

W271_Unity_Of_The_Spirit_3.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a tape recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book, and it is number three of the series. The Unity of the Spirit. It is our custom at this meeting to read a portion of Scripture. And those of you who are listening to this tape recordings, you care to join us, will you switch off for a little while and read together with us? The first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. Let us remind ourselves, shall we, as we open the book once again, that we are dealing with the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. And the fourth chapter opens the great practical outworking of truth. We had before us in our first study an exhibition of the fact that this epistle divides itself into two parts chapters one, two and three being a revelation of doctrine and chapters four, five and six, the exhortation to a corresponding worthy walk or practice. Now, we looked at the way in which the Apostle introduces this chapter. He calls himself the prisoner of the Lord. Whereas in chapter three, he called himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ, or the revised version, the prisoner of Christ Jesus. And you may say, Well, that's splitting hairs. But when we come to consider that the word Lord only occurs once in chapters one, two and three and occurs 16 times in chapters four, five and six, then you realize that the very titles of Christ have a bearing.

[00:01:37] If if I'm thinking of Him as my savior, I think of him as Jesus Christ. If I think of Him as Lord, I think of one who has a power and a right to command me and tell me what to do. And so the Lord emphasizes the practical side. He said to his disciples, You call me master and Lord, and you do well, for so I am. And if I'm your Lord and master. Shouldn't you do the things that I command you? So we first of all, notice that and then we notice another feature. The one who is writing this epistle was a representative of the absent sainted Christ. He calls himself an ambassador. He had full rights and full powers and occasionally exercised them. A man was blinded because he was opposing the gospel. A blinded by Paul. He threatened the church at Corinth that he would come to them with a rod if needs be. And yet, here, instead of exercising that authority, he says, I beseech you. And he wrote my name on a letter. He said, I could command you. I know, but I rather would beseech you. So he's beginning to emphasize the spirit in which these things are to be worked out, I beseech you. And then he says, I beseech you that you might walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Now we speak about a walk. A person person's walking life. And we speak about his colleagues and they're more or less the same.

[00:03:14] The walk and the calling can be used of a doctor that is walk in life or that is calling. So that in a sense. It's only two sides of one thing. I think I've told you before that once in Aberdeen I even ventured to hold out a half a crown on a palm in your hand, and I knew it was quite safe, even in Aberdeen. I said, There's a half a crown for anybody in this congregation who can come forward and take one half only. That even that even stopped in aberdonian. You cannot really divide doctrine and practice except. For the purposes of examination, they go together. For you certainly do not believe all scripture is given by inspiration of God. If at the very self-same time you're consistently and persistently denying its teaching or walking contrary to it. So you see, we're only saying this is what does Paul say in Romans the 12th chapter, your reasonable or logical service? There's nothing extraordinary about it, except it's a very extraordinary thing to find any one of us. Walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Or walking worthy of such a calling that we have received. When the apostle was setting up this calling. Later on, writing to Timothy, he said, Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according with his own purpose and grace that was given us in Christ Jesus before time began.

[00:04:45] Well, that's only a summing up of what we were reading in chapter one there. His great thought was that you may know what is the hope of his calling. Now he says, I want you to walk worthy of that calling. And when he speaks about the unity of the spirit, he says, There's one hope of your calling. So it's picking it all up now and focusing our attention upon what manner of persons we should be. If this high and holy and heavenly calling is ours by grace. Of course, it's enough to make most of us feel it's hopeless. Well, that's a good thing to feel like that. First of all, as long as you don't remain like it all the time. First of all, let's discredit ourselves and do it decently and then afterwards say, Well, if I keep on like that, I'm really I'm really saying that God won't help me and cannot help me. So in all the consciousness of our inability and weakness. We listened to his injunction to rise and walk. Now, should we say, because I haven't got any ability. But you know what I'm going to say, don't you? There was a man for 38 years, a cripple. And the Lord said to him, Take up thy bed and walk. Well, he might have said, Now, Lord, that's an impossibility. He didn't. He did it.

