

Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians

Series 1-20

By Paul Tackett

1 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – No Other Gospel (Galatians 1)

Introduction: A Letter of Urgency

The Epistle to the Galatians opens not with flowery commendation, but with a firm tone of rebuke. The apostle Paul, stirred with righteous indignation, addresses a doctrinal crisis that strikes at the very heart of salvation: **a perversion of the gospel**. Galatians 1 lays the foundation for one of the most important defenses of **salvation by grace through faith without works** in the New Testament. This chapter is not simply a pastoral greeting—it is a divine rebuke to those who twist the gospel for personal or religious gain.

From the very beginning, Paul reaffirms his apostolic authority—not given by man, but by Jesus Christ Himself. His words thunder across the centuries as a clarion call to the Church: **There is only one gospel**. Any deviation, no matter how minor, is an affront to God’s redemptive plan and an accursed thing.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Paul’s Apostleship by Divine Commission (Gal. 1:1)

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)”

Paul wastes no time establishing the source of his authority. He was not ordained by a church board or council. His apostleship did not originate with Peter, James, or John. It was **divinely commissioned by the risen Christ Himself** (Acts 9:3–6).

This verse alone refutes apostolic succession and Roman Catholic claims that Peter passed authority to a line of popes. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13), received his marching orders straight from the glorified Christ, separate from the Twelve’s ministry to Israel.

2. The Gospel of Grace and Peace (Gal. 1:3–5)

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Paul's greeting highlights the two blessings that define the gospel of the grace of God: **grace and peace**. Grace is unmerited favor; peace is the result of receiving it. Christ's sacrifice (v. 4) was to **"deliver us from this present evil world."** The goal of the gospel is not merely heaven after death, but **deliverance from the grip of the world's system right now** (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).

This runs contrary to the modern **prosperity gospel**, which attempts to marry Christ to the world. Paul's gospel calls us out of it.

3. No Other Gospel (Gal. 1:6–9)

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another..."

Paul's shock in verse 6 is rooted in the Galatians' quick departure from truth. They had begun to **mix law with grace**, influenced by Judaizers who insisted on circumcision and law-keeping as necessary for salvation.

Paul states emphatically: **there is no other gospel**. Any so-called "gospel" that adds works—baptism, Sabbath keeping, tongues, penance, sacraments—is a perversion (v. 7). And those who preach such perversions, **even if they are angels from heaven** (v. 8), are under a divine curse.

This is one of the strongest denunciations in Scripture. It damns the system of Roman Catholicism, the sacraments of Orthodoxy, the rituals of the Hebrew Roots Movement, the false prophets of Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses, and even mainstream denominations that subtly attach **"do this to be saved."**

4. The Gospel Received by Revelation (Gal. 1:11–12)

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man."

Paul again makes it clear: the gospel he preaches was **not learned** in Jerusalem. It was **not passed down** from the apostles. He received it by **revelation from Jesus Christ** (cf. 2 Cor. 12:1–4).

This further destroys the myth that Paul's gospel was identical to Peter's in Acts 2. Peter preached repentance and baptism for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), while Paul preached **faith alone in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection** (1 Cor. 15:1–4; Eph. 2:8–9).

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Legalism in All Its Forms

The primary heresy in Galatia was the **reintroduction of the Mosaic law** into Christian doctrine. This is seen today in groups like Seventh-day Adventists, Hebrew Roots adherents, and those who say “we’re not saved by works, but you have to keep the law to prove you’re saved.”

Paul calls this a perversion (Gal. 1:7). He says that to **add anything** to the gospel is to **remove oneself from grace** (Gal. 5:4). Keeping the Sabbath, avoiding pork, or celebrating feast days does **nothing to enhance salvation**—it only pollutes grace.

2. Catholic Sacramentalism

Paul’s rebuke extends to Roman Catholicism’s sacramental system, where **baptism, confession, Eucharist, and penance** are required for justification. Galatians 1:6–9 pronounces a curse on anyone preaching such a system.

The true gospel is **not “Jesus plus sacraments.”** It is **Christ alone by grace through faith.**

3. Progressive Revelation Heresies

Some modern “apostles” and charismatics claim to receive **new revelations** from God that modify or override Paul’s doctrine. Yet Paul warned in Gal. 1:8–9 that **even an angel** (much less a modern “prophet”) preaching a different gospel is accursed.

Joseph Smith claimed angelic revelation and founded Mormonism. Muhammad claimed angelic revelation and birthed Islam. Both are **damned systems** according to Paul’s warning.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **1 Corinthians 15:1–4** – Defines Paul’s gospel: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.
- **Romans 11:6** – Grace and works are mutually exclusive.
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – Salvation is by grace through faith, **not of works.**
- **Titus 3:5** – Not by works of righteousness, but by His mercy.
- **2 Corinthians 11:13–15** – Satan’s ministers transform into angels of light, mimicking truth.
- **Philippians 3:2–9** – Paul calls law-keepers “dogs” and counts his own righteousness as dung.

These verses make the gospel **airtight and exclusive**. No works. No rituals. No additions.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Galatians 1 is critical to understanding **the uniqueness of Paul's ministry**. His gospel was not the continuation of the kingdom gospel preached in Matthew through Acts 7. It was a **new dispensation** revealed to him as the apostle to the Gentiles.

This is why we are not under the law. We are not looking for a kingdom on earth. We are **the Church, the Body of Christ**, awaiting a heavenly inheritance (Col. 1:5; Eph. 1:3).

To mix Paul's gospel with the Mosaic law is to confuse Israel and the Church—a hallmark of **covenant theology** and **postmillennialism**. Paul's rebuke stands as a barrier between truth and confusion.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Paul's zeal for doctrinal purity challenges today's compromising churches. He was not interested in pleasing men (Gal. 1:10). He did not tolerate error for the sake of unity. He loved the Galatians too much to let them be deceived.

Modern Christianity desperately needs this kind of boldness. Too many are afraid to offend. But Paul risked his life to uphold the purity of the gospel. The question is: **Do we?**

If we truly believe that Christ's finished work is the only way to Heaven, we must preach it with clarity and defend it with courage. The gospel is not a soft suggestion—it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

Closing Thought: The Gospel Is Not Negotiable

Galatians 1 is Paul's opening salvo in a war for the soul of the Church. The lines are drawn: the gospel of grace versus every other religious system in the world. The warning is sobering—**tamper with the gospel, and you are accursed**.

There is no middle ground.

In an age of ecumenical confusion, Galatians 1 reminds us that **Paul's gospel is the only true gospel**. Every believer must cling to it, preach it, and defend it—**without compromise, without apology, and without shame**.

2 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Accepted in the Beloved (Galatians 2)

Introduction: When Truth Meets Hypocrisy

Galatians 2 stands as one of the most important turning points in the New Testament—not because it reveals something new, but because it confirms something eternal: **salvation is by grace through faith, not by works, not by law, and not by association.** In this chapter, Paul does something unthinkable in religious circles—he publicly rebukes Peter, one of the most respected apostles, for hypocrisy.

The stakes were high. The gospel was under attack—not from pagans or heretics, but from within. The threat wasn't just doctrinal confusion; it was the **practical denial of justification by faith** by those who knew better. In confronting Peter, Paul preserved the gospel not only in word but in example. Galatians 2 teaches us that **truth must trump reputation, tradition, and compromise**—even when it comes from those within the household of faith.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Paul's Authority Affirmed Again (Gal. 2:1–2)

Paul returns to Jerusalem **by revelation** and presents his gospel before the leadership. He brings **Titus, a Greek**, to make a point: **Titus was not compelled to be circumcised** (v. 3). This act was not just symbolic; it was a theological dagger to the heart of Judaizers who insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation or spiritual standing.

Titus stood as a living testimony that **Gentiles were accepted without works of the law**—a truth that undermines every system built on ceremonial rites, including Catholicism, Seventh-day Adventism, and modern Messianic Judaism.

2. False Brethren and the Battle for Liberty (Gal. 2:4–5)

Paul exposes that **false brethren were brought in unawares**, attempting to **spy out our liberty** and bring believers **into bondage**. The use of the word “bondage” here is not metaphorical; it points directly to the **yoke of the Mosaic law** (cf. Acts 15:10).

He doesn't give these false teachers any room. Not **“for an hour”** (v. 5). That's how serious the gospel is. The idea that “we should all just get along” or that doctrinal differences are unimportant is destroyed in these verses. **Paul defends liberty in Christ fiercely**, and so should we.

3. Paul's Gospel vs. Peter's Gospel (Gal. 2:7–9)

Here Paul draws a clear distinction between his ministry and Peter's. They preached the same Christ, but their commissions were different:

- **Peter:** Apostleship to **the circumcision** (Jews)
- **Paul:** Apostleship to **the uncircumcision** (Gentiles)

This is not contradiction—it's **dispensational truth**. Paul's gospel focuses on the **mystery of the Body of Christ**, not the earthly kingdom offered to Israel (cf. Eph. 3:1–9).

Understanding this distinction is critical to rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

4. Paul Withstands Peter to the Face (Gal. 2:11–13)

Peter's hypocrisy is legendary. Though he knew better (Acts 10), he **separated himself from Gentile believers** when certain Jews arrived from James. Paul didn't ignore it. He didn't "take him aside privately." He **withstood him to the face**, publicly.

Why? Because Peter's behavior was "**not according to the truth of the gospel**" (v. 14). His actions implied that Gentiles were second-class unless they adopted Jewish customs. This undermined the doctrine of **justification by faith alone**.

This rebuke also dismantles the Catholic claim that Peter was the first pope. Paul corrected him publicly. Peter had **no supreme authority**—and he erred doctrinally. No infallibility here.

5. Justification by Faith Without the Law (Gal. 2:16)

This verse is the **doctrinal cornerstone** of the chapter:

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ..."

Three times Paul declares that works cannot justify a man. It is **faith in Christ**, not **faith in the law**, nor **faith plus works**. The repetition hammers the point home for all ages.

You cannot read this verse and still believe:

- Baptism saves.
- Sacraments save.
- Torah observance justifies.
- Sabbath-keeping earns God's favor.

It's all **faith in Christ**—period.

6. Crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20)

Paul's beautiful statement in verse 20 is both doctrinal and devotional:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live..."

Here, we find the truth of **positional sanctification**. The believer's old man is **crucified with Christ**, and the new life is **Christ living in him**. This isn't mysticism—it's spiritual reality. Paul doesn't say he's trying to die to self. He says **he already is dead**, and now Christ lives in him.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Works-Based Salvation (Catholic, Orthodox, SDA, Hebrew Roots)

Galatians 2:16 decimates every form of works-based justification. This includes:

- Catholic doctrines of penance, confession, and Eucharist.
- Orthodox rituals.
- Adventist Sabbath requirements.
- Hebrew Roots law observance.

None of these can justify a sinner. They only **rebuild what Christ tore down** (Gal. 2:18).

2. Peter's Papal Infallibility (Catholicism)

Peter was **wrong**—and Paul said so. He acted contrary to the truth of the gospel (v. 14). If Peter was infallible, Paul was in rebellion. But if Paul was right, Peter was not infallible. You can't have it both ways.

This event alone is enough to **collapse the papacy** and the whole hierarchy built upon it.

3. Ecumenical Compromise

Paul did not compromise truth for the sake of unity. He didn't say, "Let's agree to disagree." He didn't form a committee or a council. He **called out hypocrisy**—publicly—because it touched the core of salvation.

Today's ecumenical movement would label Paul as divisive, unloving, or rigid. But Paul wasn't trying to be liked—he was **protecting the truth**.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 3:20–28** – Justification apart from the law.
- **Philippians 3:9** – Not having my own righteousness.
- **Acts 10:34–35** – God is no respecter of persons (refutes Peter’s error).
- **Romans 6:6–11** – Crucified with Christ, alive in Him.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** – Made the righteousness of God in Him.
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Each of these confirms Paul’s doctrine and further separates **the gospel of grace** from the **gospel of the kingdom** preached in early Acts.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

This chapter reinforces **the unique gospel given to Paul** for the Church Age. We are not under the law. We are not spiritual Israel. We are **the Body of Christ**, justified by faith alone and indwelt by Christ Himself.

Peter’s gospel in Acts 2 was tied to **Jewish prophetic fulfillment**—repentance, baptism, the kingdom. Paul’s gospel is tied to a **heavenly calling** (Phil. 3:20), a **spiritual body** (1 Cor. 12), and a **mystery** (Col. 1:26–27).

Failing to make this distinction leads to:

- Confusion about salvation.
- Misapplication of Matthew, Hebrews, and James.
- Bondage under laws never meant for the Church.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Paul’s confrontation with Peter teaches that **truth comes before popularity, peace, or friendship**. Peter wasn’t a heretic—he was a brother who stumbled. And Paul loved him enough to confront him with truth.

We need that same courage today. When preachers compromise, when churches drift into worldly methods, when doctrine is sacrificed for unity—we must stand and speak.

Doctrinal cowardice in the name of tolerance is still cowardice. Love tells the truth—even when it stings.

Closing Thought: Stand Fast in Liberty

Galatians 2 is a battle cry. It's a reminder that **doctrine matters**, even when relationships are at stake. Paul stood for liberty—**not political liberty**, but **spiritual liberty**—the kind only the gospel can give.

Let every believer remember: we are justified **by the faith of Christ**, not by the works of the law. And if that gospel is threatened—even by a Peter—we must, like Paul, **stand fast**.

Because to yield is to compromise. And to compromise is to corrupt.

3 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Bewitched by the Law (Galatians 3)

Introduction: The Folly of Mixing Law with Grace

Galatians 3 may be the sharpest chapter in the New Testament when it comes to rebuking legalism. Paul, in no uncertain terms, calls the Galatians **“foolish”** and **“bewitched”** for turning back to the law after beginning in the Spirit. This chapter isn't soft—it is surgical, dismantling every system that teaches salvation or sanctification by works.

