

WCCC 1989

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God's Eternal Purpose (3)

Ephesians 4:1 – 16 I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you therefore to walk worthy of the calling wherewith you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love; using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, as you have been also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all. But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ. Wherefore He says, having ascended up on high, He has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men. But that he ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things; and He has given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints; with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ; in order that we may be no longer babes, tossed and carried about by every wind of teaching which is in the sleight of men, in unprincipled cunning with a view to systematized error; but, holding the truth in love, we may grow up to Him in all things, who is the head, the Christ: from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love.

Let us bow our heads and pray.

Lord when we come before Your words, we truly feel that if not for the enlightenment of Your Holy Spirit, we can only touch the letter of Your words and but not the reality of Your words. So at this time, we really need to look upon You. Please give us the Spirit of revelation and wisdom, so that Your words can become spirit and life in us. Lord, we come to You with full dependence. We look to You to speak and to work here so that Your Son will be exalted and will gain all the glory. Listen to our prayer. In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

What we have been fellowshiping before the Lord this time is God's eternal purpose. We know that our God has purposed in Himself a purpose. Before the creation He has in Himself destined a good pleasure. That good pleasure controls all that He does later. That eternal purpose is His own beloved Son. He wants His beloved Son to have supremacy in all things. He is to sum up all things in heaven and on earth in His Son. He wants His Son to inherit all things. And all things are to manifest the glory of His Son. So all things in heaven, on earth and under the earth will bow down on their knees and all tongues confess His Son is Lord. Our Lord, Jesus is in fact the Lord of all things. And this is the will that God has predestined in Himself before the creation of this earth. Not only did God predestine this good pleasure, but this good pleasure will be accomplished through His Son. So, we know that in God, Christ is not only the central but also the universal. And this is the purpose that God has purposed in Himself. For this reason, we have to consider Christ to be the center of all things. We have to pursue to know Him. Also, we see that God has an eternal purpose in Christ. Not only did God in Himself have a good pleasure, but He also has a good pleasure in His Son. Because He loves His Son, He thinks that it is not enough He has given all things to His Son. He wants to prepare a bride for His Son to be His helper. Thus, we see that He has chosen us in Christ.

Brothers and sisters, God's choice of us indeed is a mystery. We do not know why God chose us. His choice is not according to us. His choice of us is according to His glory. In Christ, He has chosen us before the creation. He has chosen us not just to be barely saved. Some people think the predestination and choice of us is just for us to be saved. If this is so, then men will be the center. But we see that God's predestination and choice are according to His glory. He not only saved us; He selection is for us to gain the sonship. Romans 8 tells us what God has foreknown, He predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son. Those whom He has foreknown, He called them. Whom He called, He justified. Whom He justified, He glorified. So we know the selection of God is for us to gain glory and not just to be barely saved. We are to enter into glory. We are to be conformed to the image of His Son so that we can be like His Son. We are to enjoy glory with His Son and to reign with His Son. And this is the selection that God has predestined. We thank and praise God. It is not because of us but it is for Himself. It is for His Son. Thus, according to His glory, He predestined and chose us. Now that He has chosen us, He will never let go. He will continue to work in us until we can gain the glory. And this is the faith we have before Him. He gives us a lot of grace so that we can be holy and without blemish before Him – that we can be a holy and without blemish church offered up to His Son as a bride. And this is in the eternal purpose of God. This is what we have shared in the past two mornings.

This morning we will go forward. We want to see how God works out His eternal purpose in us. What we have shared in the past is what God has in

Himself. God in Christ has destined such a purpose. Now that He has purposed this good pleasure, He accomplished all things through His Son. This is what we have seen in the past two days. This morning we are going to see how God works out His eternal purpose in us.