[00:06:02] There was another man in the synagogue who got a withered arm, and the Lord said to him, Stretch it forth. But he might have said, Well, that's the very thing I

can't do. But he did. So you see where we discredited ourselves. And we should, if we keep on shuffling our feet too much, we are then denying the very grace of God which is all sufficient for all our needs, if only we use it by wholly. Well, now we must make another move. And we found in verse two, before ever, he tells us what the unity of the Spirit is. He wanted to make sure the manner of people we were that were working it out. So it was with all lowliness not high mindedness, with all loneliness and meekness. That has to do with ourselves within and then with long suffering and forbearance. That's where the other person. So there's our dual relationship, ourselves and our attitude to others. And this all embraced in the two words in love. Whenever we come to the newer aspect this evening and we find that the words in verse three I think will occupy most of our time. You won't sit there fidgeting and say, Oh, well, we needn't stop so long on these things. Friends, this is our opportunity to stop on them so that we can understand as far as it humanly possible what God intends when he uses certain terms. And this verse says, Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

[00:07:31] Now, first of all, I don't think I will spend time in running over many scriptures which speak about walk. But I do want to make sure that we see that the apostle was keen about this. So just briefly, and if you just let me turn to the passages, I'll read them so that we don't take too much time. Romans The sixth chapter. And verse four. Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Even so, we also should walk in newness of life. So that in the one walk at the beginning of another, there were then leaving all others to your own search. Let's come to the epistle, to the Ephesians itself. And see how the this walk and calling are linked together. Ephesians two. And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world. So there's a walk that once characterized those who were now blessed. Well, now, a little bit further down the chapter, he says in verse eight, For by grace are ye saved through faith? And that not of yourselves, It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.

[00:09:07] So in that chapter he just gives two walks only. The walk of the old creation. The walk of the new. But he doesn't go into details about it. But when you come to the practical section, well, that's the place to go into details with regard to this walk. So we'll

look a bit closer. Chapter four, verse one. I, therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. And then in verse 17, it's put in the negative. This, I say therefore, and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind. This is the very opposite of the word loneliness, which is the word humility of mind. And that's the pattern in which he's working. First of all, he tells you positively that he puts it negatively. And then following that, we have in chapter five, verse one and two. Be ye, therefore, followers of God as dear children and walk in love. And when we come to that passage, we shall find this is no mere sentiment. It's as Christ also has loved us. And how did he do it? Looking down in pity from heaven now coming down in pity from heaven. And hath given himself for us an offering. A sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. Walk in love.

[00:10:27] Then presently he says verse eight. For ye were sometime darkness. But now are ye liked in the Lord. Walk as children of Light. And then he says in the same chapter, verse 15. See then that ye walk circumspectly not as fools, but as wise. So you see, there's a good deal of stress in this epistle on the walk. There's the old walk. There's the new walk. And then the subdivision of that walk. As it has to do with walking in love. Walking in light. Walking in wisdom. Have a look at the next term. The word calling our translators. Uh, they must have been did it purposely. The word vocation is the word calling and the two words, if you're looking at the original, you can see are practically the same. That ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called. But of course it makes better English sometimes to vary the word. And it also gives us this thought that the word vocation. As a deeper meaning, hasn't it? I mean, you may read that a nurse was interviewed. And they said, Now look here, your sister is working at a factory and she gets the whole weekend off and all she does is to pick up two things and drop them into two holes. And she's getting £12 a week and you're slaving away at this hospital as a nurse and you're getting that half the money and you don't get the time off that she does.

[00:11:58] Well, you know the answer, don't you? This nurse says, Well, I can't help myself. I wish I could earn more money. I wish I could have more time. But I feel I must do this. That's a vocation. That's not merely getting a job. So, friends, we have a vocation. We have a calling. And the Apostle Paul puts it, Your woe is me if I do not. Dispensation is laid upon me. I can't help myself. We have a calling, a vocation, and it's

claiming us. And we ought to seek to honor God in connection with it. The word in the original is precise coming from the Greek word *Kaliyan*. So if you spell. Calling it English with a K. You're getting near to it because the Greek word is K. That's the origin of. See, the word enters into our word. Ecclesiastic or ecclesiastic? X means out of and carry out a call a called out company. And that is the word church. It has no reference to a building in the Scriptures. It doesn't matter whether it's a corrugated iron building or a gothic cathedral, it doesn't matter. That's not a church in the estimate of God. The church of the people in it who are a people called out by God for whatever calling he has revealed as their hope and their prospect. Now this. Word pieces occur several times in Ephesians, and this is our opportunity to acquaint ourselves.