For Paul, the gospel was not just the way in—it was the **only way forward**. The law was never meant to save, sanctify, or strengthen the believer. Its purpose was to condemn and to point to Christ. Galatians 3 is not simply a doctrinal statement; it's a divine warning to anyone who seeks to **add law to grace**, or who believes the Christian life can be perfected in the flesh.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. The Rebuke of Legalistic Foolishness (Gal. 3:1–3)

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth...”

Paul doesn't mince words. The Galatians had been spiritually **“bewitched”**—deceived like someone under a spell. What had caused this? A return to the law. Paul reminds them that

Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified—not as a lawgiver or a reformer, but as the Redeemer.

He then fires a trio of piercing questions:

- Did they receive the Spirit by works or by faith? (v. 2)
- Are they now made perfect by the flesh? (v. 3)
- Have they suffered for nothing? (v. 4)

These questions expose the irrationality of mixing **faith with law**. If the Spirit came by faith, why return to works? If God began the work in them by grace, why attempt to finish it by human effort?

This rebuke isn't just to the Galatians. It lands squarely in the lap of modern Christianity:

- Churches that teach **you must tithe or God won't bless you**.
- Teachers who claim you can **lose salvation** if you don't "walk in holiness."
- Movements that demand **Sabbath-keeping, Torah observance**, or food laws as signs of spiritual maturity.

Paul says to all of them: **foolish, bewitched, misled**.

2. Abraham Justified by Faith (Gal. 3:6–9)

Paul pulls Abraham into the conversation—not Moses. Why? Because **Abraham was justified before the law existed** (Gen. 15:6). He "believed God," and it was **counted to him for righteousness**.

The law came **430 years later** (v. 17). So the promise given to Abraham—justification by faith—**was not annulled by the law**.

This is huge. It proves that God's plan of salvation was always based on faith, not law. Abraham becomes the model for **both Jew and Gentile**, showing that God's blessings come through believing, not achieving.

3. The Curse of the Law (Gal. 3:10–12)

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse..."

The law cannot bless anyone—it only curses. Why? Because it demands **perfect obedience** (Deut. 27:26). And no one, except Christ, has ever met that standard.

To live under the law is to live under a curse. This includes:

- Catholics who think sacraments justify.
- Charismatics who think tongues prove salvation.
- Messianics who teach that believers must keep feast days.

The law condemns. It never empowers. It never justifies. “The just shall live by faith” (v. 11), not by ceremonial observance.

4. Christ Redeemed Us from the Curse (Gal. 3:13–14)

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...”

Here is the heart of substitution. Christ became a curse—**not just took the curse, but became it**—so that we might be blessed. The blessed Son of God was treated as accursed, so the accursed children of Adam could be treated as righteous.

This is the transaction of the gospel:

- **He bore our curse**, that we might receive His righteousness.
- **He died under the law**, that we might live under grace.
- **He was made sin**, that we might be made righteous (2 Cor. 5:21).

5. The Law Was Temporary and Inferior (Gal. 3:19–25)

Why then the law? Paul anticipates the objection and answers it clearly:

- The law was **added because of transgressions** (v. 19)—to expose sin.
- It was given **until the seed (Christ) should come** (v. 19).
- It was administered through angels and a mediator (v. 19–20), showing its distance from God.
- It was **never meant to give life** (v. 21).
- It served as a **schoolmaster** (v. 24), leading us to Christ.

But once faith came, **we are no longer under a schoolmaster** (v. 25). This absolutely shatters all attempts to bring believers back under the Old Testament system—whether Jewish, Catholic, or cultic.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Hebrew Roots and Torah Observance

Galatians 3 dismantles the Hebrew Roots Movement. The attempt to bring Christians under feast days, Sabbaths, circumcision, or Mosaic ordinances is **anti-Pauline and anti-Christ**.

The law was temporary. Its purpose was to **condemn, not cleanse**. It was a schoolmaster—but the school is out. Christ has come.

2. Roman Catholic Sacramentalism

The Catholic Church teaches that grace is dispensed through sacraments, which are tied to obedience and ritual. This is law clothed in Christian garments.

Galatians 3 shows that **even Abraham**—before sacraments, before circumcision—was justified by faith. And Christ has redeemed us from the **curse of ritual and ordinance**.

3. Lordship Salvation and Perseverance Theology

Many Calvinists insist that true salvation includes a lifetime of obedience or else it was never genuine. But Galatians 3 reveals the absurdity of beginning in the Spirit and trying to be “made perfect by the flesh” (v. 3).

Sanctification, like justification, is by grace through faith. Good works are the **fruit**, not the **foundation** of salvation.

4. Covenant Theology Confusion

Those who believe the Church is “spiritual Israel” and that the Mosaic law still binds the believer miss the whole point of Galatians 3. The Church is not under the law. Believers are not spiritual Jews. The promise was to **Abraham’s seed—Christ—and those in Christ**.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Genesis 15:6** – Abraham believed God and was justified.
- **Romans 4:1–5** – Faith counted for righteousness without works.
- **2 Corinthians 3:6–9** – The law is a ministry of death.
- **Romans 3:20** – By the law is the knowledge of sin.
- **Colossians 2:14–17** – Law ordinances nailed to the cross.
- **Hebrews 8:13** – The old covenant is ready to vanish away.

These passages affirm that the law's role is **finished**, and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life (Rom. 5:21).

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Galatians 3 teaches that the Body of Christ is not an extension of Israel. It is a **new creature** (Gal. 6:15), formed by faith, not genealogy or covenant. We are children of **promise**, not of law.

Dispensational truth shines in this chapter:

- The law was **added** (not eternal).
- It was **temporary** (until Christ).
- It was **inferior** (given by angels, not directly).
- It was **not of faith**.

The Church Age is not under the law. We walk by **the Spirit**, not by tablets of stone. We are the seed of Abraham **by faith**, not flesh.

Practical & Devotional Insight

There's a powerful pastoral lesson here: Many Christians still live like they're under the law—not Mosaic, but manmade:

- “God won't love me unless I perform.”
- “I have to earn God's approval.”
- “If I sin, I've lost my standing.”

This legalism kills joy, quenches the Spirit, and robs the believer of liberty. Paul's message is clear: **Don't be bewitched**. Don't trade sonship for slavery. Don't return to Egypt.

You were saved by faith. You live by faith. You grow by faith. Your victory is in **Christ, not the checklist**.

Closing Thought: Faith Is Enough

Galatians 3 silences the legalist, rebukes the ritualist, and disarms the Judaizer. It declares, boldly and unapologetically, that **faith is enough**. Not faith plus the law. Not faith plus effort. Not faith plus pedigree.

Just **faith in Christ**, who became a curse so you could become a son.

Let every believer say with confidence, “I am no longer under the schoolmaster. I am in Christ. I am justified. I am free.”

That is Pauline truth—and it is the heartbeat of the gospel.

4 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Heirs According to the Promise (Galatians 4)

Introduction: From Slaves to Sons

Galatians 4 opens the vault of spiritual adoption and places the believer directly into the divine family—not as a servant, not as a religious hireling, but as a **son and heir through Christ**. Paul transitions from doctrinal precision to relational clarity, explaining how the believer has passed from the **bondage of the law** into the **liberty of sonship**. This chapter provides one of the most powerful doctrinal declarations of the **believer’s identity in Christ**.

Yet, even in the shadow of this sonship, Paul grieves. The Galatians, who had once embraced liberty, are now returning to bondage. What kind of madness would make a free son want to live like a slave again? The answer is both spiritual deception and carnal seduction—religion often appeals to pride more than freedom does. Galatians 4 is Paul's heartfelt plea for the saints to stand in their position as heirs and **refuse to be entangled again with a yoke of bondage**.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. From Children Under Tutors to Sons in Christ (Gal. 4:1–7)

Paul opens by comparing a child heir to a servant—though the heir owns everything, he’s still under the care of tutors until the appointed time (v. 1–2). This pictures Israel under the law: **heirs of a promise**, yet under the rudimentary elements of religious observance, waiting for the fullness of time.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son...” (v. 4)

Here we see the doctrine of **divine timing**. Jesus didn't arrive by accident. He came precisely **when prophecy, history, and divine purpose converged**. He was born under the law (v. 4) to **redeem them under the law**, and to **adopt them as sons**.

The believer's transition from law to grace is not just a legal change—it's a relational one. The Spirit cries within us, **"Abba, Father"** (v. 6). This echoes Romans 8:15–17, where the believer's status is no longer fear-based servitude but **Spirit-empowered sonship**. The result? **We are no more servants, but sons—and if sons, then heirs of God through Christ**.

This passage annihilates the false idea that believers in Christ are still under the Mosaic law. Sons are not governed by the same system that ruled over spiritual children. You do not return to the yoke of ceremonial law when you have already inherited **liberty in Christ**.

2. Turning Back to Bondage (Gal. 4:8–11)

Paul appeals to their past: **before Christ, they were enslaved to pagan gods** (v. 8). But now, knowing God—and more importantly, being known of God—they are turning back to **"weak and beggarly elements"** (v. 9). These "elements" refer to the elementary religious ordinances—the **types and shadows of Judaism** and law observance.

He specifically mentions **"days, and months, and times, and years"** (v. 10)—Sabbaths, feast days, new moons, sabbatical years. These were all part of the Jewish calendar. To go back to those after receiving Christ is spiritual regression.

"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (v. 11)

Paul is not questioning their salvation—he's questioning their **sanctification and growth**. He fears that all his labor is being undone by **religious seduction**, as they trade grace for law and liberty for bondage.

3. Paul's Pastoral Appeal and Pain (Gal. 4:12–20)

Paul switches from theological rebuke to **emotional appeal**. He reminds them of their love for him when he first preached the gospel (v. 13–15). They received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. But now, as he speaks truth, he has become their **enemy** (v. 16).

This is the painful price of ministry: **those who once rejoiced in truth may turn against the one who gave it**. Paul grieves for them as if in travail again (v. 19), desiring that Christ be formed in them. This is a vital truth for every teacher, pastor, and parent: **ministry is not just about conversion—it's about Christ being formed in people**.

His plea exposes the wickedness of the Judaizers. They didn't just want converts—they wanted disciples of their religious system (v. 17). Paul calls out their motive: **zealously affect you, but not well.**

4. The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gal. 4:21–31)

This section contains one of the most **powerful dispensational allegories** in all of Scripture. Paul takes the story of **Abraham's two sons—Ishmael and Isaac—and interprets it allegorically.**

- **Hagar (the bondmaid)** represents Mount Sinai and the law.
- **Sarah (the freewoman)** represents grace and the promise.
- **Ishmael**, born after the flesh, represents the old covenant.
- **Isaac**, born after the Spirit, represents the new covenant.

This is not a mere illustration—it's **doctrinal declaration**. Paul is saying: **If you cling to the law, you are children of the bondwoman. If you live by grace through faith, you are children of the freewoman.**

And the conclusion?

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” (v. 30)

In other words: **Don't try to live in both systems.** Law and grace cannot coexist. Sinai and Calvary are two mountains that **cannot be reconciled.**

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. The Hebrew Roots Movement and Sabbath Keepers

Those who teach that Christians must observe the Sabbath, feasts, or Mosaic calendar are clearly refuted by **Galatians 4:10–11**. These observances belong to a system Paul calls **“weak and beggarly.”**

Trying to “return to your roots” may seem spiritual, but Paul calls it **bondage**. In Christ, we are not under such shadows—we are **in the light of fulfillment.**

2. Catholic Feast Days and Holy Calendars

Catholicism has substituted Jewish feasts with its own: Lent, Advent, Saints' Days, Marian Months, and so on. Galatians 4 makes clear that such systems belong to **those under the law**, not to the sons of grace.

The Christian calendar is not dictated by **holy seasons**, but by the **indwelling Spirit**, who leads every day.

3. Covenant Theology

Covenant Theology insists there's one people of God and one covenant of grace from Genesis to Revelation. But Paul shows a **clear difference between children of the bondwoman (Old Covenant) and children of the free (New Covenant)**.

To merge them, as Covenant Theology does, is to **reject Paul's allegory** and the entire structure of the epistle.

4. Replacement Theology

Galatians 4 doesn't teach that the Church replaces Israel. Instead, it teaches that **the promises to Abraham are fulfilled spiritually in Christ**, and all who are in Christ—Jew or Gentile—are heirs **according to the promise**, not according to flesh or law.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 8:15–17** – Spirit of adoption, not bondage.
- **John 1:12–13** – Sons of God by faith.
- **Romans 4:13–16** – The promise is not through the law.
- **Isaiah 54:1** – Quoted in Gal. 4:27 about the barren woman.
- **Genesis 21:10** – Sarah tells Abraham to cast out the bondwoman.
- **Hebrews 8:6–13** – The new covenant is better and makes the old obsolete.
- **Colossians 2:16–17** – Let no man judge you in feast days, Sabbaths, or new moons.

These references bolster Paul's argument that **sonship and inheritance come by promise, not performance**.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Galatians 4 is a gem of **right division**. It lays out that the Church is:

- Not under the law.
- Not Israel.

- Not spiritualized Judaism.
- Not bound to feast days, seasons, or temple shadows.

The Body of Christ is:

- **Adopted by grace**, not born of Sinai.
- **Sons**, not slaves.
- **Free**, not bound.
- **Heirs**, not servants.

Trying to live as a Christian under Jewish law is like **trying to drive with the parking brake on**—you'll move, but you'll ruin everything. Paul's command is clear: **Cast out the bondwoman.**

We are the Isaac company, not the Ishmael assembly.