We can say the Book of Ephesians is divided into two big sections. These two sections can be represented by two prayers. In the first part of chapter one, Paul had a prayer. He has another prayer in the latter part of the third chapter. And these two prayers led us to see the two big sections of the Book of Ephesians. The first prayer is in chapter 1:1 - 3:13. This is the first big section. This section shows us how God in Himself and in His Son destined His eternal purpose and how He through Christ has accomplished His purpose. We can say this is the objective truth. What is this objective truth? This objective truth is what God has done in Christ. He has already accomplished all things. Objective truth are the things that have been accomplished. We need to be able to see and acknowledge it. When Paul talked about this objective truth, He had a prayer. He said may the glorious God grant you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you can have true knowledge of God. Now God has already done things in Christ. It is not done by you or me. But that God in His Son Christ has already done all for us so that His eternal purpose can be accomplished.

We need a spirit of revelation for all these things. We need to be able to see, not just the outside seeing, or just the understanding in our mind, but in the depth of our spirit. We need to truly see how glorious the eternal purpose is that God has destined. We need to truly see that the beloved Son of God is the center of all things. We need to truly see how God in Christ has chosen us, and how Christ on the cross has accomplished all things so that the eternal purpose of God can be accomplished on us. This we need to see in our spirit. The Holy Spirit needs to reveal this mystery of God in our spirit so that we can truly see Christ and we can truly see the church; so that we can truly know Christ and we can truly know the church. We need the Holy Spirit to reveal and enlighten our spirit so that we know what is the hope of His calling; what is the riches of His glory in the inheritance of His saints; and what is the surpassing greatness of His mighty power on us. We need the revelation from God to see all these. What is required of us is for us to see the objective truth. The objective truth is eternal fact. This eternal fact we need to be able to see. And because we can see, we will believe and accept. And this is the first part of the Book of Ephesians.

The second part is from Ephesians 3:14 - 6:24. Here it lets us see the subjective experience. It tells us that because God in Christ has already accomplished all these facts, now God through the Spirit will turn these facts into our true experiences. But for this to be realized, our inner man has to be strengthened because this requires our own response. So in Paul's second prayer, he asked the Father, according to His glory, and through His spirit to

strengthen our inner man. We know that Christ lives in us because of our faith. When we receive Christ, He enters into us. But where does Christ dwell? He is in us but where does He dwell? The bible tells us that He dwells in our spirit through His Holy Spirit. But brothers and sisters, not only does He dwell in our spirit, He also dwells in our heart. Because we believe in Him, He wants to dwell in our heart. The meaning is that He wants to fill us – not only in our spirit, but He wants to come out from our spirit and fill our heart. He wants to fill us with His love so that we can be filled fully with God's love. And this is the subjective experience. And this is God working out His eternal purpose in us.

Brothers and sisters, even though God's truth is objective, yet His truth in us should become our subjective experience. The truth of God is not something far away. The truth of God should be our life and our experience in us. Only this way will we truly enter into the eternal purpose of God. I know when we share on the eternal purpose of God, very often we feel as if we are talking about something that is very high up and far away because He is so high. We can see but we cannot reach. It is as if we are describing a basket of many delicious fruits, such as peaches, apples, grapes, plums and watermelons. We see this basket full of delicious fruits. But this basket is hanging high up in the air. We can see it. However, we cannot quench our thirst by just looking at a plum. And because we have seen it, there arise a yearning in our heart. We want to know Christ. We want to know the church. We feel these are very precious and they bring up a yearning in our heart. However, we can only see but cannot get it. Brothers and sisters, God's truth is not like this. Indeed, His truth is very high and so perfect. But God put this basket of fruits on earth. He said you can enjoy them to the fullest. Brothers and sisters, do not think that the eternal purpose of God does not have a personal relationship with us and that this is only something in our imagination. We have to know that God's eternal purpose has to be worked in us. Or we can say that God, through His Holy Spirit leads us into His eternal purpose. This is what we see in the second part of the Book of Ephesians.