[00:13:30] First of all, in Ephesians 1:18, the passage we read. After having taught them a certain amount. He then prays for them. But there comes a moment when more teaching would only choke a person unless the teaching you receive begins to work its passage. Well, you better not read any more for a bit. Because you see, truth is only truth, not only if you agree to it with a nod of your head, but if you harmonize with it with the way you walk. Otherwise, it's just a doctrine that you profess but you do not possess. So he says here, the eyes of your understanding, being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling. So we're very concerned that they should be acquainted with the things that are related to their calling. The first thing is, after the moment is given the first phase of his teaching in Ephesians 1 to 14, and then in Chapter four, we walk worthy of this calling. And in chapter four, verse four, it's all related to the hope, the hope of his calling. When you come to Philippians, there's a little change in. It's worthwhile turning the page just to see this. Philippians Chapter three. He says, Brethren, in verse 13, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

[00:15:15] Now, that's a very great distinction to be observed. In Ephesians, it's the hope of the calling. I do not running the race with the hope in view. And you are not wondering whether you're ever going to reach it. That's yours by grace, the hope of your calling. But when you come to Philippians, even this man who knew his salvation was sure. He says, Not as though I were already perfect. Oh, I've still got a bit to run. But I forget the things which are behind. I reach forward and I run according to this mark, not

for the hope, but for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And I partly quoted at the beginning two Timothy chapter one, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling. So it's a high calling and it's a holy calling. And that should, of course, be reflected a little bit in our walk, shouldn't it? All possible. This is a pretty big demand to make on any of us. But it throws us back on the fact that it's not by our own power, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord. Is the Old Testament passage which comes to mind. Well, now all that is leading on to this verse three of chapter four. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit.

[00:16:34] What is this word? Endeavoring? Well, I think we must stop there, because this is the first word of his exhortation. What does he mean by endeavoring? Well, it on the surface, it means as though you put a certain amount of time and thought and possibly energy into it. The use of this particular word in ordinary classic Greek was a serious lifetime occupation. Well, let's think of it. This is not really something that you would think about when you come to a meeting on a Sunday morning or on a Thursday evening. This is something which is a serious occupation. And I think there are a few begin to realize it is an occupation. Because it doesn't really mean how you conduct yourself in a meeting with other Christian friends, but how you conduct yourself all the time. So should we pause a moment to get a little idea of this exhortation, this word? It is translated in some passages. Diligence. And I was just looking up the word diligence. Our English word comes through the Latin from one of the words in the Latin language, which means to love. It's an occupation that you're following, but your move for love in doing it. You may also know that diligence is the name of a coach that used to be used in France. A diligence because they borrowed from the word, which gives us the word diligence, the word speed or despatch.

[00:18:12] Whenever we look at the original itself, shall we? There are three words that I'm giving them to you so that you can look them up and pursue it further. And the root of the word is s p o u d. Svod spell. Dazo is the verb. Spell. Spell Dios is the adverb and spell is the noun. Forgive the grammar that we can't very well help ourselves. Now, would you like to take 2 or 3 references? Galatians Chapter two, verse ten. This is the verb spelled basso. Galatians two, verse ten. Only they would that we should remember the poor the same which was also forward. Forward to do. He was diligent about it all. He didn't have an arm that and said, Oh, I don't see that that matters. He was forward to do it. And then without turning to the package, because the majority of you know this

package. Two Timothy 2:15 study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Now, there are some people who have been rather fogged by that word study. You know, the person who says, oh, I'm not a scholar. Well, you don't have to be a scholar to be a workman. It's a workman as addressed. And its diligence. What? Scholarship? Diligence. Be diligent. To show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. And then in two Peter, chapter one, verse ten, he urges his readers to be diligent.

[00:20:10] That's where the word comes in our version. Wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election. Sure. For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. So they were to be just doctrinaires and nodding their head to a doctrine and never allowing it to filter through into daily life and practice diligence. Well, then in Philippians chapter one. Uh, chapter two. I'm sorry, verse 28. We read these words. He's speaking about Epaphroditus, who was sick nigh unto death, verse 28 I to him. Therefore, the more carefully that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be less sorrowful. Wait a minute. A more carefully is the word more carefully. See, there was a kid about it. He was diligent. He was watchful. And then, for one example, in Romans, the 12th chapter. Romans, the 12th chapter, verse eight. Or he that exhorted on exhortation. He that give it let him do it with simplicity. Or I wish that was understood by folks who give money with simplicity. Sometimes a gift is spoiled by the way in which it's given. Savvy isn't a word for asshole. Don't stop giving friends, but do it with simplicity. He that ruleth with diligence. I was going to give you one, but you don't mind second one, do you? I think it comes in verse 11. In this using this same expression.