Practical & Devotional Insight

There's a deeply personal note in this chapter. Paul is not merely writing a polemic—he's writing with a broken heart. The Galatians once loved him dearly, but now they're doubting him. And all because they've turned back to **religion**.

Nothing kills spiritual joy faster than religious bondage. Rules, calendars, guilt systems—they promise power, but only produce fear and hypocrisy. Paul wants them to remember: **They are sons. They are heirs. They are free.**

For the modern believer, this means:

- You don't live to earn God's love—you live because you **have** it.
- You don't serve to be accepted—you serve because you **are** accepted.
- You don't obey to gain approval—you obey because you're **already approved in Christ**.

That's the heartbeat of sonship.

Closing Thought: Cast Out the Bondwoman

Paul's closing words in Galatians 4 are jarring: **“Cast out the bondwoman and her son.”** That wasn't just a historic event—it's a spiritual command. You cannot live in both tents. You must choose:

- Law or grace.
- Servant or son.
- Ishmael or Isaac.
- Mount Sinai or Mount Zion.
- The bondwoman or the freewoman.

Paul's appeal is not just theological—it's personal. He sees the Galatians trading freedom for slavery, and it grieves him.

Let it grieve us too.

Let every believer declare with full assurance:

“I am not a child of the bondwoman, but of the free.”

5 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Stand Fast in Liberty (Galatians 5)

Introduction: The Line Between Liberty and License

The fifth chapter of Galatians opens with a trumpet blast of truth: **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”** Liberty is not a minor theme in Pauline doctrine—it is a defining one. Galatians 5 is the battleground where liberty, legalism, and lawlessness clash. Paul has just established in chapters 3 and 4 that the believer is **not under the law but under grace**. Now he pivots to warn that liberty is not a license to sin, nor is legalism a shortcut to holiness.

This chapter is rich with doctrinal clarity and practical admonition. It contains some of the most quoted verses in modern Christianity—“walk in the Spirit,” “fruit of the Spirit,” “the works of the flesh”—yet few grasp how tightly these truths are tied to the believer's **position in Christ and freedom from the law**.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Standing Fast in Liberty (Gal. 5:1)

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Paul begins with a command: **stand fast**. Why? Because liberty is not automatic—it must be guarded. The “yoke of bondage” refers directly to **the Mosaic law**, including circumcision, feast days, dietary laws, and all the regulations that governed Israel.

This verse refutes the idea that the law has a place in the believer’s sanctification. The Galatians were not denying Christ; they were mixing Christ with law. And that **mixture ruins grace**. To return to the law is not backsliding—it’s **betrayal of liberty**.

2. The Danger of Adding Law to Grace (Gal. 5:2–4)

“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

Circumcision, in this context, is symbolic of the entire law system. Paul is not condemning the physical act itself but the **theological meaning behind it**. If a believer seeks to **add** law-keeping to faith in Christ, then **Christ shall profit him nothing**.

This statement obliterates all works-based systems:

- **Catholicism**, which adds sacraments.
- **Judaism**, which clings to circumcision.
- **Seventh-day Adventism**, which promotes Sabbath-keeping.
- **Hebrew Roots**, which glorifies Torah observance.

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

“Fallen from grace” does not mean loss of salvation. It means **you’ve stepped out of the sphere where grace operates** and into a legal system where grace is nullified. This rebukes those who teach sanctification by law, holiness by rules, and spiritual growth by religious effort.

3. Faith Which Worketh by Love (Gal. 5:5–6)

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

Paul reminds the Galatians that **righteousness is something we wait for—not work for**. The hope of righteousness is **glorification**, and it is a byproduct of faith, not law.

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

This verse defines the Christian walk. It is not marked by ritual, race, or rule-keeping—but by **faith energized by love**. Faith alone saves. But true faith produces love—not to earn salvation, but because **love is the fruit of liberty**.

4. Leaven and Legalism (Gal. 5:7–9)

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”

The Galatians started well. But someone hindered them—**false teachers, legalists, Judaizers**. Paul points out that it only takes **a little leaven to leaven the whole lump** (v. 9). Just a small dose of legalism—**one requirement, one ritual, one added rule**—and the whole gospel is corrupted.

This warning is timeless. In many modern churches:

- **Salvation is grace**, but sanctification is by a checklist.
- **Freedom is preached**, but guilt is used for control.
- **Jesus is exalted**, but Moses is snuck in the back door.

Paul says: That’s not the gospel. That’s **leaven**.

5. Liberty Is Not License (Gal. 5:13–15)

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh...”

Liberty is not lawlessness. Paul warns that **freedom can be abused** if it is interpreted as a license to sin. Legalists fear this and try to rein people back under rules. But Paul doesn’t do that. He doesn’t revert to law—he appeals to love.

“By love serve one another.”

Christian liberty expresses itself **not in rebellion but in service**. Freedom from the law leads to **freedom to love**, not self-indulgence. Love fulfills the law, not by striving, but by **Spirit-filled living** (Rom. 13:10).

Walk in the Spirit, Not the Flesh (Gal. 5:16–18)

This is the core of Christian victory.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Paul doesn't say "fight the flesh"—he says **walk in the Spirit**. Victory over sin is not through law, willpower, or accountability—it's through **yielding to the Spirit**. The law could not produce holiness; only the Spirit can.

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (v. 18)

Clear as crystal: those led by the Spirit are **not under the law**. Any teaching that puts the believer back under the law **rejects the leadership of the Spirit**.

The Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5:19–21)

Paul lists 17 "works of the flesh," organized into four categories:

1. **Sexual Sins:** Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.
2. **Religious Sins:** Idolatry, witchcraft.
3. **Social Sins:** Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders.
4. **Sensual Sins:** Drunkenness, revellings.

"They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (v. 21)

This isn't loss of salvation for believers—it's a declaration that **those whose lives are defined by these sins** give evidence that they have never been born again.

But for the saved, these sins can **still manifest** if one walks in the flesh. That's why the call is to **walk in the Spirit**—not to strive against the flesh in the power of the flesh.

The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23)

In contrast to the works of the flesh, the Spirit produces fruit:

"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Note:

- It's not **fruits** but **fruit**—a unified whole.
- These are not **commands to obey**—they are **results of yielding**.

Against such, Paul says, **there is no law**. The law cannot produce these. Religion cannot manufacture them. Only the Spirit can bear them **in the soil of liberty**.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Legalistic Sanctification

Many believe that while salvation is by grace, sanctification is by **rules, discipline, or law**. Galatians 5 makes clear:

- Law cannot sanctify.
- The flesh cannot fight the flesh.
- Only the Spirit can lead to victory.

2. The Hebrew Roots Movement

The teaching that believers must keep Torah, Sabbaths, or feasts is directly refuted. Paul says **those led by the Spirit are not under the law**. To go back is to **be entangled again** with bondage.

3. Lordship Salvation

Some Calvinists teach that true salvation always results in sinless victory. Paul teaches **there is a war between flesh and Spirit** (v. 17), and the believer must choose to walk in the Spirit. Holiness is not automatic—it is **dependent on yielding**.

4. License Theology

On the other side are those who say, “I’m free, so I can live how I want.” Paul says **liberty is not an excuse for sin**. Those who abuse it **consume one another** (v. 15) and destroy their testimony. True liberty expresses itself **through love, not lust**.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 6:14** – “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”
- **2 Corinthians 3:17** – “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”
- **Romans 8:13–14** – If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.
- **Titus 2:11–12** – Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness.
- **Romans 7:4–6** – We are dead to the law to serve in newness of spirit.

- **Colossians 2:20–23** – Will-worship and rules appear wise but are powerless against sin.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Galatians 5 is essential to **rightly dividing** the Church Age. It teaches:

- We are **not under the law**.
- We are not motivated by fear of judgment but by **love and the Spirit**.
- We do not walk by sight (rules), but by faith and inner guidance.

Those who insist that Christians are bound to Old Testament ordinances, holy days, or Jewish roots are **confusing Israel with the Body of Christ**.

Paul's message is liberty—not to sin, but to serve.

Practical & Devotional Insight

The Christian walk is not about **doing more**—it's about **yielding more**. You don't grow by trying harder but by trusting deeper. Legalism says, "Work harder." Grace says, "Walk closer."

Ask yourself daily:

- Am I walking in the Spirit?
- Am I producing love?
- Am I serving others?
- Am I burdened by rules, or free in relationship?

Liberty is not passive—it is **active, Spirit-filled living**. When you walk in the Spirit, **you don't need rules**—because the fruit of the Spirit exceeds anything the law demands.

Closing Thought: Walk in Liberty, Live by the Spirit

Galatians 5 is the believer's **bill of liberty**. It says:

- You are **free from the law**.

- You are **empowered by the Spirit**.
- You are called to **serve through love**.
- You are equipped to **walk in victory**, not because of rules, but because of the **living Christ in you**.

To live under law is to **reject the Spirit**. To abuse liberty is to **grieve the Spirit**. But to walk in the Spirit is to **fulfill the will of God with joy, peace, and power**.

Let every believer stand fast, walk strong, and bear fruit—**not by law, but by liberty**.

6 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – The Law of Christ (Galatians 6)

Introduction: A New Law for a New Man

As Paul brings the epistle to the Galatians to a close, he does so not with shallow goodbyes or vague moral exhortations—but with rich, Spirit-filled truths that define the very essence of the Church Age. Galatians 6 moves us from doctrine into daily practice. Having established the believer’s liberty from the law, Paul now outlines what that liberty looks like in action: **burden-bearing, Spirit-sowing, and cross-boasting**.

While the Judaizers gloried in the flesh, Paul gloried in the cross. While others sowed for the praise of men, Paul reminded the Galatians that **whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap**. This chapter is the crescendo of Christian maturity—showing us what it truly means to live under **the law of Christ**, not the law of Moses. It is deeply practical, personally convicting, and dispensationally rich.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Restoration, Not Condemnation (Gal. 6:1)

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness...”

This verse sets the tone for Christian relationships within the Body. The goal of correction is **restoration**, not humiliation. The word “restore” here is a medical term used for **setting a broken bone**. It’s delicate work, requiring **spiritual discernment and personal humility**.

Notice:

- It’s not a license to ignore sin.

- It's not an excuse to gossip.
- It's a call to gently lift, not proudly crush.

“Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

There's no room for Pharisaical pride. Every believer is vulnerable. Paul reminds us that discipline must be administered with trembling hands and humble hearts. This verse refutes the harsh, authoritarian style of spiritual correction that often dominates legalistic circles.

2. Bear Ye One Another's Burdens (Gal. 6:2)

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

This is **the law of Christ**—the new rule that governs the Christian life. Not the Ten Commandments, not the 613 laws of Torah, but the law of **sacrificial love** (John 13:34). It's echoed in Romans 15:1 and 1 Corinthians 9:21, where Paul declares himself **under the law to Christ**, not to Moses.

Burden-bearing is not just empathy—it's **spiritual service**. It includes:

- Helping a brother through sin recovery.
- Encouraging the weak and wounded.
- Meeting physical needs when able.

This is Christianity in its most powerful form: **selfless, Spirit-led service**.

3. Every Man Proves His Own Work (Gal. 6:3–5)

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”

Paul targets the prideful who believe they are exempt from burden-bearing. He reminds us of our insignificance apart from Christ. We are **nothing**—and thinking otherwise is self-deception.

“But let every man prove his own work...”

While we are to bear others' burdens (v. 2), we must also carry our own “burden” (v. 5)—a reference to **personal responsibility and accountability before God**. The apparent contradiction is resolved this way:

- Verse 2: Share each other's heavy loads.
- Verse 5: Carry your own personal pack (like a soldier's kit bag).

It's communal compassion and personal responsibility—**both essential for balance** in the Body.

4. Sowing and Reaping (Gal. 6:6–10)

This section contains one of the most universally quoted principles in all Scripture:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

But before that, Paul commands:

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”
(v. 6)

This is not about casual fellowship—it's about **supporting ministers materially and financially**. The word “communicate” here means **to share** (cf. Philippians 4:15). Those who are taught the Word have a biblical obligation to support those who labor in it. Paul ties this directly to the principle of sowing and reaping.

“He that soweth to his flesh... shall reap corruption.” “He that soweth to the Spirit... shall reap life everlasting.”

This is not about earning salvation—it's about sowing post-salvation. The Christian who feeds his carnal appetites reaps a life of decay. But the believer who yields to the Spirit reaps a harvest of spiritual vitality and eternal reward.

This section destroys the idea that **grace cancels consequences**. Grace forgives sin, but sowing and reaping remain intact. It's a universal principle that governs both saints and sinners.

5. Don't Grow Weary in Well Doing (Gal. 6:9–10)

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Ministry is often slow, discouraging, and unrewarded in the moment. Paul reminds us that harvest comes in **due season**—not always now, but eventually. The reward may be in eternity, but **it will come** (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58).

“Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

While our compassion should extend to all, **priority belongs to fellow believers**. This principle teaches **order in charity**—we love the world, but we especially love the Church. This is the divine model of spiritual triage.

Paul's Final Contrast: Flesh vs. Cross (Gal. 6:11–16)

Paul now summarizes the letter's central theme:

“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh... constrain you to be circumcised...”

This is the ultimate motive of legalists: **outward show**. They want to boast in numbers, influence, and conversions—not in the cross. They don't keep the law themselves (v. 13); they just want to recruit others into bondage.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Paul's glory is not in flesh, but in the **cross**. The cross:

- Ends self-righteousness.
- Kills legalism.
- Strips away pride.

“By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Here's the doctrine of **crucifixion to the world**. It means:

- The world has no appeal to the believer.
- The believer has no value to the world.

This is real separation—not by external codes, but by **internal crucifixion**.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” (v. 15)

Paul ends where he began: the external means **nothing**. What matters is **the new creature**—a new man in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24).