This morning we are going to share on the topic of how God through His spirit works His eternal purpose into us. I would like to share four things with brothers and sisters this morning. The first thing is in Ephesians 4:1 'walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called'. Thank and praise God that we are a group of people that has been called. Let me say one more time that we are called according to God's election. His election is according to His good pleasure. We do not understand why God has called us. We can say that it is because He loves His beloved Son that He has called us. He called us. What is our calling? We touched on this a little yesterday morning. He called us to be the body of Christ. He called us to be one new man. He called us to be His house. Not only to be His dwelling place but also to be His family. He called us to be the bride of Christ. He called us to be His warriors. To sum up, He called us to be the bride and helper of Christ. We are called to be a corporate

body. We have been called individually. But what we are called to do is corporate. Although God has called us one by one, but it is not for us to be individual spiritual giant. He called us one by one to become a corporate body. And each one of us is a member of the body. Christ is our head. We are His body.

So, what is our calling according to the Book of Ephesian? You remember Paul said in the first chapter that He prayed that God will enlighten us and open the eyes of our heart so that we know the hope of His calling. What is that hope? We know that the calling is for us to be the body of Christ. That hope is that when the body grows up and matures, the body can become the bride of Christ. Today we are the body of Christ. In the future we are the bride of Christ. Today we are the body. But this body needs to grow up. When the body is matured, then Christ will come and receive us to be His eternal bride. And this is the hope of our calling.

Here Paul tells us that we need to walk worthy of our calling. Now that we see what our calling is, how should we walk on this earth? It has to be worthy of His calling. How can it be worthy of the calling? Ephesians 4: 1- 16 let us see two things. The first thing is to use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit. This way we can be worthy of our calling. The second thing is that according to the working of each member, builds up this fitted body in love. Dear brothers and sisters, we have been called to be the body of Christ. How many bodies does Christ have? We know that Christ is the head. We are His body. Each believer, from the first believer in the Lord to the last believer, and all through the twentieth century, is a member, and fitted together to become one body. Only one head and there is only one body. We cannot have two heads or many heads, and we cannot have two bodies or many bodies. One body and one head are the normal condition and this is beautiful. But if we have several heads but only one body or vice versa, then we will say it is a grotesque thing. Brothers and sisters, here we have to see clearly that we have only one head, and that head is Christ. He will not allow other heads outside of His own. And under that one head there is only one body. Although there are many members, yet it is still one body. With one body there are many members. So is the Christ.

Brothers and sisters, here we can see that there is only one body. Now that there is only one body, there is one thing that is very important. We have to use diligence to keep the oneness of the body. I think this is a very clear matter. If you do not use diligence to keep the oneness, then the body will be divided into many parts. Then we come short of the great glory of God. But how do we keep this oneness? We thank and praise our Lord. Here it tells us that we should keep the unity that is given by the Holy Spirit. In the Chinese translation there is a lack in the interpretation. It is true that this oneness is given to us by the Holy Spirit. But the meaning is deeper than this. In the English translation it said unity of the Spirit. And this unity of the Spirit is

given to us. Every believer, every member has obtained this unity of the Holy Spirit because this unity of the Holy Spirit has already been given to us. So our part is to keep it. Brothers and sisters, can you keep a thing that is not yours? That thing must already belong to us if we are to keep it. If that thing is very precious then we have to use diligence to keep it. If I have several coins in my pocket, and I am walking on the street, I do not look around. I walk very naturally, why? If someone steal these coins, it does not matter. But if I have gold bars in my pocket, not only will I put my hand in the pocket, I will carefully look around me because I am afraid that someone will come and steal them. And I use diligence to keep them. Dear brothers and sisters, today God has given the church a very great gift. And that is the unity of the Holy Spirit. And how precious this unity of the Holy Spirit is. Through the oneness of the Holy Spirit, the body will be fitted together and will not be divided. So the bible tells us we have to use diligence to keep it. You are not to let the enemy steal this unity away. We have to stand firm on this ground. What is the ground of the church? The ground of the church is the unity of the Holy Spirit. We need to stand on the unity of the Holy Spirit. We will not let anyone or anything to move us away from our stand.

