the word of and see the way in which it is subdivided. Till we all come in, the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a. O Son of God unto a perfect man. Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. You might say, well, that's, that's rather low down. That's playing with it. But still, there it is, step by step, a sevenfold unity of the spirit, a sevenfold unity of the faith. So, God willing, when we meet together next time, we will endeavor to open up as far as God gives us grace, the meaning of that next unity. We've had to spend time on the unity of the Spirit with the one baptism and the one hope, and the one Lord here will have spent another time on the unity of the faith and see whether, by the grace of God we can gather lessons for ourselves and blessings out of it afterwards to our fellows.