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Legalism and Ritual-Based Christianity

Galatians 6 directly rebukes those who focus on **external righteousness**. Circumcision, feast-keeping, dress codes, or denominational badges—none of these produce spirituality. Paul says:

- They do it to avoid persecution (v. 12).
- They want to boast in your submission (v. 13).

But true Christianity is **cross-centered, not crowd-centered**.

2. Works-Based Sanctification

Sowing to the Spirit is not law-keeping—it is **Spirit-yielding**. The idea that holiness comes through rule-keeping is destroyed by Paul’s appeal to **internal transformation**. It’s not what you forbid—it’s what you **foster by walking in the Spirit**.

3. Anti-Tithing Abuse of Galatians

Some misread v. 6 to avoid giving, but Paul clearly teaches that those who are taught should **materially support** those who teach. It's not Levitical tithing—it’s **grace-based, Spirit-led generosity** (cf. 2 Cor. 9:6–8).

4. Replacement Theology

Paul speaks of the “Israel of God” in v. 16, which some use to claim the Church replaces Israel. But the context shows:

- He’s referring to the **true believing remnant of Jews in Christ** (cf. Rom. 9:6).
- He’s not redefining the Church as Israel.
- He affirms a distinction between **the new creature** (v. 15) and **ethnic Israel**.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **1 Corinthians 3:12–15** – Each man’s work will be tested.
- **2 Corinthians 9:6** – Sow sparingly, reap sparingly.
- **Romans 8:13–14** – Walk after the Spirit, not the flesh.
- **Ephesians 4:24** – Put on the new man.
- **Romans 12:15** – Weep with them that weep; bear burdens.
- **Philippians 4:17** – Paul seeks fruit that abounds to the giver’s account.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Galatians 6 draws the line:

- We are under **the law of Christ**, not Moses.

- We glory in the **cross**, not external signs.
- We walk by the **Spirit**, not religious systems.

This chapter concludes Paul's strongest case for **grace-based living**, free from the curse of the law, and full of the **new creature's life**. The distinction between Israel and the Church remains intact.

We are:

- **Burden bearers**, not spiritual policemen.
- **Seed sowers**, not harvest manipulators.
- **Cross-glorifiers**, not law-boasters.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Every verse in Galatians 6 drips with application:

- Are you restoring or condemning?
- Are you bearing burdens or causing them?
- Are you sowing to the Spirit or the flesh?
- Are you weary in well doing?
- Do you boast in Christ or your own spirituality?

The law of Christ is not written in stone—it's etched in the heart. It moves the believer to compassion, sacrifice, patience, generosity, and godliness—not by force, but by **faith working through love**.

This chapter calls for maturity—not just correct doctrine, but **Spirit-led action**. It doesn't ask how loud you shout in worship; it asks **whose burdens you've helped carry this week**.

Closing Thought: Let No Man Trouble Me—The Marks of the Cross

Paul ends the letter with a final warning and a badge of authenticity:

“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”
(v. 17)

Unlike the Judaizers who boasted in circumcision, Paul bore the **scars of persecution**, proof that he followed Christ. These were **not ritualistic marks—they were marks of suffering** for truth.

So it is today. The real Christian isn't marked by beads, robes, Hebrew phrases, or Sabbatarian calendars. He is marked by:

- A crucified heart.
- A Spirit-led walk.
- A selfless love.
- A Christ-centered glory.

Let no man trouble us with law, with ritual, with bondage. We bear the marks of freedom.

We are under the **law of Christ**, and that is enough.

7 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Seated in Heavenly Places (Ephesians 1)

Introduction: The Eternal Position of the Believer

Ephesians 1 opens one of the most profound doctrinal treatises in the New Testament. Where Galatians rebuked legalism, Ephesians reveals **the riches of the believer's inheritance in Christ**. It is not a corrective letter like Galatians or Corinthians. It is a letter of praise, exaltation, and deep doctrinal insight into **who the Church is**, what **God has already accomplished**, and where **the believer is positionally seated**.

Paul isn't just offering a prayer—he is unveiling an eternal reality. From the opening verse, he directs the believer's eyes not to Sinai or Jerusalem, but to **heavenly places in Christ**. The phrases used in this chapter—"chosen," "predestinated," "accepted," "sealed"—have been twisted by Calvinists, misunderstood by many, and yet they contain some of the most glorious truths of **God's eternal purpose for the Body of Christ**.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Paul's Apostolic Authority and the Faithful in Christ (Eph. 1:1–2)

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God..."

As in Galatians, Paul establishes that his apostleship is **not self-appointed or man-given**. It is by the **will of God**. His audience is **“the saints... and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.”** This dual address encompasses all believers:

- **Saints**—by position in Christ.
- **Faithful**—those walking in obedience to that calling.

Paul is writing not just to saved sinners but to **those seeking to walk in their heavenly identity**.

“Grace be to you, and peace...”

The Pauline pattern always puts **grace before peace**. There is no peace without grace. This greeting is not perfunctory—it reflects the **standing of the believer** in the age of grace.

2. Blessed With All Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places (Eph. 1:3)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...”

This verse is a mountaintop. It introduces the grand theme of the epistle:

- **Spiritual blessings**, not earthly.
- **Heavenly places**, not promised land.
- **In Christ**, not in Moses or Abraham.

This is the Church’s unique inheritance. Israel’s promises were earthly—land, crops, health, military victory. The Church’s blessings are **spiritual and celestial**. This marks a dispensational divide. We are not heirs of Israel’s kingdom—we are **seated in Christ** in the heavenlies.

This verse alone refutes:

- Prosperity gospel (material wealth is not the measure).
- Covenant theology (the Church is not spiritual Israel).
- Charismaticism (blessings are not always visible, emotional, or miraculous).

3. Chosen in Christ Before the Foundation of the World (Eph. 1:4)

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...”

Here we must be precise. Paul does **not** say God chose who would be in Christ, but that those **in Christ are chosen**. The location of election is “**in him.**”

This destroys the Calvinist notion of **unconditional election of individuals to salvation**. God chose the Body of Christ before the foundation of the world; individuals are added by **faith in the gospel** (Eph. 1:13).

“...that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

The purpose of this election is sanctification and Christ-likeness—not arbitrary damnation or favoritism. We are **declared holy** in Christ and called to walk accordingly.

4. Predestinated to Adoption (Eph. 1:5–6)

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself...”

Again, predestination is not about who gets saved. It is about **what happens to those who are saved**. Every person **in Christ** is predestinated to:

- **Adoption**—full sonship with inheritance rights.
- **Glorification** (cf. Romans 8:30).
- **Conformation to Christ’s image**.

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

The phrase “**accepted in the beloved**” is breathtaking. In Christ, the believer is **already accepted**, not **on probation**, not waiting for approval, not hoping to be good enough.

We are not accepted by merit but by union with the Beloved—Jesus Christ.

5. Redemption Through His Blood (Eph. 1:7–8)

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...”

The redemption is **present tense**—we **have** it. Not through baptism. Not through confession. Not through enduring to the end. Through **his blood**.

This strikes at:

- Catholic sacramentalism.

- Lordship salvation.
- Any gospel that delays assurance until judgment day.

“...according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”

God’s grace is not stingy. It abounds. And it is wise—it does not ignore sin, but **pays for it fully**.

6. The Mystery of His Will (Eph. 1:9–10)

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will...”

Paul here begins unveiling one of the **seven Pauline mysteries**—God’s plan to gather **all things in heaven and earth under Christ**.

This is future prophecy, looking forward to the **millennial reign and beyond**, when all creation is united under Christ’s headship. It’s a cosmic plan, and the Church is part of it now, spiritually seated in heaven, waiting for physical manifestation.

7. Sealed With the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:11–14)

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance...”

Our inheritance is **not conditional on our performance**. It is tied to our union with Christ.

“...after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...”

This verse outlines the order of salvation:

1. **Hear the gospel.**
2. **Trust in Christ.**
3. **Sealed with the Holy Spirit.**

“...ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance...”

The sealing of the Holy Spirit is **God’s down payment**, His guarantee that the full inheritance is coming. This is eternal security. A seal can’t be broken by man—it is **God’s seal**.

Paul’s Prayer: Enlightenment to Understand Our Position (Eph. 1:15–23)

Paul now shifts to prayer. He doesn’t ask for riches or miracles—but for spiritual sight.

1. The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation (Eph. 1:17)

“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ... may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.”

This isn’t new revelation. It’s **illumination** of what we already have. The believer’s great need is **to understand what God has already done**.

2. The Eyes of Understanding Enlightened (Eph. 1:18)

“...that ye may know what is the hope of his calling...”

Hope is not wishful thinking—it is **confident expectation**. Paul wants the saints to grasp:

- The **hope** of their calling.
- The **riches** of their inheritance.
- The **greatness of God’s power** toward them.

3. Resurrection Power Working in Us (Eph. 1:19–20)

“...the exceeding greatness of his power... which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead...”

The same power that raised Christ **now works in the believer**. This isn’t metaphorical—it’s practical. Victory over sin, endurance in trials, wisdom for service—**all flow from resurrection power**.

4. Christ Above All, the Church His Body (Eph. 1:21–23)

“...Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion...”

Christ is exalted **above all angelic beings, demons, powers**—in both heaven and earth.

“...and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

This is perhaps the greatest statement of the Church’s identity in all Scripture:

- We are **his Body**.
- He is **our Head**.

- We are **his fullness**—the visible representation of Christ on earth.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Calvinism (Total Depravity and Unconditional Election)

Ephesians 1 refutes Calvinism:

- **We are chosen “in Christ,” not to be in Christ.**
- **Predestination is unto adoption and glorification**, not unto faith.
- **God’s will is made known to believers**, not hidden behind decrees.

2. Conditional Security

The believer is **sealed with the Holy Spirit** until redemption (v. 13–14). The seal is not conditional on performance. Eternal security is embedded in the language of **inheritance, sealing, and grace**.

3. Prosperity Gospel

The blessings of Ephesians 1 are **spiritual**, not material. They are in **heavenly places**, not earthly stores. Any gospel that promises health and wealth in exchange for faith ignores Paul’s inspired emphasis.

4. Replacement Theology

Ephesians 1 distinguishes the Church as:

- A **new man** (cf. Eph. 2:15).
- Blessed in **heavenly places**, not in a land.
- The **Body of Christ**, not spiritual Israel.

This is a **dispensational revelation**, not covenant rebranding.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – New creature in Christ.
- **Romans 8:29–30** – Predestined to be conformed to his image.
- **Colossians 2:10** – Complete in Christ.
- **1 Peter 1:4** – Inheritance reserved in heaven.

- **1 Corinthians 12:13** – Baptized into one Body.
- **Romans 8:16–17** – Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Ephesians 1 is a cornerstone of **Pauline dispensationalism**:

- It presents the Church as **a mystery revealed only to Paul** (cf. Eph. 3:1–6).
- It emphasizes **positional truths**: chosen, adopted, accepted, sealed.
- It distinguishes the Church from Israel by focusing on **heavenly identity**, not earthly destiny.

This chapter elevates the Church **above ordinances, ethnicity, and performance**. The believer's status is based not on works but **on union with Christ in heavenly places**.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Ephesians 1 is not just for scholars—it's for struggling saints:

- When you feel inadequate: remember you are **accepted in the beloved**.
- When you feel uncertain: remember you are **sealed with the Spirit**.
- When you feel directionless: remember your **hope is anchored in eternity**.
- When you feel powerless: remember **resurrection power is in you**.

This chapter invites the believer to **live from his position, not his performance**. You are already seated in heaven—now walk like it on earth.

Closing Thought: The Riches of His Grace

The letter opens with a doxology and ends with a declaration: **Christ is exalted, the believer is secure, and the Church is his Body**.

You don't need to work for acceptance—you are accepted.

You don't need to fear the future—you are predestinated to glory.

You don't need to earn blessings—you are already blessed.

Ephesians 1 isn't a ladder to climb—it's a treasure chest already given.

Open it. Believe it. Live it.

8 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Raised and Seated Together (Ephesians 2)

Introduction: From Death to Dominion in Christ

Ephesians 2 is one of the most pivotal chapters in Pauline doctrine. In just 22 verses, Paul walks the believer through the **entire spiritual transformation**—from death in sins to life in Christ, from being children of wrath to citizens of the household of God, and from alienation to unification through the cross.

This chapter reveals the **grace of God** not only as the means of salvation but also as the eternal backdrop of the Church's identity. Paul explains that God didn't just **save us from something (sin)**—He saved us **unto something glorious**: union with Christ, eternal purpose, and heavenly positioning.

Ephesians 2 dismantles pride, legalism, and human effort. It also presents a beautiful dispensational transition from **Israel and Gentiles being separate**, to being **one new man in Christ**. This is not about joining a religion—it is about being recreated into something that had never existed before: **the Body of Christ**.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Dead in Trespasses and Sins (Eph. 2:1–3)

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...”

The first reality Paul presents is **total spiritual death**. Man is not spiritually sick or misguided—he is **dead**. That death is marked by:

- **Trespasses**: deliberate violations of God's law.
- **Sins**: falling short of His holiness.

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world...”

Before salvation, every person follows the **world's system**, under the influence of:

- **“The prince of the power of the air”**—Satan.
- The **spirit that now works in the children of disobedience**—the satanic current pulling men to rebel.

Verse 3 confirms that **all** (Jew and Gentile alike) once lived according to fleshly desires, and were by nature **“children of wrath”**. This refutes any teaching of **inherent human goodness**. Without Christ, man is depraved and condemned.

2. But God... Rich in Mercy (Eph. 2:4–5)

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...”

The phrase “but God” marks one of the most important transitions in Scripture. While man was helpless, God was merciful. While man was dead, God intervened.

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ...”