[00:22:03] Verse 11. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit. Serving the Lord. Not slothful. Using. Well, that's the sort of person we should be activated. But that sort of spirit and diligence and you can find any other passage is given up for them. I've given you a specimen, but you can see it's no child's play, is it? He uses this word with discrimination and care. And he says to us in the in a measure, make it your business. The word includes the word business. Not busy ness in the wrong sense, but business. The thing that should occupy your thought, your plans, your affairs and what you possess and your time you have. But you say it looks as though it's a full time job. I think it is, friends. But that doesn't mean to say we must neglect all the things of daily

life, because to neglect them is not to serve the Lord. The thing is to be complete as far as is humanly possible and all round witness to the truth, we believe. So there's a stress upon diligence. Now what are we supposed to do? What are we supposed to do? We're supposed to keep. The unity of the spirit. There is no word here. That means you have to form a unity of the spirit. You haven't got a maker unity. God forbid there are too many so-called unities that are made by man, and that's all they amount to man made unities.

[00:23:38] Now, if you will look back on the before we do that, I want you to notice that in verse three, this unity of the spirit is to be kept in the bond of peace, not merely peace. The article is there. Now, that's not good English, but it doesn't matter. It's the truth. And when the article is used in a Greek passage like this, it refers to something that's already been said many times. Now, why should he say in the bond of peace? I hope your mind is saying, what? Peace. I mean, if you ask that question, you may get the answer. Will you turn to chapter two? Is there a trinity in chapter two? This has to do with peace. And X-rays are the spirit and having one body in it. Oh, yes. Well, then, friend, you can never possibly keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace if you're ignorant about chapter two. But this is the unity that the spirit has already made, and you haven't got to make it. You've got to preserve it. You've got to keep it. So let's go back then. He says in verse 12, He's reminding you and me that in those early days we were without Christ being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. That was our condition as Gentiles.

[00:25:03] But now in Christ Jesus, you sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace. Who has made the boast. The word comes in front of the boat and the twain each time. He is our peace. Who hath made the boast one and have broken down the middle wall of partition between us? Having abolished in his flesh the enmity. That's the opposite of the word peace. Even the law of commandments contained in ordinances or decrees. For to make in himself of Twain one new man. So making peace. So what a tremendous lot. Oh, yes. You see, when our saviour first came, he presented himself to the people of Israel and not to the Gentiles. He said to his apostles, go not into the way of the Gentiles, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And the Apostle Paul was the first one to be given the title The Apostle of the Gentiles. And during the after the Apostles, the Gentile and the Jew were linked

together. And Paul described the unity in Romans the 11th chapter, and told the Gentile believers that they were like wild olive grass, contrary to nature, into the true olive tree. And then the olive tree was cut down and the people of Israel were dismissed. And the people of Israel have been blinded for 2000 years. They are still. And you who are believers tonight are not grafted into the olive tree of Israel.

[00:26:38] For there is no olive tree of Israel to be grafted to. Something has happened. Now the middle wall of partition refers to the temple that was at Jerusalem. And the Temple of Jerusalem had an outer court into which a Gentile could go. And then there was a wall. And that wall has a series of slabs. And there was an inscription on them. And as I've said before in these meetings, I say again, you could actually see one of those slabs, not a copy of it, in the offices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, just the back of Selfridges in Oxford Street. And you can look at a stone that, you know, our saviour looked at and the apostle Paul did. And that stone says to this effect, No one being a foreigner is permitted beyond this balustrade. Whoever does will be responsible for his death, which will immediately follow. That was the middle wall of partition that kept a Jew and a Gentile separate, and that was built up by the decrees of Acts 15, which said that the Jew was going to keep all the law of Moses. But the Gentile believer was left off by just A44 things, mainly to do with ritual observances in connection with food and so on. Well, if that's all God. That's all things been demolished and a new man has been created. Now go. Go on. So making peace.

