

The church as the body of Christ

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[0 : 00] Seeking to rely upon the Spirit of the Lord, let us again look at the portion of Scripture read, the Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 16.

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the factual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

And we shall seek to consider these words. First of all, we shall consider a certain key which opens this letter to us.

There is a key which opens this letter. Secondly, we shall consider the special task or the special watch of the Church of God.

And thirdly, the source of this task or this watch. And fourthly, its purpose.

[1 : 53] The key, the special task, its source, its purpose. Some, at least of the great letters of the New Testament, have certain keys which open them to us.

The most evident, I suppose, is the letter to the Hebrews.

The writer to the Hebrews wishes to emphasize the super-eminence of the new dispensation. And the reason for him wanting to do that is that these Hebrews to whom he was writing, that they were over-emphasizing the importance of the old dispensation.

They were over-emphasizing its importance to their own great detriment. So, over and over again, the writer to the Hebrews uses the word better.

His son, in whom God has finally spoken, is better than angels, better than Moses, better than Aaron.

[3 : 52] His son, in whom God has spoken, has established a better covenant upon better promises.

He has brought in a better hope. He has accomplished a more excellent ministry. He himself is the greater and more perfect tabernacle.

He meets them at every turn. Everything they bring up, extolling the old dispensation, he meets it with something better from the new.

He himself is the better sacrifice. He himself is the greater high priest.

He is greater than Melchizedek, who was greater than Abraham. He is greater than Melchizedek, who was greater than Abraham, and therefore greater than Levi, who was in Abraham's loins.

[5 : 15] In the gospel, there is a better and a more enduring substance than any Canaan.

Now they desire a better country.

And finally, at the center of glory. At the center of glory. At the very center, we can say at the center of the center of glory.

The glory which pertains to Mount Zion. There is blood that speaketh better things.

Under the old dispensation, thousands and I suppose millions of beasts were slaughtered in sacrifice.

[6 : 23] But they were only symbols. But they were only symbols. At the center of Mount Zion. Of the glory which is above.

There is blood which speaketh better things. Likewise then, there is a certain key to the letter to the Ephesians.

And what is it? It is the phrase, in love. In love.

In love. Over and over again, the apostle uses this mighty word. He demonstrates it initially in the eternal designs of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In love having pre-horizoned us. In love having pre-horizoned us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.

[7 : 35] According to the good pleasure of his will. That's in chapter 1. And then he prays a great prayer.

That the faithful at Ephesus be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith.

That they being rooted and grounded in love. There is nothing in the whole universe like a Christian.

Trees are rooted. Houses are grounded or founded. But only the Christian is rooted and grounded in love.

That they, that ye, that they being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend. What is the bread? The bread of what?

[8 : 47] The bread of love. And the length of love. And the depth of love. And the height of love. And to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

That's what a Christian is. He knows the love which passes knowledge. The love of Christ which passes knowledge.

In order to be filled with all the fullness of God. And then he beseeches them to walk worthy of their calling.

In lowliness and meekness. In long suffering. Forbearing one another in love. Fervent love covers a multitude of sins.

He exhorts them in adulthood of Christianity. This is what this chapter is about. Adulthood of Christianity.

[9 : 56] That ye be no more children. No longer children. How ashamed we should be.

In front of the depths of God's holy word. He exhorts them in adulthood of Christianity.

To speak the truth in love. Or to do the truth. It can mean both. To do the truth in love. He commands them towards spiritual increase.

In the whole body of believers. Towards the edifying. That's the building of itself in love.

He counsels them to be followers of God. In order to walk in love. You cannot walk in love.

[10 : 56] Unless you are a follower of God. Six times he uses this watch word.

And no wonder. Why? Because without love.

There can be no real church. And without love. There can be no real church order. And without love.

There can be no real church discipline. And without love. There can be no real church unity.

Or progress. Secondly then. Let us consider. The special task. Or watch.