Brothers and sisters, today someone said the ground of the church is locality. We have to stand on this locality. So we come to a locality and we have to register and we said we have this place. This is not so. Although there is manifestation of localities of the church, but the ground of the church is the oneness of the body. If you want to talk about local churches, please remember that local church is not a doctrine in the bible. In the bible the local church is an example. It is a practice. It is not a teaching. What is the teaching of the local church? The teaching of the local church is the unity of the Holy Spirit. If you keep the unity of the Holy Spirit, then the church will be manifested in that locality.

So dear brothers and sisters, we have to walk worthy of the calling. We have to use diligence to keep the oneness given to us in the Holy Spirit. But how do we use diligence to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit? We need to have a certain attitude. Here Paul tells us in all things be humble, lowly and meek, long suffering, bearing with each other in love, and be united in the bond of peace. We have to have a certain attitude to keep this oneness. And this attitude is that in all things be lowly. To be lowly means without oneself. What is lowly? Lowliness is not a little less of self, rather it is not to have self at all. What is meekness? Meekness is not seeking my rights. Longsuffering is to endure for a long time. How to tolerate? If you have love, then you can tolerate. How can you unite? If you have peace, you can have unity. We know all these are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. We need to have this kind of attitude. Only this way can we have diligence to keep the oneness given to us in the Holy Spirit. If we do not have humbleness, and we are very proud, how can we keep the unity in the Holy Spirit? If we continue to strive for our rights, how can we keep this oneness? In the body all the members are joined together and we

have to forbear. If we are always at arm's length, then there will be no problem among us. For example, we the believers do not usually associate with one another but only for an hour once a week. We all wear Sunday clothes; we come to worship; we sing hymns and listen to messages. If we are happy, we nod our head, if we are unhappy, we shake our head, and everyone says goodbye at the end of the meeting. Nothing will get in between us. Brothers and sisters, it might seem that this is very good. But this is not a body. In the body each member is connected together and there is a very intimate relationship. For example, sometimes I eat very fast when I eat. When I did that my teeth will bite my tongue. And my tongue then said I am on strike. I am not going to cooperate. Can there be something like that? I do not know how many times I have bitten my tongue. But my tongue still forbears and cooperates. Oftentimes I think when we eat, we use our teeth. But do you know you eat with your tongue? If you do not have your tongue to move the food around the mouth, how can you eat? Sometimes you need to move the food to the back so the molar can work on the food. Sometimes the food has to be in the middle for the incisors to work on it. You know who does this kind of work? It is the tongue. Without the tongue then you have to use your finger to move the food.

Brothers and sisters, you need to have longsuffering. Longsuffering – even though we have already suffered once, we still have to suffer more. This way we can keep the unity of the Holy Spirit. Of course, we have to tolerate with love. Peter said my brother had wronged me seven times. Asking a person like Peter to endure is not easy. We know Peter had a quick temper. He thought that he had patience with his brother. And he went to the Lord and told the Lord. He said my brother offended me seven times and I forgave him seven times. What do you think? He did not expect the Lord told him that not only seven times but seventy-seven times. Peter went away depressed. He said there was nothing I could do. He is my brother and I have to forgive him however much he had offended me. Dear brothers and sisters, without love, how can you forgive? But brothers and sisters, how can we have lowliness, meekness, forbearance, love and peace? Where is the secret to this? The secret is in Paul's first sentence. I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ. I am the prisoner of Christ. Although on the outside, he was the prisoner of the Romans. But he said I am the prisoner of Christ. I am bonded by Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, Paul looked on this as his glory. Not only was he a servant of Christ, not only was he a bond slave of Christ, he was also the prisoner of Christ. A prisoner does not have any freedom. He cannot do as He wishes. He is entirely under the control of the master. So brothers and sisters, we need to offer up our body as a living sacrifice. This way we can be the prisoner of Christ. It is Christ who rules us. We are not our own master. Only then can we manifest the character of Christ and can keep the unity of the Holy Spirit. Outside of Christ, there is no way that we can keep the unity of the Holy Spirit. How can we keep the unity of the Spirit if we are in our flesh?