[00:28:06] This is the bond of the peace that is already explained in chapter two that he now refers to in Chapter four is to be held in that bond. Friends, we are not dealing with a trifle. This unity is held together in the bond of peace which are sealed by the blood of Christ. He is our peace. So making peace and that he might reconcile them both unto God in one body by the cross. The cross comes into it and all its horrible sufferings on our account. Having slain the enmity thereby and came and preached peace to you, which were afar off and to them that were knife or through him. We the both had access by one spirit. And will you go to Ephesians four? There is one spirit in the unity that is to be kept and there is one body. We've just mentioned it in chapter in verse 16, and then it says One spirit unto the Father, one God and father, so that the terms of the unity of the Spirit are all practically been said in chapter two telling you what it is. He says, Now you keep it in chapter four. So you see. We must be on our guard never to use this expression. Oh, let's keep the unity of the spirit. And that means let's all be quiet and

don't make any disturbance. And don't bother about what you believe. I mean, that's putting it bluntly.

[00:29:29] Or put it this way. Supposing there's going to be a conference held as there often are in places, and an evangelical clergyman of the Church of England and an evangelical pastor of the Baptist church are both going to speak on the same evening. So in order to keep the unity of the spirit, they say, look, we won't mention the word baptism. What do you see? Because if the church in England and is true and what he says about baptism, it will upset the Baptist pastor what he says about baptism. But is that what the scripture means here? Well, let's look what is the what is this unity of the spirit? We're to keep verse four. There is one body and one spirit, even as you are called in, one hope of your calling. One lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father, or one baptism. There are many things that I'm supposed not to say a word about. I've got to speak about. I've got to keep it. So you see, it's not right to use the expression, Oh, let's keep the unity of the spirit. Meaning let's be quiet and peaceable. No, no. Peace isn't a quiet thing. Not necessarily. It certainly doesn't mean hiding the truth, because it might cause a bit of a bother You? Cause enough bother if you stand for the truth, friends. You can't help yourself. But it's an abuse of the term merely to say to have acquired an easygoing meeting so that we don't tread on anybody's toes.

[00:30:56] That's not keeping the unity of the spirit. That's rather betraying the truth that's entrusted to you. We haven't got to be contentious, but we may have to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered. So. So keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace is keeping the unity which has already been made and sealed by the blood of Christ. And then to glance a little bit on in this before we go into the unity of the spirit itself. Let's notice after that is done, he speaks about the apostles in verse 11 and the prophets and evangelists and the pastors and the teachers. But what are they going to do? Well, once again, notice there's no emphasis upon preaching the gospel. That will come right enough. But the first thing comes first. This is the very citadel and heart of the whole thing. If you run here, your gospel won't be very effective. If you're right here, you'll have a message that God will honor when the time comes for it to be made known. So let's see how these apostles, what they're supposed to do. It's for the perfecting. Other sites. We have to look at all these a bit more in detail presently, but this word perfectly means to readjust a broken limb. This is resetting. This is the idea of unity again. There was a break. Now they were united.

[00:32:23] There's the unity of the spirit. Now, these gifts have been given for the perfecting of the saints. The uniting of the knitting them together again. For the work of the ministry. For the building. The word edifying is the word building. You see, this is not salvation of an unsaved person. This is the putting of the safe person in his right place in relationship to Christ, the foundation. So in chapter two, he says, and you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. There they are. There are some apostles and some prophets. They are the foundation ministry, Jesus Christ himself, being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a dwelling place, a habitation of God in spirit. It is a slight thing, friends, that some folks are called to be a dwelling place for God. A holy temple. Don't you see? He saved us and called us with a special reason. Are we going to turn round to him and say, Oh, but then what about. Now look, there are some have laid upon their hearts and it's their calling to do certain types of Christian work and we are glad they're doing it. But it doesn't follow that everybody's going to be walking in exactly the same path and doing the same thing. This is written in our book, and the first things come first.

[00:33:51] If we'll keep the unity of the spirit, if we will walk worthy of our calling, if we seek to readjust the sights. The witness we give will be honored of God. But if not, well, then it will be one of those slipshod things that will only be, as it were, half measures so that we have in the first place a unity of the spirit to keep. And then you will see that I didn't finish reading verse 13 till we all come in. The unity of the faith. There's something for us to arrive at. I think we've got a job on hand for. If you add any major guy to rise to the heights of the disparate places. I think the Apostle was right when he said, This is your business. This is your business. Now, a person could easily be sort of browbeaten by saying, but you're only thinking of yourself. Say, look, friends, I know that's a charge you could easily make. But supposing we think for a moment that we are living in time and we are dealing with eternity. Don't you think that if God has a purpose and a place. And he's told us what to do. It doesn't matter so much what other people think. It matters whether we are doing that, which will have a place then that will matter most. So he says this unity of the faith is to be attained.