This is regeneration—**spiritual resurrection**. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, the believer is spiritually raised **with Him**. The verb “quickened” here means **made alive**.

“(by grace ye are saved;)”

This parenthetical phrase interrupts the sentence to emphasize the **source of life**: grace, not merit. We didn’t earn our resurrection—we received it by grace.

3. Raised and Seated in Heavenly Places (Eph. 2:6–7)

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...”

This is perhaps one of the most astonishing truths in all Scripture. The believer is not only:

- **Raised spiritually**, but
- **Seated positionally with Christ** in heaven.

This is not future—it is present tense. Positionally, the believer is already:

- Above the world.
- Above demonic power.
- Seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

Why?

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

Your salvation is **not just about you**—it’s a display of God’s glory. Throughout eternity, the Church will stand as the greatest testimony to **God’s unsearchable grace**.

4. Saved by Grace Through Faith (Eph. 2:8–9)

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God...”

This verse is one of the most quoted—and most misunderstood. It clearly teaches:

- Salvation is **by grace** (unearned).
- **Through faith** (not works).
- **Not of yourselves** (not initiated or sustained by man).
- **It is the gift of God** (salvation as a whole is the gift).

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

No human effort contributes to salvation. No sacraments, rituals, moral living, or perseverance earns justification.

This slams the door shut on:

- Catholicism’s sacraments.
- Calvinism’s perseverance model.
- Islam’s scale-based salvation.
- Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses’ works systems.

5. Created in Christ Unto Good Works (Eph. 2:10)

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”

While salvation is **not by works**, it is **unto works**. The believer is:

- A **new creation** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17).
- **God’s workmanship** (poiēma—masterpiece).

- Designed to walk in **Spirit-enabled good works**.

These are not dead religious routines, but **fruit born of the Spirit's indwelling** (cf. Gal. 5:22–23).

6. Gentiles Once Far Off (Eph. 2:11–12)

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh...”

Paul now reminds the Gentile believers of their past:

- Called **uncircumcision** by the Jews.
- **Aliens from Israel**.
- **Strangers to the covenants**.
- **Without hope and without God**.

This reveals that Gentiles were not under the law or covenants. Those who teach that the Church is just Israel continued miss this point. Gentiles were outsiders.

7. Made Nigh by the Blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13–14)

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

No longer alienated, Gentiles have been **brought near**—not by law, not by adoption into Judaism—but by **the blood of Christ**.

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one...”

Christ is **the peacemaker**, uniting Jew and Gentile into one Body.

“...and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us...”

This refers to the literal wall in the temple that separated Gentiles from Jews. Spiritually, Christ **tore it down**.

8. One New Man: The Church (Eph. 2:15–16)

“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments...”

Christ abolished **the Mosaic law** as a system to bring people to God.

“...for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace...”

Here’s the dispensational gold: the Church is **not Israel, not Gentile**—it is a **new man**.

This refutes:

- Replacement theology.
- Covenant theology.
- Messianic Judaism that seeks to blend covenants.

The Body of Christ is a brand new organism—a **mystery** not revealed in the Old Testament (cf. Eph. 3:5).

9. Reconciliation and Access (Eph. 2:17–18)

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

Christ’s gospel reached both Gentiles (“afar”) and Jews (“nigh”). But both now have **equal access**:

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

This is **Trinitarian beauty**:

- **Through Christ** (the Son),
- **By the Spirit**,
- **To the Father**.

No priest needed. No temple. No sacrifice. **One Body, one Spirit, one Lord**.

10. Fellowcitizens, Family, and a Holy Temple (Eph. 2:19–22)

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints...”

Gentiles are no longer second-class. In Christ, they are:

- **Fellowcitizens** (equal in the kingdom).
- **Of the household of God** (part of the family).

- **Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.**

Christ is the cornerstone, and the entire Body is:

“...fitly framed together [and] groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”

We are not a physical building—we are a **spiritual habitation of God through the Spirit.**

This demolishes the need for:

- Holy sites (Mecca, Jerusalem, Rome).
- Physical temples.
- Priestly mediators.

The **Church is God’s temple**—the believer’s body is His dwelling place (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19).

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Salvation by Works

Verses 8–9 declare that salvation is **entirely by grace through faith**. All systems that add works, ordinances, or law are condemned.

2. Covenant and Replacement Theology

The Church is not spiritual Israel—it is “**one new man.**” This eliminates the idea that we’ve inherited Israel’s covenants or become their replacement.

3. Charismatic Misuse of “Power”

Paul emphasizes **resurrection power for godly living**, not for seeking signs, tongues, or emotional experiences. The spiritual reality is inward transformation, not outward theatrics.

4. Denominational Elitism

Paul tears down all distinctions: Jew vs. Gentile, temple vs. outsider. There is **one Body**, with **equal access** to God.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 5:1–2** – Peace with God through Christ.

- **Colossians 1:13–22** – Reconciled through the blood of His cross.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17–21** – New creature and ministry of reconciliation.
- **Titus 3:5–7** – Saved not by works, but by mercy and grace.
- **Galatians 3:28** – No Jew or Greek in Christ.
- **1 Corinthians 12:13** – One Body by one Spirit.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Ephesians 2 is essential to Pauline dispensationalism:

- We were **not part of Israel’s covenants**.
- Christ created **a new man**, the Church.
- We are not under law—we are under grace.
- We are **already seated in heaven**.

The Church is not a continuation of God’s plan with Israel—it is **a new program**, revealed to Paul and formed by the Spirit. There is no national, ethnic, or religious hierarchy in Christ.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Ephesians 2 is more than theology—it’s personal:

- You were dead—but now you’re alive.
- You were distant—but now you’re near.
- You were hopeless—but now you’re seated.
- You were outside—but now you’re inside God’s household.

When the devil accuses you, go back to verse 6: **“I’m seated in heavenly places.”**

When guilt haunts you, go to verse 8: **“By grace I am saved.”**

When you feel useless, go to verse 10: **“I am His workmanship.”**

When you feel like a stranger, go to verse 19: **“I am of God’s household.”**

Closing Thought: From Grave to Glory

Ephesians 2 takes the believer from the **grave of sin** to the **throne of grace**. It showcases God's mercy, the sufficiency of Christ, and the glory of the new creation.

The believer's feet may be on earth, but his **seat is in heaven**.

He may once have been alienated—but now he is **part of something eternal and holy**.

No works. No law. No division.

Only grace. Only Christ. Only one new man.

Let that truth shape your walk, your worship, and your witness.

9 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – The Mystery Made Known (Ephesians 3)

Introduction: The Revelation of the Hidden Plan

In Ephesians 3, Paul shifts from praising God's eternal plan in Christ to explaining his **unique role in revealing a previously hidden mystery**. What he unveils in this chapter is one of the most important revelations in all of Scripture: the **dispensational truth** of the **Body of Christ**, which had been **hid from ages and generations**.

The chapter is intensely doctrinal, but also deeply personal. Paul reflects on his calling and responsibility to make known what had not been known before. He defines the Church not as a continuation of Israel or a modification of the covenants, but as something **altogether new**, brought into existence by grace, revealed through Paul, and rooted in the **unsearchable riches of Christ**.

This chapter is the backbone of Pauline dispensationalism. Without it, we cannot rightly divide Scripture or understand the uniqueness of the Church Age. What was hidden is now revealed—not by Peter, not by the prophets—but by **Paul**, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Paul, the Prisoner of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:1)

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles...”

Paul begins this section with a personal note. He is not just a teacher—he is a **prisoner**. And not just a prisoner of Rome, but a **prisoner of Jesus Christ**.

Why? Because of his ministry to **the Gentiles**. His unwavering commitment to the gospel of grace, apart from law, rituals, and Jewish tradition, brought him persecution and imprisonment.

But he does not complain. Paul's chains are **part of his calling**. His suffering is not in vain—it's a cost he gladly bears for the sake of revealing **God's mystery** to the Gentile world.

2. The Dispensation of the Grace of God (Eph. 3:2)

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward...”

This verse is a doctrinal landmark. Paul uses the word **dispensation** (Greek: oikonomia), which refers to a **stewardship or administration**. He was given a new economy of truth—**the dispensation of grace**—not law, not kingdom preaching.

This dispensation is not Old Testament continuation. It is a **new stewardship** committed to Paul, and it defines the Church Age.

3. The Mystery Made Known by Revelation (Eph. 3:3–5)

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery...”

Paul didn't receive this mystery through tradition, rabbinical training, or angelic visitation. It was revealed **directly by Christ** (cf. Gal. 1:11–12).

What is the mystery?

“...which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men...”

This mystery was **not revealed in the Old Testament**. The prophets did not see it. The plan for the Church—the Body of Christ—was hidden until it was given to Paul.

This flies in the face of those who teach:

- Covenant theology (which sees the Church in the Old Testament).
- Kingdom now theology.
- Replacement theology.

Paul says plainly: **This mystery was hidden**—and now revealed.

4. The Content of the Mystery (Eph. 3:6)

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...”

This verse defines the mystery. It includes:

- **Gentiles as fellowheirs**—equal inheritance with believing Jews.
- **Same body**—no national division.
- **Partakers in Christ by the gospel**, not by covenant, circumcision, or law.

This is revolutionary. In the Old Testament, Gentiles could only approach God through Israel. Now, **in Christ**, both Jew and Gentile are **equally part of one new man** (cf. Eph. 2:15).

This destroys all religious elitism, ethnic superiority, and legalistic gatekeeping.

5. Paul’s Unique Apostleship (Eph. 3:7–9)

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God...”

Paul did not choose this calling. He was **graced into it**. And what was his job?

“To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...”

These riches are **unsearchable**—they cannot be found by tracing the Old Testament. They are **not in the Mosaic law, the Davidic covenant, or the prophets**. They are in Christ alone, revealed by Paul.

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...”

Paul’s job is **to reveal this mystery**, to help all men see the **fellowship**, the **unity**, the **equal standing** of every believer in this new creation—the Church.

“...which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God...”

Again, Paul stresses: this was **not known**. It was **hidden** in God. This is not a Jewish doctrine. It is not a kingdom doctrine. It is a **Pauline revelation**.

6. The Heavenly Testimony of the Church (Eph. 3:10–11)

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...”

This is astounding. God is using the Church to **teach angels** about His wisdom.

The Church is not just a community of believers—it is a **cosmic testimony** to God’s grace and wisdom. Angels, fallen and unfallen, look at the Church and see something **they never imagined**: Jew and Gentile, indwelt by Christ, seated in heaven, reigning with Him.

“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord...”

The Church is **not an accident**. It was not Plan B. It is part of God’s **eternal purpose**—planned before the world began, hidden until Paul, and now revealed.

7. Access with Confidence (Eph. 3:12–13)

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

This verse teaches:

- We come **boldly**, not with fear (cf. Heb. 4:16).
- We come with **confidence**, not ritual.
- We come **by faith**, not works.

No priest. No temple. No sacrament. Just Christ.

“Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you...”

Paul’s suffering was for their gain. His chains meant their liberty. His affliction brought them truth. So he tells them: **Don’t be discouraged**. God’s plan is bigger than our pain.

Paul’s Prayer: Strength and Fullness (Eph. 3:14–21)

Having laid out the mystery, Paul now **bows the knee** (v. 14) and prays one of the greatest prayers in the Bible.

1. Strengthened with Might by His Spirit (v. 16)

“That he would grant you... to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man...”

This is not external power. This is **internal empowerment**. The strength of the Christian is not in charisma or ability—it is in the **Spirit’s might** working in the inner man.

2. Christ Dwelling in Your Hearts by Faith (v. 17)

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...”

Christ is already in every believer positionally—but Paul prays for **experiential closeness**, where Christ is **at home** in the believer’s heart.

“...being rooted and grounded in love...”

Love is not a suggestion. It is the **foundation** of Christian strength and maturity. Doctrinal precision must lead to **practical love**, or it becomes cold.

3. Comprehending the Dimensions of Christ’s Love (v. 18–19)

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height...”

Paul prays that believers would grasp the **immeasurable dimensions of Christ’s love**. Not just intellectually, but spiritually.

“...to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge...”

The love of Christ is knowable—but not exhaustible. It passes knowledge, yet we are called to pursue it, experience it, and grow in it.

4. Filled with All the Fullness of God (v. 19)

This is staggering. Paul doesn’t pray for better circumstances, but for **the fullness of God** to be experienced in the life of every believer. That’s not sinless perfection—it’s **spiritual saturation**.

5. Unto Him Be Glory (v. 20–21)

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...”

God’s power exceeds imagination. And it works **in us**—not just around us.

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages...”

The Church is the **eternal stage** of God’s glory. Not just now, but forever.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Covenant Theology

Paul explicitly states that the mystery was **hidden in other ages**. Covenant theology fails to see the Church as a new man and instead imposes Israel's covenants onto the Body of Christ.

2. Calvinism

The emphasis on Paul's **stewardship**, not divine determinism, shows that **God revealed something new**, not secretly forced a predestined plan from the beginning.

3. Legalism

Paul presents salvation, access, and standing as **by grace, through faith**, apart from the law. The Church is not governed by Jewish ordinances, feasts, or sabbaths.

4. The Charismatic Movement

This chapter does not point to signs and wonders as proof of spiritual maturity. It points to **love, strength in the inner man, and comprehension of Christ's love**.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Colossians 1:25–27** – Mystery revealed: Christ in you.
- **Romans 16:25–26** – Mystery kept secret, now made manifest.
- **1 Corinthians 2:7–10** – Hidden wisdom revealed by the Spirit.
- **Galatians 1:11–12** – Paul received gospel by revelation.
- **Ephesians 2:15** – One new man, not two merged entities.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Ephesians 3 is the bedrock of **Pauline dispensationalism**:

- The Church was **not revealed in the Old Testament**.
- Paul was **uniquely entrusted** with this mystery.