Only in Christ can we keep the unity. We have to be the prisoner of Christ. That way we can keep the unity of the Holy Spirit.

What is the unity of the Spirit? This is the seven oneness. Here it tells us there is only one body, one Holy Spirit, and we have been called with only one hope. One body, one Holy Spirit and one hope. All these have to do with the Holy Spirit. We are all baptized into one body in the Holy Spirit whether we are Jews or Gentiles. And this Holy Spirit dwells in us and leads us into that one hope. Brothers and sisters, every believer has this three oneness. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are already baptized into one body. And we all have one glorious hope and that is to be the bride of Christ in the future. Every believer has these. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. And these have a relationship with the Son of God, our Lord. He is our Lord. We have only one Lord, not many lords. We have only one faith. What does this one faith point to? This refers to our very fundamental faith. That is, we believe our Lord is Christ and the Son of the eternal living God. One baptism – we are baptized in the name of the Lord. We are baptized into His name. From now on, we belong to Him. We do not belong to ourselves and we no longer belong to this world. We belong to our Lord. So it is one Lord, one faith and one baptism. It is something that every believer has. We have only one God. And this God is the Father of us all. He is your father and He is my father. He is over us all. He is among us all. And He dwells in us all. And these we all have. So here you see, what is the unity of the Spirit? It is that we have the unity that is in the triune God. And this is something that every believer has.

Now you can use the diligence to keep it. If we use diligence to keep it, then we come to verse 13 which said 'until we all arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God'. In the Chinese bible it said, 'until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son'. Here we see that there is again the unity. What is the unity in here? It is the unity of the faith. There is a little difference between 'one faith' that we talked about and 'the faith' here. One faith refers to our fundamental faith. If you do not believe in Jesus Christ and that He is the Son of God, then you are not saved at all. This is our foundation. But in verse 13, it talks about the faith. What does it refer to? It refers to the totality of our faith. And this is the faith mentioned in the Book of Jude. 'You have to defend the faith which has been given to the saints once and for all.' We know that our faith or this truth has been given to the saints once and for all. And this is the revelation of the word of God. It encompasses many truths. And all the truths require us to believe and accept. And this is what has been referred to here as the faith. One day we will reach to a level that we are in the unity of the whole faith of God. We know that up till today we still have no success in this although we have the unity in the fundamental faith. But in various truths in the bible, there are various interpretations. Take the example of the matter of rapture mentioned by our brothers last night. Some believe that all the saints will be raptured before the start of the tribulation. Some believe all the saints will be raptured after the

tribulation. And some believed all the saints will be raptured in the middle of the tribulation. Some believe some of the saints will be raptured before the tribulation and the rest will be during the tribulation. So you see that we do not have the unity in the faith. But one day we will have unity in the faith.

And then it also said we have the unity in the knowledge of the Son of God. Here the knowledge is the true knowing. And this knowledge comes through experiences. And it tells us that one day we will also reach a unity in our experience of the Son of God. Today our experience of the Son of God differs from each other. Some experience the love of the Son of God. Some experience the sternness of the Son of God. I remember two brothers. They were talking and I was sitting next to them. The background of one of the brothers was Catholic. And in the Catholic teaching God is high above. When you walk into a Catholic church, it instills a sense of fear in one. But thank God, this brother is now saved. And after he was saved, he felt that our God is near and loving. We know that many of the modern-day people when they mention Jesus, they say Jesus, Jesus. They will not say Lord Jesus. And he thinks that God is such a God – loving. But the other brother's background is the opposite. His used to think that the Lord is near and loving. When he was at the meeting, he could put his feet on the table. But later when he read the bible, he found God is fearful. We need to have a fear of our God. So these two brothers were arguing. One said God is loving. The other said God is fearful. And each had scriptures to support their point of view. I was there listening. And then after a while I told the brothers, your arguments sounded like a fable. There were two knights. They came from two different directions and in the middle, there was a shield. One knight said this shield was made of gold and the other said it was made of silver. And they started fighting for this reason. And it turned out that one side of the shield was gold and one side was silver. So I told the brothers. Let me quote some of the scriptures. You know in 2 Corinthians 5 it said on one hand God is loving and on the other hand the Lord is to be feared. And today we have differences in our knowledge of the Son of God. But thank and praise God, one day we will have unity in our knowledge of the Son of God.