- [11 : 54] Of the church of God. And the first thing we have to notice. Is that a gathered church. Comes from Christ. What do you mean you say? A gathered church. Comes from Christ. Where two. Or three. Are gathered. Are gathered. And so on. Where two. Or three. Are gathered.
- And so on. Where two. Or three. Are gathered. Together. In the earth. Where two or three are gathered and so on.
- Where two or three are gathered together in my name. Who gathers them?
- Who gathers them? Do they gather themselves? That would be a sad and sorry gathering if they gathered themselves.
- [13 : 05] Only one can gather them. God. God the Father gathers them. God the Son gathers them. God the Spirit gathers them. God the Son. God the Son. God the Son. God the Son. And what is he going to say where two or three are gathered together in my name.
- He says this. There am I. There am I. I. He is in the midst of that. He is the center and without a center there can be no circumference.
- He describes the circumference. The whole of the real church is from Christ. They proceed from Him. They grow up in Him from whom they proceed. They grow up in Him from whom they proceed. They grow up to Him from whom they proceed. In Him, from Him, to Him.
- Harmony is the key word in this verse. Harmony. Every joint of supply. The basic idea here is the idea of a choir, a chorus, a unison, the best of all music. The church is harmonized.
- [15 : 31] That's the word used in the scripture. The church is harmonized and compacted together. By those who hold office. And nobody takes office in the church of God unto himself. Nobody can take these offices to themselves. By those who hold office and by the ordinances established by those who hold office. And by those who hold office. And by those who hold office. And by the ordinances established by God in the church. Real holders of office and church ordinances are by virtue derived from Christ.
- and tend towards Christ. And tend towards Christ. And how this is by those who hold office and by those who hold office. And by those who hold office. And by the ordinances established by God in the church.
- the church. And by the ordinances. And by the ordinances. And by the ordinances are by virtue derived from Christ. And tend towards Christ.
- And how then shall the church progress. We have it here. Set before us. Or we can't say plainly. This is a difficult verse to comprehend.
- according to the effectual working. In the measure of every part. Every single part must do its own way. There are wheels and there are wheels within wheels. And in the harmony as in a clock.
- [17 : 21] there are wheels going in different directions. This is God's masterpiece. His own church. This is the spiritual engine of God's design.
- according to the effectual working. In the measure of every part. according to the effectual working. In the measure of every part. Making increase. Of the body.
- unto the edifying of itself in love. And we ask the question. What is the great business. Of the church of God.
- God? Is it primarily quantity? That is number by addition. Is that its primary function? No. And again no. It is not quantity. But quality. Eternal life. is in quality and not in quantity. It is not number by addition.

but number by grace. And by growing up in Christ. some of thoughts. Some of thought that number by addition. by addition makes a church. And there. thereby they have enrolled everybody. people.

[18 : 36] they have enrolled. That is not quantity. They have enrolled. in quality. not quantity. is in quality and not in quantity.

It is not numbered by addition but numbered by grace and by growing up in Christ.

Some have thought that numbered by addition makes a church and thereby they have enrolled everybody. How wrong they are.

Numbered by grace and by growing up in Christ. And the only way to effect this is for every part of the spiritual body to work according to everyone's measure for the building of itself in love.

This then is the special task or watch of the church. Every member must toil spiritually.

[19 : 50] There is no place for spiritual sloth. The arbors as the pilgrim learned in his progress the arbors were not for sleeping in but for taking a spiritual rest now and again.

The church was not for the walk away and therefore he lost his evidence and therefore he had to walk the same part of the road three times through his own sloth.

And we could go on with these therefors. One more of them he did not notice because he had to walk the same part three times.

Forward till he found out that he had lost his role. Back again to find it again and forward again. When he came to his destination it was late and it was dark and the lions frightened him from going forward.

Because of the dark he could not see that if he kept to the middle of the road they couldn't reach him. And thereby or therein is a great spiritual lesson for every one of us.

[21 : 26] But must toil according to the measure granted to him or to her by God towards the increase of grace in himself.

Towards the increase of grace in himself it doesn't end there. It's only one body the increase of grace in himself and others.