- Jew and Gentile are **now one new man**.
- We are **seated in heavenly places**, not awaiting kingdom land.
- Our role is to **testify to angelic beings** and display God's wisdom.

Any teaching that merges the Church with Israel ignores Ephesians 3.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Ephesians 3 challenges the believer to think **bigger**:

- Bigger than your struggles—because God's plan is eternal.
- Bigger than your background—because Jew and Gentile are now one.
- Bigger than your church programs—because we are God's temple.
- Bigger than your emotions—because Christ's love surpasses knowledge.

Paul's prayer is your reality:

- You are strengthened.
- Christ dwells in you.
- You are rooted in love.
- You are filled with God's fullness.
- You are part of God's cosmic glory plan.

Closing Thought: The Fellowship of the Mystery

Paul's revelation in Ephesians 3 is not academic—it's revolutionary. It redefines salvation, fellowship, purpose, and eternity. It calls the believer to walk in light of **heavenly truth**, not earthly tradition.

You are not under the law. You are not in Israel's covenants. You are not trying to earn access.

You are in the Body of Christ. You are seated in heaven. You are part of an eternal mystery—now made known.

Don't let the world, religion, or tradition pull you away from **the fellowship of the mystery**. Embrace it. Proclaim it. Live it.

10 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Walk Worthy of the Calling (Ephesians 4)

Introduction: From Position to Practice

The first three chapters of Ephesians lift the believer to the heights of heavenly truth. Paul reveals that we are seated in heavenly places, blessed with spiritual riches, and sealed with the Spirit. We are members of one Body, fellowheirs of a mystery hidden from the ages. Now, in Ephesians 4, the tone changes—not in glory, but in focus.

The doctrinal foundation is firmly laid. Now Paul exhorts believers to **live out their heavenly position in earthly practice**. The theme is simple but profound: **“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”** (v. 1). The believer's behavior must match their position. This is not law-keeping for salvation—it is grace-empowered living that reflects the unity, maturity, and love of the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 4 gives practical instruction for Church unity, spiritual growth, doctrinal maturity, and holy living—all flowing from the grace God has already given.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Walk Worthy of the Vocation (Eph. 4:1–2)

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called...”

Paul appeals as a **prisoner**, not a dictator. He urges the saints to **walk worthy**—not to earn their position, but to reflect it. “Vocation” here refers to our **calling as saints**, members of Christ's Body.

“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love...”

A worthy walk begins with **humility, gentleness, patience, and love**—the very opposite of pride and legalism. These are not spiritual gifts; they are **spiritual fruits** (cf. Gal. 5:22–23). Walking worthy is not flashy; it is faithful.

2. Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3–6)

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The believer does not create unity—**the Spirit already did that** at salvation. Our job is to **preserve it**. This is not ecumenical compromise. It is spiritual commitment to **peace, truth, and humility**.

Paul then lists **seven unifying truths** that bind every believer in Christ:

1. **One body** – The Church.
2. **One Spirit** – The Holy Ghost.
3. **One hope** – The rapture and glorification.
4. **One Lord** – Jesus Christ.
5. **One faith** – The faith of the gospel.
6. **One baptism** – Spirit baptism into Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13).
7. **One God and Father** – The divine origin and goal of all.

This unity is doctrinal, not emotional. It’s based on shared spiritual reality, not surface agreement.

3. Grace Given According to Christ’s Gift (Eph. 4:7–10)

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Grace is not one-size-fits-all. Christ gives **different measures of grace and gifts** to believers. Paul now transitions into the concept of **spiritual gifts** as divine equipment for ministry.

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” (cf. Ps. 68:18)

Christ’s ascension was not just triumph over death—it was a **victory parade** in which He distributed spoils: **spiritual gifts** for His Body.

“(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)”

This parenthesis teaches Christ's descent into Hades (paradise side), where He liberated Old Testament saints (cf. Luke 16:22–26; 1 Pet. 3:19). His resurrection and ascension **secured our victory** and enabled our equipping.

4. Gifts for the Church (Eph. 4:11–12)

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...”

These are not spiritual gifts like prophecy or tongues—they are **gifted men** given to the Church. Each plays a role:

- **Apostles** – Foundational (cf. Eph. 2:20); no longer active in office.
- **Prophets** – Received direct revelation; also foundational.
- **Evangelists** – Spreaders of the gospel (e.g., Philip).
- **Pastors and teachers** – Shepherds and instructors of local flocks.

Why did Christ give these men?

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Their role is not to perform all the ministry but to **equip the saints** to do it. This destroys the clergy-laity divide. Every believer is **called to minister**, and the Church thrives when each member functions.

5. Till We All Come to the Unity of the Faith (Eph. 4:13–14)

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God...”

The goal of pastoral ministry is not comfort but **Christ-likeness**. Maturity includes:

- **Unity in doctrine.**
- **Deep knowledge of Christ.**
- **Spiritual stability.**

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro...”

Spiritual immaturity leads to instability and **susceptibility to false doctrine**.

“...by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive...”

Paul warns of **deceivers who disguise error as truth**. Today this includes:

- Prosperity preachers.
- Judaizers pushing Torah.
- Hyper-charismatics.
- False unity movements.

The cure? **Grow up** in the Word and walk worthy of your calling.

6. Speaking the Truth in Love (Eph. 4:15–16)

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things...”

Maturity balances **truth and love**. Not all truth is loving, and not all love is truthful. Real Christian ministry speaks **both boldly and graciously**.

“...from whom the whole body fitly joined together...”

The Church is **Christ’s Body**, and it grows as every member:

- Is connected properly.
- Supplies their part.
- Edifies others.

This verse teaches **body life**—mutual support and growth through active participation.

7. Walk Not as Other Gentiles Walk (Eph. 4:17–19)

“This I say therefore... that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk...”

Paul now addresses lifestyle. Believers are to **live differently from the world**. He describes the unsaved as:

- Walking in the vanity of their mind.
- Having darkened understanding.
- Alienated from God through ignorance.
- Past feeling—morally desensitized.

This is a portrait of spiritual and moral decay. The world has no anchor. Believers must not copy its ways.

8. Put Off the Old Man, Put On the New (Eph. 4:20–24)

“But ye have not so learned Christ...”

Paul doesn’t just say “don’t sin”—he says **you learned Christ differently**. The Christian life is about **putting off the old man** (sin nature behavior) and **putting on the new man** (Spirit-led conduct).

“...which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

The new man is **a creation of God**, rooted in truth and righteousness—not religious form or cultural morality.

9. Specific Instructions for a Worthy Walk (Eph. 4:25–32)

Paul ends the chapter with practical commands. A worthy walk includes:

- **Truthful speech** (v. 25).
- **Controlled anger** (v. 26–27).
- **No place for the devil** (v. 27).
- **Honest work and generosity** (v. 28).
- **Edifying speech** (v. 29).
- **Sensitivity to the Spirit** (v. 30).
- **Bitterness removed, kindness added** (v. 31–32).

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

The Spirit who sealed us (Eph. 1:13) can also be **grieved** by our words and actions. This confirms:

- The **Spirit is a person**, not a force.
- The **believer’s behavior affects fellowship**, not salvation.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Clergy-Laity Separation

Ephesians 4:11–12 teaches that gifted leaders are to **equip all saints**. Ministry is not for professionals only—it’s for every believer.

2. Apostolic Succession

Paul names apostles and prophets as **foundational** (Eph. 2:20). Their office ceased after the foundation was laid. Modern “apostles” claiming new revelation are deceivers.

3. Works-Based Sanctification

The new man is **created after God** (v. 24). Holiness is the fruit of the new nature, not the result of legalism. We are called to walk worthy, not work to be worthy.

4. Ecumenical Unity

True unity is based on **seven doctrines** (vv. 4–6), not on shallow agreement. Unity without truth is compromise.

5. Universalism or Moralism

The “old man” is not improved—it is **put off**. Morality without regeneration is deception. The unsaved walk in darkness and are alienated from God.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 12:1–2** – Present your body; be transformed.
- **1 Corinthians 12:12–27** – One body, many members.
- **2 Timothy 3:16–17** – Scripture equips the man of God.
- **Galatians 5:22–25** – Fruit of the Spirit.
- **Colossians 3:8–14** – Put off the old, put on the new.
- **Hebrews 13:20–21** – God equips believers to do His will.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Ephesians 4 continues the theme of **Pauline dispensationalism**:

- One body, not multiple covenants.
- Spirit baptism, not water ordinances.
- Christ as Head, not Peter or priests.
- Ministry by gifted members, not a ruling class.

This chapter gives **structure and clarity** for local churches in the Church Age:

- Unity must be doctrinal.
- Growth must be Spirit-led.
- Ministry must be mutual.
- Holiness must flow from new life.

Practical & Devotional Insight

This chapter is a spiritual mirror. It asks:

- Does your walk match your calling?
- Are you building or dividing the Body?
- Do you speak truth in love?
- Are you growing or coasting?
- Are you putting off the old and putting on the new?

Ephesians 4 is where theology meets daily life. It challenges us to:

- **Guard unity.**
- **Grow in Christ.**
- **Minister to others.**
- **Live differently from the world.**
- **Reflect Christ in speech and behavior.**

Closing Thought: Walk Like Who You Are

Ephesians 4 is Paul's heartfelt appeal: **Walk worthy of your calling.** You're not what you used to be. You're not where you used to live. You are:

- Seated in heaven.
- Empowered by grace.
- Called to unity.
- Gifted for ministry.
- Designed for growth.
- Destined for glory.

So walk like it.

Let your life reflect your position.

Let your love reflect your doctrine.

Let your ministry reflect your Savior.

This is the worthy walk—and it begins with grace, leads through truth, and ends in glory.

11 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Walk in Love, Light, and Wisdom (Ephesians 5)

Introduction: The Walk of the New Man

In Ephesians 4, Paul exhorted believers to walk worthy of their calling and to put off the old man while putting on the new. In chapter 5, he takes that instruction further by laying out **three specific walks** that define the Christian's lifestyle in the present age: **walk in love**, **walk as children of light**, and **walk circumspectly**.

This chapter builds on the foundation of our position in Christ and shows what it looks like when that position is manifested in daily conduct. Paul is not calling for superficial morality. He is calling for **Spirit-filled, Christ-reflecting living**, grounded in doctrine and empowered by grace.

Ephesians 5 strikes at the heart of both worldliness and legalism. It doesn't teach performance for righteousness, but it does teach **holiness as the fruit of being in Christ**. It is one of the most practical chapters in the New Testament for believers living in a dark, deceitful, and decaying world.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Walk in Love (Eph. 5:1–2)

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us...”

The chapter opens with a call to **imitate God**. As dear children, we are to follow our Father—not from fear, but from affection. And the way to follow Him is to **walk in love**.

But love is not left undefined. Paul gives us the model: “**as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us...**”

True love:

- Is **self-sacrificing**.
- Is not based on feelings.
- Is a **sweet-smelling savour** unto God.

This kind of love is **radically different** from the counterfeit love promoted by the world, which is often sensual, self-centered, and shallow.

2. Rejecting Worldly Lusts (Eph. 5:3–5)

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you...”

Paul contrasts divine love with the **sins of the flesh**—especially sexual immorality. He names:

- **Fornication** – sexual sin outside marriage.
- **Uncleanness** – impure thoughts and actions.
- **Covetousness** – greed and idolatry.

These are not minor failings—they are the **opposite** of love. They are exploitative, self-seeking, and destructive. Paul warns believers to keep their **speech clean**, too:

“Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient...”

God cares not just about what we do, but **how we talk**. Words reflect the heart. Instead, we are to be marked by **giving of thanks**.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person... hath any inheritance...”

Paul is not saying that salvation can be lost. Rather, he’s stating that **those whose lives are defined by such sins give no evidence of being saved**. The children of God walk in love, not lust.

3. Let No Man Deceive You (Eph. 5:6–7)

“Let no man deceive you with vain words...”

Even in Paul’s day, there were those who excused sin with persuasive words. Today, many downplay holiness in the name of “grace.” But Paul warns: **sin brings wrath**.

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”

Grace never gives a license to sin. Believers are to separate from **those who live habitually in rebellion** and those who teach **soft doctrine to justify it**.

4. Walk as Children of Light (Eph. 5:8–14)

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light...”

Paul doesn’t say we were “in” darkness—he says we **were** darkness. It was our nature. But now, in Christ, we **are light**—a transformation has occurred.

So, walk accordingly. Light produces:

- **Goodness**
- **Righteousness**
- **Truth**

“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”

Christian living is not just about avoiding sin. It’s about **actively discerning** and doing what pleases God.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

We are not called to **tolerate evil**—we are called to **expose it**. That doesn't mean being harsh or unkind, but it does mean speaking the truth boldly.

“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

This verse is a call to spiritual **awakening**. Too many Christians are **asleep to their calling**, blending into the darkness. But Christ is calling them to **rise and shine**.

5. Walk Circumspectly (Eph. 5:15–17)

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise...”

To walk circumspectly means to walk with **caution, awareness, and precision**. The Christian walk is not careless—it is watchful. We are surrounded by spiritual pitfalls, false doctrine, and subtle temptation.

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

This is a call to **urgency**. We are not promised tomorrow. The world is getting darker. The Church must not waste time—it must **use every moment for God's glory**.

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

God's will is not a mystery for the faithful believer. It is revealed in His Word. A wise believer **studies and walks in the will of God**, not blindly drifting through life.

6. Be Filled With the Spirit (Eph. 5:18–21)

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit...”

Paul gives a sharp contrast:

- Wine controls by **numbing**.
- The Spirit controls by **energizing**.