Are there two unities in the bible? No. there is only one unity in the bible. But this unity has two ends. At the beginning it is the unity of the Holy Spirit. It is already given to us. Every believer has this. You have that. I have that. He has that. On the other end, towards the end, we will have unity in the faith and also in the knowledge of the Son of God. Do we have that today? We do not. That is why the bible said you have to arrive at, or reach that point. And this is something that we have to arrive at. If today we start at the beginning, then we will reach the end. But if we do it the other way around, we want to start at that very end, then we will not even have the beginning. After you believe in the Lord, you encounter a brother, and when you both started talking, you realize that he believes in the Lord. Maybe the first question you will ask him is are you a Christian? He said, thank the Lord, I am. You know

there are people who will say, I am but they did not thank the Lord. Then we know there is a problem with this Christian. And if he said thank the Lord, I am a Christian, then you feel excited inside that you meet a brother. Is this so? This is the unity of the Holy Spirit. But then we will immediately ask a second question. What denomination do you belong to? Say if the brother who asked the question is a Methodist and he met a Baptist, then there is a problem. I am a Methodist how can you say you are a Baptist. If you do not become a Methodist, then we cannot have any fellowship. Even worse, when you ask the third question have you spoken in tongues? I have spoken in tongues, and if you have not spoken in tongues, then you do not have the Holy Spirit in you. We cannot fellowship with each other. Dear brother and sister, see that if you want to use the end point to be the starting point, you will lose even the beginning. You cannot fellowship. If you cannot fellowship, how can you arrive at the unity of the faith and also in the knowledge of the Son of God? But sadly, this is how it is today. We all do things like this. So the body is divided. Dear brothers and sisters, we have to use diligence to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit. Although we have differences in many of the interpretations of the bible, or differences in our spiritual experiences, yet we all belong to our Lord. We should have fellowship with each other. No matter the differences, we have to have fellowship in Christ and in life. The basis of fellowship is not enlightenment but life. The degree of fellowship is according to light, but the basis of fellowship is life. It is because we all have the same life. Then we should have fellowship. The result of the fellowship is that we can exchange our light of the bible, so that our fellowship can progress or go forward. (end of tape. The following is on a new tape. Part of the message was missing).

There are apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. These people are raised up by God and given to the church as gifts. They use God's words to minister to the children of God. What is their function? Their function is to perfect the saints. There are two meanings to this phrase 'to perfect the saints.' One is to bring the saints to maturity so that we can mature in life or that our life can grow up. The other meaning is to equip the saints so that the saints can be equipped. And this is the function of the gifts of God to the church. We see that God uses these people to edify the children of God so their life will grow and the children of God will be equipped before God. And what did the bible say? So that each will perform his function to build up the body of Christ. How is the body of Christ built up? The building up of the body of Christ did not depend on these four gifts. These four gifts built up the body of Christ indirectly. Who are those who directly build up the body of Christ? Those are all the saints. Each member fulfills one's function. And this is what today we called body ministry. Every believer needs to fulfill one's own function. Each member is different. The grace and gifts that each member receives are different. But we all have received grace and gifts. Now we need to rise and fulfill our own function. This way we can build up the body in love. Dear brothers and sisters, today God's church cannot be built up because all believers just depend on a few brothers. We think building the