According to the principle of love. No other principle will do here. The principle of knowledge is not sufficient.

Knowledge puffs up. Only love edifies. Nothing will do in place of love.

If a man as we have it in the great song. If a man were to give all the substance of his house. For love that is and keep love back.

[22 : 29] It would utterly be contempt. We must always remember that the great word for love in the New Testament certainly involves our emotions.

But infinitely more than our emotions. Some people think and they are wrong in thinking that they should be ruled by their emotions at the later stage of their Christian lives as they were ruled by them at the beginning.

They were only spiritual children then. God teaches us to find love deeper than in our emotions.

In our understanding. In our understanding. And he teaches us to find love deeper than in our understanding. He teaches us to find love in our will.

Infinitely more than our emotions. Love has to do with the understanding. Love has to do with the understanding.

[23 : 48] But more and principally with the will. This is what the great word for love in the New Testament sets before us. It is our love which principally involves our will.

It involves our understanding and our emotions. I am not saying that at all. But principally our will. It expresses supremely the will governing the understanding.

And the understanding governing the emotion. It is our most magnificent word. And we must realize.

And we must realize more and more. That Christian love can only flow from the divine spirit.

The love of God is cascaded into our hearts. By the Holy Spirit given to us.

[24 : 53] Now there is a certain great fault with us. As regards love. There is a certain great fault which pertains to us.

As regards love. It is not principally that we do not see how paramount the principle of love is.

No. Our great fault is our sloth to put love in exercise. To set love to labor.

For this is what the apostle commended the Thessalonians for. The labor of their love. Everyone is required to do his or her own share in the church of God.

Everyone has a measure. And where there is a measure. There must be work. Every one of us has his or her own measure.

[26 : 11] Whether we be old or young. Wherever there are gifts and graces. They will work their own special work.

And what is the rule of this church task. Of this church watch or tax. What is its rule? It is the mutual labor and care of all the members of the church.

For the temporal well being. The temporal well being. The temporal well being. Can't be left out. And the spiritual. and eternal good of the whole body. A lot. And the glory by Christ.

That's right. The véritable well being. That's what's your capable baking process. Because the needs of Jesus. What's your diminish? It's! The Neragon gesagt that let Him push into this. It's yellow and light. She faces the things. If these people have a reality.

Uh, if, again, less for the Songce fruits and sails. If you believe, declaring well being. The goal is not to win. That's not to win. It's it. The ify on that sem sheafasm will be. It's sin. It's it. You and pray that belt from children. It's all not to me. of the whole body and of every member of that body, excluding not one.

[27 : 22] Thirdly, a word upon the source, the source from which this task, this watch emanates.

It proceeds from union and love. First of all, from union. It originally proceeds from union. They are bound together in love. The Apostle Paul gives a wonderful illustration of this in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. He demonstrates the wonderful unity amidst diversity which we have in the human body. He demonstrates the care which each member has for every other member in the human body. And he powerfully displays how aligned hand and foot are and how united here and I are. And he further displays how necessary the portions of the body which are not seen.

The portions which are not seen really are. The portions which are not seen are really the more important. They are in fact the most dominant parts of the body and there is no system in the body. And how terrible it is that there should be system in the body of Christ.

It is the most unnatural of all things that there should be dissensions and divisions in the church of God. We are all members one of another. In this great congregation we are all members one of another.

No one is so unimportant as to be less than a member. We are members one of each other in this congregation and in the church of Christ. And again there can be no watch without love.

[30 : 07] What does real progress in the Christian life consist of? It consists of putting off. That is divesting ourselves. In order to put on. And when you have put off everything you are commanded to put off.

What is the last thing you must put on? It is love. The bond of perfectness. Above all other excellent things we are commanded to put it on.

The protection of church order is the putting on of love. The protection of church order is the putting on of love. Over all other excellencies. John Owen uses an illustration. He says take a number of sticks. Some long. Some short. Some thick. Some thin. Some straight. Some crooked.