[00:35:13] This unity of the spirit is to be kept. And after that. The work that God would call you to do would have that backing and there be no sort of undermining so that we

now come back again to. Oh, there's one passage. Yes, this is parallel. Chapter three, verse nine. The Apostle Paul is speaking of himself and the ministry that was laid upon him. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God. That was the burden that was on his heart to make folks see that. And when you come to the last epistle that he wrote to Timothy chapter four. You see that that was still there in his mind. He says in chapter four at verse 16, at my first defense or answer is now before Nero. You remember at Rome, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray, God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me that by me the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion and so on. That was the thought that was before him that he might finish his course and make known this marvelous revelation that God had kept to himself. So it's called a mystery or a secret until the time for its revelation to take place.

[00:36:53] The word to keep. In this passage, Ephesians four occurs twice only in the prison epistles. Well, it would be a wise thing for us to be sure. Uh, what things we are to keep. If there's only to that one, we're wasting our time with it. If God says I've laid upon you this obligation to keep this and to keep that, let's see. For all the one. Of course, before us, we've already had endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit. And the other awaits us in two. Timothy Chapter four. Two. Timothy Chapter four, verse seven. This is the pattern, man. The apostle Paul said his life was a pattern for those who should believe. And this is what he's saying at the end of his life. He's summing it up. I have fought a good fight. Verse seven. There is not a military fight. It's the word which gives us our English word agony. It's agonistic. That is to say, it has to do with wrestling and running and racing. It's a term dealing with Greek sports. I have finished my course. The word course is the word dromos, which means a course which you run. And to this very day we use the word Hippodrome. But we don't use it for a racecourse. Now we tack it on to a cinema. But Hippodrome Hippo is a horse. Dromos is the course. It means a race course for a horse.

[00:38:28] I have finished my course. So Philippians at last is answered. He said one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He said, I touch the tape. I didn't know I was going to. I wasn't sure. But now I am. I kept the faith. They are the two words. Ephesians four, the first epistle of this great

revelation. Keep the unity. Two Timothy four. The last chapter of the Epistles. I have kept the faith. What about the prize? Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me at that day. And not to me only, but all them also that have loved his appearing. The crown of righteousness is the prize that Paul will receive. Now, after having said all that I have about the fact that here we have. An emphasis upon keeping and perfecting and building sites and no reference to outside evangelism. Let's correct any false views. If I take all the scriptures together. Apart from Paul's epistles. I should discover that the word gospel occurs 28 times. That is to say, in four gospels, the whole of the Acts of the apostles, all Peter's writings, John Jude, James and the revelation 28 times. When I come to Paul's epistles.

[00:40:15] I find the word gospel occurs 73 times. And strictly speaking, if you want to know the gospel that you were to preach, you don't go to Matthew for it. You'll go to the Apostle Paul. So there's no idea that we haven't got a gospel to preach and a wonderful gospel to. But it's only saying that if the heart of the matter is kept, this is the heart of the matter. The gospel will take care of itself. But if we neglect this with an idea that we've got to do these other things first, or else somebody will criticize us, then the whole work may suffer badly. You'll find that the apostles in in Philippians very much stresses the word gospel. He says in the first chapter, verse seven, he says, I remember you even as it as it is meat to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. And you will find he speaks about the gospel more than once in this epistle with very strong terms, and nobody can possibly read the epistle to the Romans without realizing that here is the basis of the gospel we preach. He speaks about himself as separated unto the Gospel of God, which is concerning his Son. And he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe it.

[00:41:47] And you remember how he went up according to a revelation that had been given to him and laid before the leaders at Jerusalem that gospel that he preached among the Gentiles. And he said, Thou an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which I have preached unto you. Let him be anathema. Anathema. And in one Corinthians 15, he says that which I have received I that also I gave you the gospel that he preached. So there's no doubt, no possible doubt. But what we have a gospel to preach, but we are not going to import the gospel into Ephesians four. We are

going to take God's order. And he says, You look after the central part of it, look after the heart of the matter first, be right there and then you'll be able to go to the outside with a clear conscience and with all the backing of this truth behind you, to make known the gospel of the grace of God which belongs to the present period. So here we have again given attention to the opening words of this exhortation in Ephesians four. When we come to meet together next time, we shall now be prepared to look at what the unity of the Spirit comprises. It won't do us any harm to read it today and then go back to it next time, will it? Ephesians four, verse four gives you the items in the unity of the Spirit.