church is the duty of the pastor. In fact, here in the bible, this is the only place that the translation of the original language is 'pastor'. In the original language, it is shepherd. And in all the other places in the bible, they are translated as 'shepherds.' I do not know why the translator used the word 'pastor' here. Maybe he himself is a pastor. Today we think the building of the church is the duty of the pastors or the prophets or the teachers. But brothers and sisters, the true building up of the church is the responsibility of all the saints because everyone who is in Christ is the royal priest. We all need to rise up to serve our Lord. We need to do our own function to build up the body. In my own body there are different members. Each member has its own function. Eyes have to see. Ears have to hear. Hands have to pick up things and legs have to walk. My heart has to beat and my lungs have to breathe. All the members of my body have to do their functions. There is no single member that can take up the function of the entire body. Every member has its function and they work together. They are all under the dominion of the head. Each member carries out its own function. This way in love, the body is built up.

Now we come to the second point. We will look at chapter 4:20 '*But you have not thus learned the Christ*'. What we have talked about so far is how the eternal purpose of God is accomplished in the church. When the church is in unity, when the church is built up, the eternal purpose that God has purposed for His own Son is completed. From 4:17 – 32, it says that you learn Christ. And this is related to our personal daily life. God's eternal purpose has to be worked out in our daily life. Do not think that our personal daily life has nothing to do with God's eternal purpose. The eternal purpose of God is in heaven and our daily life is on earth. But the bible tells us that the eternal purpose of God has to be realized in our daily life. Our Lord Jesus Christ told us, you have to take up My yoke, and learn of Me. I am meek and lowly. This way you can enter into rest. We, the believers, are all disciples of Christ. Believers and disciples should be one. Today we seem to separate believers and disciples. We can believe in Him but we cannot follow Him. We can believe in Him but we may not learn of Him. The bible does not have this doctrine. The bible said every believer is a disciple. I will be forthcoming and said every believer is an apprentice. And we all have to learn Him. And this learning is not like a monkey learning to walk. And if you watch him, he may be walking with two legs. And if you do not watch him, he will walk his own way. It is like this because it does not have the life of a man. Today we learn Him because He is enough. Just like our brother said, because you are a disciple, so you have to be a disciple. You have the life of Christ in you. So you have to learn the life of Christ and let the life of Christ in you live out. And this is to learn Christ. It is not just to do the things on the outside. Just like when we first believe the Lord, we said we need to be humble. So we slouch when we walk. And we think to slouch is to be humble. But we know this is not true. This has to come out from the depth of our life. The Lord tells us to yoke with Him. He is on one side of the yoke and we are on the other side of the yoke. And how lowly and meek He is. He always submits to God His

father and does not rebel against His Father at all. But how about us? Although we have believed in the Lord, but our ambition is still there. We are like a bull. The yoke is God's will and He yoked us together with the Lord. We want to do God's work, and to be obedient to His will. But we are a wild bull. And we do not obey our master's command. We want to walk our own way. But on the other side of the yoke is our Lord. Although He is lowly and meek, but He is mighty. So when we want to walk to the left, He brings us back. And He continuously teaches us until we are willing to obey God. When our ambition is broken, then we can be lowly and meek in our life. And this is to learn Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have taken off the old man. In the past we lived in the old man and we walked like the Gentiles. This we already have taken off in Christ. We have put on a new man. We have to walk in the newness of life. Today the one living is not I, but Christ living out from inside me. I have to learn Christ in my relationship with God; in my attitude, in my speech, in my association with others. Here it said, do not grieve the Holy Spirit. You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in you will lead you. He will reveal Christ to you. He will slowly work in you to conform you to the image of the Son. And in this way, the eternal purpose of God will be completed in us. Do not think that our every word and action have nothing to do with the eternal purpose of God. We have to be able to see that all these are related to the eternal purpose of God. Whether the will of God can be completed or being obstructed depends on whether you have learned Christ in your daily life. Do not think this is only your personal problem. This has to do intimately with the eternal purpose of God.