Some lungs. Some thin. Some totalmente wahrscheinlich. Yes, and there are things.' ■■■■■ ■■■■ w■■■■ it to look for free of collectively. The actual stolen diu. Can you imagine we need to do pray for things to step in of life. Right?

The past. Sub indo. Samuel says it is fear that not annoying. It is fear the matter of being a miracle. As long as you have a good firm band around them they make a goodly bundle. thick and the thin but if you break the band all the crookedness asserts itself and all the angularities come into evidence and so with the church the band of love preserves a wonderful perfection amidst all the angularities and frailties and faults of the members of the body love preserves from pride love preserves from squalid discord love preserves from envy love preserves from unseemly behavior love preserves from self-seeking love preserves from suspicion if you are suspicious you are lacking in love love is not suspicious and if the band of love is loosed all the order in the world will not keep a church spiritually together they may seem to be together but they are not really together church order is the greatest help where the band is firm and it can be the greatest burden when this band is loose love decayed in the church of Ephesus though many excellent things remained love decayed and the Lord's verdict against that community was I have somewhat against thee he commanded these people to repent and do the first that is the prime works or else he would come quickly and remove that church's candle stick out of its place fourthly in a word the purpose of this watch we have said that it is for the temporal and the spiritual and the eternal good of all believers and that involves first of all there should be a a carefulness on the part of those who have and who have in abundance of this world substance for those who have not we live in a different age to the ages which characterized the church before but there is an abundant place for giving love must not be in word or in tongue but indeed and in truth love must be manifested in compassion and the spiritual good of believers should be sought in two ways first of all by the prevention of evil and what is the best prevention of evil example and exhortation an exemplary life is the great adornment of christianity exemplary holiness and usefulness in believers are great means of preventing evil in others why is the spiritual good of us why is the spiritual good so low in our day because we have lost we have lost we have lost we have lost many of the things that we inherited spiritually from those who went before us we should provoke each other to love and good works

[36 : 11] firstly by prevention of the church firstly by prevention of evil and secondly by recovery from evil and promotion and confirming of grace we are greatly destitute of three things we are greatly destitute of love and of ability and of a holy realization of what we have done in our lives we are destitute of a holy realization of what unbelief is we are destitute of a holy realization of what unbelief is and of how much of it is in ourselves nothing can prevail over these deficiencies but the grace of God we are also deficiencies but the grace of God we are deficiencies but we have to admonish we should not admonish from the height of supposed spiritual superiority but from the depth of real love and we are deficient in wisdom how does one grow in spiritual wisdom how does one grow in spiritual wisdom spiritual wisdom can only come from the constant exercise of the mind renewed by the holy ghost and furnished with the principle of spiritual light and life spiritual light and life we should be in meditation of spiritual things more often we should cleave in our affection into spiritual things what the reason we should go into spiritual things friends, do we realize that there is a circle around the love of God orlm gallium

There is a circle round the love of God. Do you realize that? Theologically we could say that God himself is the circle round his love because God is love. But there is another way that we can define this circle. God with the fire of his holy jealousy surrounds his own love. We in our own spirituality try to surround our love with unholy jealousies.

We want too much to be number one when we should be number twos. We cannot be anything else.

As a certain commentator said we would like to be nouns when we can only be adjectives. This is what the church in its spirituality said. Set me as a seal upon thy heart. She was talking to her creator redeemer. Set me as a seal upon thy heart.

As a seal upon thy arm. For love is strong as death. Jealousy that is the most ardent love.

[40 : 16] is cruel as the grave. The coals thereof are coals of fire which have a most vehement flame.

That was the Hebrew way of expressing which have the flame of God. Amen. Let us pray.

O Lord as we confess before thee how far we are from thee. We pray for a baptism of thy fire. The fire of thy cleansing. The fire of thy cleansing. The fire of thy the fire of thy jealousy and love. That they would possess us. God's jealousy and God's love. And all for Christ's sake. Amen.

we pray for the name. That was God. That was God ■■■■ dear. God. That was God. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Are you still in medicine D hormonless wenn Which means the coronavirus is sufficient for a mist We will need to see you.