Being filled with the Spirit is not about emotional highs or speaking in tongues. It is about:

- **Christ-centered joy** (v. 19)
- **Gratitude in all things** (v. 20)
- **Mutual submission** (v. 21)

These are the marks of Spirit-filling. A Spirit-filled believer:

- Sings with grace.
- Gives thanks always.
- Submits to others in love.

7. The Spirit-Filled Marriage (Eph. 5:22–33)

Paul now applies Spirit-filled living to **marriage**. This passage is rich in both practical counsel and profound typology.

Wives, Submit to Your Own Husbands (v. 22–24)

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

This is **voluntary, respectful submission** rooted in love and trust—not servile obedience. It is modeled after **the Church’s submission to Christ**.

“The husband is the head of the wife...”

Headship does not mean dominance—it means **responsibility and leadership**. In a healthy marriage, the husband leads in love, and the wife responds in respect.

Husbands, Love Your Wives (v. 25–30)

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church...”

This is sacrificial love:

- It **gives**, not demands.
- It **sanctifies**, not manipulates.
- It **nourishes and cherishes**, not ignores.

Christ loved the Church by **giving Himself** for her. So must the husband. Love is the command—not success, not charisma, not provision—but love.

“For we are members of his body...”

Marriage is not just physical—it is **spiritual and covenantal**, reflecting the **union between Christ and His Church**.

The Great Mystery (v. 31–33)

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Marriage, at its deepest level, is a **picture of the gospel**. The bride (the Church) is united to the Bridegroom (Christ) forever.

“Nevertheless let every one of you... so love his wife... and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

Paul ends this section with **clear roles**:

- The husband must **love**.
- The wife must **respect**.

These roles are not culturally outdated—they are **divinely appointed** for the stability and joy of Christian homes.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Antinomianism (Grace Without Holiness)

Paul demolishes the idea that grace permits sin. He demands a walk marked by:

- **Love**, not lust.
- **Light**, not darkness.
- **Wisdom**, not folly.

2. Charismatic Extremes

Being filled with the Spirit is not about **emotional manifestations or ecstatic speech**. It results in:

- Joyful worship.
- Thankful hearts.
- Submissive relationships.
- Orderly homes.

3. Egalitarianism in Marriage

Paul affirms **complementary roles**:

- Wives submit.
- Husbands love and lead.

This is not about power—it's about purpose and Christlike service.

4. Worldly Entertainment and Language

Filthy talk, crude jokes, and covetous entertainment **grieve the Spirit**. Christians are to **speak with grace**, not filth.

5. Doctrinal Ambiguity

Truth matters. Love does not exist apart from truth. Paul tells us to **reprove sin** and **expose darkness**, not tolerate it in the name of unity.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Galatians 5:22–23** – Fruit of the Spirit.
- **Romans 12:1–2** – Present your bodies; be transformed.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:5–8** – Walk as children of the day.
- **Titus 2:11–14** – Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness.
- **Colossians 3:16–19** – Parallel passage on home and holiness.
- **1 Peter 3:1–7** – God-honoring marriage roles.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Ephesians 5 continues the unique emphasis of the Church Age:

- We are **children of light**, not under Mosaic ordinances.
- We are to **walk worthy**, not to earn standing but because we have it.
- Our conduct reflects our **position in Christ**, not our effort for acceptance.
- The marriage model reflects **Christ and the Church**, not Israel and Jehovah.

This is **Pauline truth**—distinct from kingdom law, temple worship, or Levitical holiness. It's **grace-based, Spirit-empowered holiness**, rooted in love and truth.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Ephesians 5 asks one question: **Does your walk match your identity?**

- If you're loved, do you walk in love?
- If you're light, do you walk in the light?
- If you're redeemed, do you redeem the time?
- If you're Spirit-sealed, are you Spirit-filled?
- If you're married, does your marriage reflect Christ and the Church?

These are not abstract ideas—they are **daily decisions**. From your words to your worship, from your purity to your patience, from your marriage to your music—**it all matters**.

Closing Thought: The Glory of Walking Worthy

Ephesians 5 is a call to **glorious living**:

- Not because we have to, but because we get to.
- Not to gain favor, but to show it.
- Not for rules, but for relationship.

God doesn't just want obedient servants. He wants **Spirit-filled sons** who walk in:

- **Love**, like Christ.
- **Light**, like the truth.
- **Wisdom**, like eternity matters.

And when we walk that way—our lives, homes, and churches become a **living portrait of the gospel**.

12 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Strong in the Lord (Ephesians 6)

Introduction: The Battle Behind the Scenes

After laying the doctrinal foundation in chapters 1–3 and the practical lifestyle instruction in chapters 4–5, Paul concludes the epistle to the Ephesians by turning attention to the

spiritual battlefield. Ephesians 6 is not merely a list of ethical commands—it is a tactical manual for Christian warfare. The believer is not simply a servant or a saint—he is a **soldier**.

This final chapter reminds the Church that **the Christian life is not playground—it is battleground**. The fight is not against people, but against **principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places**. Paul does not leave the believer unarmed. He outlines the **whole armor of God**, enabling saints to **stand against the wiles of the devil** and remain unshaken in the evil day.

But before the armor is introduced, Paul also instructs believers on the conduct of the home and workplace—areas where spiritual warfare often begins. In short, Ephesians 6 ties everything together: **your family, your work, your walk, and your warfare**.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Children and Parents (Eph. 6:1–4)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”

The Christian life begins in the **home**, and Paul starts with a word to children. Obedience is not optional—it is **“right.”** It reflects God’s order and paves the way for lifelong respect of authority.

“Honour thy father and mother...”

Quoting the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12), Paul reminds readers that **this commandment carries a promise**: long life and well-being.

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath...”

Parents, especially fathers, are not to lead through fear, anger, or tyranny. The responsibility is not only to **discipline**, but to **nurture** in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Discipline without discipleship leads to rebellion.

This structure teaches that spiritual health begins **at home**. The home is the first church, the first school, the first battlefield—and many future victories or defeats are forged there.

2. Servants and Masters (Eph. 6:5–9)

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh...”

In the Roman world, slavery was a common institution. Paul does not endorse it, but he instructs both servants and masters on how to **behave in Christ**. Today, this applies to **employers and employees**.

“...not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ...”

Christian workers must view their job as **service to Christ**, not just man. Work ethic, honesty, and loyalty matter in the workplace.

“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them...”

Employers are to treat their workers with **fairness and respect**, knowing that **they also have a Master in heaven**.

This section emphasizes that the gospel impacts **everyday life**, including labor and leadership.

3. Be Strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10–11)

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

This is not a call to self-reliance. Paul doesn’t say “be strong in yourself.” He says, **be strong in the Lord**. Strength is found not in our resolve, but in **His power**.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

The devil doesn’t just oppose with violence—he attacks with **wiles**: strategies, trickery, deceit. The believer needs **the whole armor**, not just part of it.

This is preparation for warfare, not religious ritual. The goal is **to stand**, not retreat.

4. The Real Enemy: Not Flesh and Blood (Eph. 6:12)

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...”

Our fight is not with people—it is with **invisible spiritual forces**. The real enemies are:

- **Principalities** – high-ranking demonic powers.
- **Powers** – authorities of evil.
- **Rulers of the darkness of this world** – worldly systems controlled by Satan.

- **Spiritual wickedness in high places** – possibly fallen angels, demonic spirits influencing governments, religions, and cultures.

These enemies are organized, intelligent, and relentless. To ignore this reality is to walk into battle **unarmed and blindfolded**.

5. Take Unto You the Whole Armour (Eph. 6:13)

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God...”

Again, Paul stresses the **whole armor**. Partial armor leaves gaps. The goal is **to withstand in the evil day**, and **having done all, to stand**. We are not called to defeat the devil—Christ already did. We are called to **stand firm** in victory.

6. The Armor of God (Eph. 6:14–17)

1. Belt of Truth

“Having your loins girt about with truth...”

Truth holds everything together. Without it, all other armor fails. It is not just doctrinal truth—it is also **truthfulness in character**. Integrity matters in warfare.

2. Breastplate of Righteousness

“...and having on the breastplate of righteousness...”

This is not self-righteousness—it is the **imputed righteousness of Christ** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21) and **practical righteousness in behavior**. It protects the heart.

3. Shoes of the Gospel

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace...”

The soldier is **ready to go**—to stand, to march, to move forward with the message of peace. The gospel brings stability and mission.

4. Shield of Faith

“Above all, taking the shield of faith...”

Faith extinguishes the devil’s fiery darts: lies, accusations, temptations. Faith is **confidence in God’s Word**, not feelings.

5. Helmet of Salvation

“And take the helmet of salvation...”

The helmet protects the mind. This is the assurance of salvation (1 Thess. 5:8), guarding against doubt, despair, and discouragement.

6. Sword of the Spirit

“...which is the word of God.”

The only offensive weapon. The believer must know and wield Scripture—not out of context, but in truth. Like Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4), we fight with **“It is written.”**

7. Praying Always (Eph. 6:18–20)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...”

Prayer is not armor—it is the **power behind the armor**. It keeps the believer alert, focused, and in communion with the Captain.

“...and for me, that utterance may be given unto me...”

Even Paul asked for prayer—not for comfort, but for **boldness in preaching**. This reveals:

- The power of prayer.
- The priority of the gospel.
- The courage of true soldiers.

8. Final Greetings (Eph. 6:21–24)

Paul closes with personal notes:

- Commending **Tychicus**, a beloved brother and faithful minister.
- Praying peace, love, faith, and grace upon the saints.

“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”

Grace began the letter (Eph. 1:2) and now ends it. The Christian life begins, continues, and concludes in **grace**.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Prosperity Gospel

Paul doesn't say the Christian walk is victory and ease. He describes it as **warfare**. The true Christian life is often hard, lonely, and filled with resistance.

2. Pacifist Christianity

We are not called to retreat or appease the world. We are **called to stand**, to fight spiritually, to confront falsehood and evil with truth and love.

3. Armor as Ritual or Ceremony

The armor is not something to “put on” through ritual prayer or mental imaging—it is **lived** through **truth, righteousness, faith, gospel focus, Scripture, and salvation assurance**.

4. Lordship Salvation

The shield of faith and helmet of salvation show that salvation is **secure**. Assurance comes from the finished work of Christ, not continual effort or fear of failure.

5. Replacement Theology

The spiritual warfare described here is for **the Church**—not Israel, not a theocracy. The Church is a spiritual Body in a hostile world. The Kingdom is future.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **2 Corinthians 10:3–5** – The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:8** – Helmet is hope of salvation.
- **Hebrews 4:12** – The Word of God is sharper than any sword.
- **1 Peter 5:8–9** – Be sober; resist the devil.
- **James 4:7** – Resist the devil, and he will flee.
- **Romans 13:12** – Put on the armor of light.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Ephesians 6 confirms:

- The believer's warfare is **spiritual**, not political.
- Our battle is against **invisible forces**, not human institutions.
- Victory comes from **standing in Christ**, not reclaiming Old Testament territory.

We are:

- Seated with Christ (Eph. 2:6).
- Blessed in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3).
- Engaged in heavenly warfare (Eph. 6:12).

The Church is not Israel. Our weapons are not swords, but **Scripture, prayer, and truth**. Our calling is not dominion, but **standing and shining** in a dark world.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Ephesians 6 teaches that:

- Your home is a battlefield—raise your children in the Lord.
- Your workplace is a mission field—serve as unto Christ.
- Your mind is a warzone—guard it with salvation.
- Your heart is under attack—shield it with righteousness.
- Your daily walk matters—strap on truth, gospel readiness, and prayer.

Don't leave the house unarmed. Don't fight alone. Don't give ground. **Stand.**

When everything else falls—stand.

Closing Thought: The Victor's Armor

The believer doesn't fight **for** victory—he fights **from** victory. Christ has conquered sin, death, and hell. The enemy has already been judged. The armor we wear is **His**.

- His truth.
- His righteousness.
- His gospel.
- His salvation.

- His Word.
- His Spirit.

So wear it. Stand in it. Live it.

The world may rage, the devil may roar, but the believer—clothed in divine armor—**will stand.**

13 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – The Mind of Christ in You (Philippians 1)

Introduction: Joy in Chains, Faith in the Fire

The epistle to the Philippians is often called the "Epistle of Joy." But that joy doesn't stem from prosperity or comfort—it comes from Christ. In fact, Paul writes this letter **from prison**, facing uncertainty about his future, yet overflowing with praise and encouragement. Philippians 1 sets the tone: it is not only a warm personal letter but also a **Christ-centered, gospel-driven manual on how to suffer well**, how to love the Body, and how to live with eternal purpose.

More than any external circumstance, Paul shows that what matters most is **our mindset**. He rejoices in Christ, in others' growth, in the furtherance of the gospel—even through trials. The key to this mindset is seen in verse 21: **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."**

Philippians 1 is a reminder that joy is not rooted in this world but in the **unchanging Person and purpose of Christ**.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Servants of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:1–2)

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ..."

Paul doesn't begin by asserting apostolic authority but by identifying as a **servant** (Greek: *doulos*—bondslave). This sets the tone: the Christian life is not about status, but **submission to Christ**.

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi..."

He writes to **all the saints**, not just leaders or teachers. But he also acknowledges the **bishops and deacons**—this is one of the few times church leadership is formally addressed in a salutation, showing:

- The **local church** had a recognized structure.
- Leadership served under Christ, not over the saints.

“Grace be unto you, and peace...”

As with all his letters, Paul begins with **grace first, peace second**. There can be no peace without grace.

2. Fellowship in the Gospel (Phil. 1:3–6)

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you...”

Paul’s joy flows from his relationship with the Philippians. They were not just converts—they were **partners in ministry**.

“For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now...”

Their partnership wasn’t just spiritual—it included financial support (cf. Philippians 4:15–17). True fellowship is not just potlucks—it’s **laboring together for the gospel**.