The third point is from chapter 5: 1 - 20. Verse 1 says to be imitators of God, as beloved children. This speaks about our relationship with the world. We are the children of God. And in relation to the world, we have to have testimonies. We need to truly show the world our God is a loving God. Our God is a God of light. Our God is a God of wisdom. So our daily walk should show separation from this world. We need to walk in love. We have to walk in the light. We should not be a foolish person but be a wise person. We should not get drunk. Rather we should be filled with the Holy Spirit. We should always have a heart of praise and thanksgiving to God. And this shows that we are the children of God. And this is our relationship to the world.

The fourth point is in 5:21- 6: 9. Verse 21 said submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ. This is how the eternal purpose of God will prevail in our family relationship. Do not think our family relationship only belongs to ourselves, and has nothing to do with the eternal purpose of God. Brothers and sisters, there is a close relationship between the eternal purpose of God and our family. We have to have a fear of Christ to have a normal family relationship. Every brother and sister, whether it is the husband or the wife, parents or children, masters or servants, we should have a heart of fear of

Christ. Today someone feels that God loves us, and there should be no fear in love. When love is perfected then there is no fear. This is right. But the fear mentioned here does not mean that. That fear means afraid of punishment. But the fear here is afraid to hurt our Lord's heart. Because we love Him, we are willing that He is satisfied. We are afraid His heart is hurt. We need to have this kind of fear. If we do not have this kind of fear, then the family will be broken. So here we see that husband has to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife should submit to the husband like the church submits to Christ. Hope our brothers do not just read the words that our Lord gives to the sisters. And the sisters do not read just the words given to the brothers. If the brothers who are husbands can retain God's words in their hearts, use fear to keep God's words in their hearts and love their wives as Christ loves the church, then be assured, your wife will submit to you. For the wives, truly submit to your husband with the fear of God, as the church submits to Christ. This submission is not to be like the submission of the slave. You know in the original language, there is a difference in this word, it means to adjust yourself. You have to adjust yourself to help your husband. And if you can do that, your husband will love you. You do not need to be afraid. And as for the children, obey your parents in the Lord. Again, there is a difference between the children's obedience to the parents with the wives' submission to the husband. Wives submitting to the husband is between two equal partners. And this is partnership. But the children being obedient to the parents is between two unequal partners. So in all things, the children need to obey the parents in the Lord. When you grow up and you have a family, then what attitude should you have towards your parents? Is that in all things you still need to listen to your parents? The bible said you have to honor your parents. At that time, you have your own family, but you still need to honor your parents. And this is something that the Lord will bless. As to the parents, instruct and discipline the children with God's instructions so that they can be brought up not only to be a man, but to be a Christian. And this is the responsibility of every parent. As to masters and servants, it is the same. The servant should serve the master with a heart of fear of God, as if he is serving the Lord. The master, with a fear of God, cannot threaten his servants. Then you can see that the eternal purpose of God can prevail in the family. We know this is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes what God has already done in Christ, and then work one by one on us, and brings us into the eternal purpose of God. Dear brothers and sisters, may we before the Lord, not only just to receive a little objective truth, but we need to thank and praise God. We thank God for the eternal purpose that He has accomplished in Christ, and how glorious it is. But brothers and sisters, today we need to let the Holy Spirit work out the eternal purpose of God in each one of us and in the body.

Let us bow down and pray.

Lord, we ask You not only give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, but through the Spirit strengthen our inner man. So that we not only know, but we can enter into it. Lord, we ask You to work out Your eternal purpose in us in the church, in our personal life, in the society, and in the family. Lord, we wish Your eternal purpose will prevail on earth as it is in heaven. May You in the church, in the Lord Jesus Christ, gain all the praises. In the name of our Lord, Jesus. Amen.

West Coast Christian Conference