[00:43:13] There is one body and one spirit, which you'll have to raise the question and seek an answer. Why the one body comes first. I have a feeling that if you or I had sat down without the guidance of these scriptures to put down the items of the unity of the Spirit, we would have put the Lord first. You see, I think we would. And that would have been commendable. But there's a reason. But I'm not going to tell you what the reason is that I believe because I want you to come next week. You see. But there is a reason, and I think you will agree with it when you see it. So we see the first item is one body. And one spirit that immediately following. Why? Why? Because it's a foregone conclusion that the body without the spirit is dead being allowed. So the two go together, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. And we're going to raise the question, why is that strung out? You see, it doesn't say, even as you are members of the body or even as the spirit has done anything. But when it comes to the one hope of your calling, it lengthens it as even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. Then he goes back again. Simplicity. One, Lord. Once I. One baptism and then an extension again.

[00:44:31] One God and father of all who is above all and through all. And in you all. Here we have a sevenfold unity. Three members on either side and the one lord in the center. Now the one Lord in the center stands. Whatever happens. But no other part of the unity can stand if he's not there. You can't construct a seven branch candlestick. You say? Well, sure. No, no. You can construct a six branch candlestick with one central feature in the middle, which is not a branch. You see, you've got three on either side and they echo one another. One body, one father, one spirit, one baptism. Oh, somebody says, I know what you're going to say presently, that if the one spirit balances the one baptism, it's most likely that it's the baptism of the spirit, not baptism in water. Oh, well, we'll leave that to look after itself. When they get there. Then we have

one faith or one hope and one faith. Our Lord in the center. Now. That's what we have to keep. So next time we meet together, friends, I think we shall be prepared to say, Well, now let's get down to this and see what each one of these items involves so that we may have some clear cut ideas. God will give us grace what we are supposed to do, what sort of thing we are supposed to keep, what this precious thing is we've got to watch over.

[00:46:01] And then having done that, to go out into the world with all its wickedness and darkness and misery and ignorance and feel that instead of being so high and mighty and grubbing about with these words, we go out with a consciousness that we have been in the presence of the living God. There is something here which is vital and it will give strength to our weakness and grace, to our talk and truth, to our gospel. That never would be if, in any measure we betrayed this confidence. Sir, may the Lord grant unto us that as this series is studied, thereby come into the hearts of most of us a prayer. O Lord, God unto thee Grace, that I may seek to walk worthy of the calling wherewith I have been called then to realize the manner of it with all lowliness and meekness, as well as the manner of it, the one body and the one spirit. And then to be thankful that the Apostle Paul has given us the matter, he says, have a form of sound words which Thou hast learned of me and the manner he says, You look at me as a pattern, for I have been set forth as a pattern to those who shall believe unto life everlasting. And all these things will have to be woven together in one fabric before the series is over. And then someone has wondered whether we are limiting ourselves to the unity of the spirit and the unity of the faith.

[00:47:27] And then we shall come to an end. Well, don't ask me friends for I don't know. But I can't quite see that we're going to cut off at the middle of chapter four to you. I think we shall have to give a glance to the new man, which comes later on in the chapter. And then we shall say, well, after having looked at the walk that is worthy, don't you think we ought to take a bit more and look at chapter five, which speaks about Walk in Love and Will, you've done that? Well, it speaks about wives and husbands and children and parents and servants and masters. I think we ought to look at that, don't you? Oh, well, we've gone so far. We better look at the whole armor of God before we say we've looked at the practical outworking of truth. Friends, We've got enough, haven't we? You see, it's heights and depths. It touches the relationship of man and wife and child and parent and master and servant down here in this life, as well as

heavenly places and principalities and powers and wickedness and armour and sword and so on. You see, it's an involved thing. So let's take it piece by piece. And as the book unfolds, its truth may the Spirit of God write it upon our hearts and then may be rewritten again in our manner of life. We leave it there for the time being. Pick up our threads, God willing, next time we meet together.