“Being confident of this very thing...”

Here is a key doctrinal verse:

“That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

This confirms:

- **Salvation is God’s work**, not ours.
- He begins it, and He completes it.
- Eternal security is not based on our perseverance, but **God’s faithfulness**.

3. Paul's Deep Affection (Phil. 1:7–8)

“Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all...”

Paul's affection is not sentimental—it's based on shared grace. He loved the Philippians not just as friends, but as **co-laborers and fellow partakers of grace**, both in chains and in defense of the gospel.

“For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.”

The phrase “bowels” refers to **deep inner affection**. Paul's love wasn't shallow—it was rooted in the heart of Christ. This is the kind of love that builds strong churches.

4. Prayer for Spiritual Maturity (Phil. 1:9–11)

“And this I pray...”

Paul's prayer is not for physical health or financial blessing. It's for:

- **Abounding love with knowledge and judgment.**
- **Spiritual discernment** (approve things that are excellent).
- **Sincerity and blamelessness until Christ returns.**
- **Fruitfulness through Christ, unto the glory of God.**

This kind of prayer reflects **eternal priorities**, not temporal convenience.

5. The Gospel Advancing Through Adversity (Phil. 1:12–14)

“But I would ye should understand... that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel...”

Paul was in prison, yet he viewed his circumstances as an opportunity. The gospel was spreading **because of his chains**, not in spite of them.

“So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace...”

The elite Roman guard had heard the gospel. God turned a prison into a pulpit.

“And many of the brethren... are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

Paul's faith emboldened others. Persecution, when endured faithfully, becomes a **catalyst for courage in others**.

6. Rejoicing Even in Rivalry (Phil. 1:15–18)

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife...”

Paul acknowledges that not all who preach Christ have pure motives. Some did it to **add affliction to his chains**. Yet Paul’s response is stunning:

“Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

Paul didn’t rejoice in false doctrine—he rejoiced that **the name of Christ was being proclaimed**, even by those who wanted to hurt him.

This is a powerful lesson in humility. Paul cared more about **Christ’s fame than his own reputation**.

7. Life or Death—Christ is All (Phil. 1:19–26)

“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation...”

Paul is confident that through prayer and the Spirit, all things are working together for good (cf. Rom. 8:28). Whether he lives or dies, he desires:

“...that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness... Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”

Then he gives one of the most profound statements in Scripture:

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Living means fruitful labor for Christ. Dying means **being with Christ**—which is far better. Either way, **Christ is the goal and treasure**.

“Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ...”

Here Paul confirms that **death brings immediate presence with Christ**—not soul sleep or purgatory.

Yet he’s willing to stay “for your furtherance and joy of faith.” His motivation is selfless—**others’ growth, not his gain**.

8. Conduct Worthy of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27–30)

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...”

“Conversation” means **manner of life**. Paul urges the Philippians to:

- Stand fast in one spirit.
- Strive together for the faith.
- Be fearless in the face of opposition.

“For unto you it is given... not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake...”

Faith and suffering are both gifts. This rebukes the modern idea that suffering means something has gone wrong. Paul says suffering for Christ is **part of the Christian calling**.

“Having the same conflict which ye saw in me...”

Their spiritual war mirrors Paul’s. They must embrace the struggle—not with despair, but with joy.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Prosperity Gospel

Paul was **in prison** and yet full of joy. He taught that suffering was a **gift**, not a curse. His chains advanced the gospel, not hindered it.

2. Lordship Salvation

Verse 6 affirms that **salvation is God’s work from start to finish**. It’s not maintained by human effort, but by **divine faithfulness**.

3. Soul Sleep or Annihilation

Paul says to **depart is to be with Christ**, not unconscious or extinguished. Death brings **immediate presence with the Lord** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8).

4. Hypercritical Attacks on Imperfect Preachers

Paul rejoiced even when Christ was preached by those with flawed motives (v. 18). He didn’t excuse false doctrine, but he didn’t become **bitter or vindictive** over minor rivalries.

5. Passive Christianity

Paul describes the Christian life as:

- **Striving together.**
- **Boldness in suffering.**
- **Fruitful labor.**

- **Joy in hardship.**

There's nothing passive about it.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 8:28–30** – All things work for good.
- **2 Corinthians 5:8** – Absent from the body, present with the Lord.
- **Galatians 2:20** – I live, yet not I, but Christ in me.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:2** – Boldness in conflict.
- **2 Timothy 4:6–8** – Paul's readiness to depart and receive his crown.
- **Acts 16:12–40** – Paul's first visit to Philippi, establishing the church.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Philippians 1 reflects several key truths for the Church Age:

- We are **not under the law**, but in **fellowship by grace**.
- Our mission is the **gospel**, not establishing a kingdom.
- Our hope is **heavenly**, not earthly.
- We live by **Christ's life in us**, not by fleshly strength.
- We serve by **Spirit-empowered labor**, not ritual.

Paul models how to serve joyfully even while **in chains**, awaiting judgment from the Roman Empire. His outlook is entirely shaped by **Christ in him**, not by circumstance.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Philippians 1 challenges the believer with several questions:

- Is Christ the center of your joy?
- Are you participating in gospel fellowship or just attending church?
- Are you striving for the faith or sitting on the sidelines?

- Are you prepared to suffer for Christ—or only willing to serve when it’s easy?
- Can you honestly say, “To live is Christ, to die is gain”?

This is a chapter of **joyful realism**. Life is hard. Trials come. But if Christ is everything, **you can’t lose**.

If you live—you labor for Him. If you die—you go to Him.

That’s the mindset that changes everything.

Closing Thought: Christ Magnified in My Body

Paul’s ultimate desire is found in verse 20:

“...that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”

This is the cry of the mature believer—not for comfort, but for Christ’s glory.

Philippians 1 reminds us that joy is not circumstantial—it’s **Christ-centered**. And the only way to live like that is to **have the mind of Christ** in you.

Let your life be a vessel for His gospel.

Let your suffering be a stage for His glory.

Let your joy be rooted in the unchanging reality of who He is.

And let your mindset say with Paul, **“To live is Christ, and to die is gain.”**

14 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Let This Mind Be in You (Philippians 2)

Introduction: A Mind Like Christ in a World Like Rome

If Philippians 1 is about joy in adversity, then Philippians 2 is about humility in service. It stands as one of the most Christ-exalting, self-denying chapters in the New Testament. Paul lays down the ultimate pattern for Christian life and ministry: the **mind of Christ**—a mindset of humility, obedience, and exaltation through suffering.

In a world of self-promotion, ambition, and spiritual pride, this chapter crushes the ego. It calls believers not just to imitate Christ outwardly, but to **think like Him inwardly**. It’s a

radical call not to personal greatness, but to spiritual surrender for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

But this is not moralism—it’s Pauline doctrine. The humility of Christ is not only a model to follow but a truth to worship. He **emptied Himself** and was **exalted**. And as members of His Body, we are called to walk that same path of **humble obedience**, trusting God to glorify His Son through our lives.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Like-Minded Love in the Body (Phil. 2:1–4)

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit...”

Paul starts with a heartfelt appeal. If Christ means anything to you—if the Spirit is at work in you—**then live it out by being of one mind**.

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love...”

Unity is not based on personality or preference. It’s based on:

- **Shared love**
- **Spiritual humility**
- **Putting others first**

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory...”

These are the enemies of unity:

- **Strife**—selfish rivalry.
- **Vainglory**—empty boasting.

Instead, believers are to operate with **lowliness of mind**, esteeming others **better** than themselves. Not just equal—**better**.

This mindset dismantles the pride, cliques, and spiritual arrogance that often infect local churches.

2. Let This Mind Be in You (Phil. 2:5–8)

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...”

This is the heart of the chapter—and a cornerstone of Pauline theology.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God...”

Christ was **fully God**—not a created being or a lesser deity. Yet He did not cling to that status. He willingly **emptied Himself** (without ceasing to be God) to take on human flesh.

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...”

Christ went from **heaven to humanity**, from **throne to towel**. He didn’t lose divinity—He **veiled** it in flesh.

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself...”

Even as a man, Christ chose the lowest place: **obedience to death**, and not just any death—**the death of the cross**.

This passage is the **ultimate example of humility and obedience**:

- Voluntary demotion.
- Total surrender.
- Death for others’ benefit.

Paul says: **That’s the mindset you need.**

3. Wherefore God Also Hath Highly Exalted Him (Phil. 2:9–11)

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him...”

Because Christ humbled Himself, God exalted Him. This is a divine pattern:

- Humility leads to honor.
- Obedience leads to glory.
- Suffering leads to reward.

“And given him a name which is above every name...”

This is **not just a title—it’s the very name of LORD** (cf. Isa. 45:23). Jesus is not just a good man—He is **Lord over all**, and one day:

“Every knee should bow... every tongue should confess...”

All creation—heavenly, earthly, and under the earth—will acknowledge:

“That Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

This doxology refutes every form of humanistic religion and self-salvation. Jesus is not one of many paths—**He is the exalted Lord**, and every being will bow to Him.

4. Work Out Your Own Salvation (Phil. 2:12–13)

“Wherefore, my beloved... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

This is often misused. Paul does **not** say “work for your salvation.” That would contradict everything he wrote in Ephesians 2:8–9 and Romans.

To “work out” means to **exercise** what God has already worked in.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

The believer is not working to earn grace—he is working because **grace is already working in him**. It is **God in you**, empowering both the desire (“to will”) and the ability (“to do”).

This verse strikes a balance:

- Personal responsibility.
- Divine enablement.

The “fear and trembling” is not about losing salvation. It’s about taking seriously the fact that **God is at work in you**, and you’re a vessel for His glory.

5. Do All Things Without Murmuring (Phil. 2:14–16)

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings...”

This is practical fruit of the Christlike mind. A humble servant doesn’t grumble or argue—he serves joyfully.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation...”

The world is crooked. The Church is to **shine as lights**, reflecting Christ in a dark world.

“Holding forth the word of life...”

We are not just to hold **onto** the gospel—we are to **hold it forth** like a torch. Gospel witness is not just verbal—it’s visible.

6. Paul’s Joy in Sacrificial Service (Phil. 2:17–18)

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith...”

Paul views his suffering and possible death as a **drink offering**—poured out alongside their faith. His joy is not diminished by sacrifice—it is **deepened** by it.

“I joy, and rejoice with you all.”

This is Christian joy: not dependent on safety or success, but rooted in **shared service and sacrifice** for Christ.

7. Timothy: A True Servant (Phil. 2:19–24)

“I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.”

Paul praises Timothy as a rare jewel—**genuinely concerned for others**, not for his own interests.

“Ye know the proof of him...”

Timothy had been tested. He wasn’t flashy, but he was **faithful**. He served like a son with a father in the gospel.

This passage teaches that:

- True ministers are **hard to find**.
- Faithfulness matters more than fame.
- Godly leadership serves, not controls.

8. Epaphroditus: The Sick Soldier (Phil. 2:25–30)

“My brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier...”

Paul honors Epaphroditus for bringing supplies from the Philippians and risking his life in the process.

“For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death...”

This man was not careless—he was **courageous**. He almost died in faithful service.

“Receive him therefore... and hold such in reputation.”

Churches today often celebrate the talented and talkative. Paul says: **Honor the faithful, the selfless, the sacrificial.**

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Salvation by Works

“Work out your salvation” (v. 12) is often misused to teach works-based salvation. But v. 13 clarifies that **God is the One working in the believer**, both to will and to do.

2. New Age or Humanistic Theology

Verses 6–11 declare Christ’s deity, incarnation, and future global worship. Jesus is **not just a teacher or enlightened man**—He is **equal with God**, exalted Lord, and coming Judge.

3. Word of Faith Theology

This chapter speaks of **suffering, sacrifice, and obedience**, not claiming health and wealth. Epaphroditus nearly died for the gospel—Paul didn’t rebuke him for “lack of faith.”

4. Egalitarianism in Ministry

Paul describes clearly defined roles:

- Paul as spiritual father.
- Timothy as spiritual son.
- Epaphroditus as servant-soldier.

There is **order, honor, and hierarchy**, but grounded in **love and humility**, not ambition.

5. Narcissistic Christianity

“Let this mind be in you...” shatters the self-centeredness of modern Christianity. The Christian is to:

- Think of others first.
- Die to self.
- Embrace obedience, even when it hurts.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **John 13:3–17** – Jesus washing feet as model of servant leadership.
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** – Though rich, He became poor for our sakes.
- **Romans 12:1–3** – Present your bodies; think soberly.
- **Matthew 23:12** – He who humbles himself shall be exalted.
- **2 Timothy 2:3–4** – Endure hardness as a good soldier.
- **1 Peter 5:5–6** – God resists the proud, gives grace to the humble.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Philippians 2 embodies the Pauline pattern for:

- **Church unity** through humility.
- **Ministry** through sacrifice.
- **Witness** through godliness.
- **Spiritual growth** through Christlikeness.

This is **not kingdom law**, **not Mosaic order**, and **not a prosperity formula**. It is **Spirit-filled, grace-powered discipleship** for the Church Age.

The Body of Christ is not to boast in its liberty or success—but to **walk as Christ walked**, think as Christ thought, and serve as Christ served.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Philippians 2 asks:

- Are you seeking your own or the things of Christ?
- Are you serving with joy or grumbling?
- Are you growing in obedience or stalling in pride?
- Are you content to be poured out for others?

The path of the Christian is not upward mobility—it's downward humility. And in that, God does the exalting.

Closing Thought: Christ Our Pattern, Christ Our Power

“Let this mind be in you...”

That's not a suggestion—it's a summons. It's the only way to be light in the darkness. It's the only way to survive division. It's the only path to joy and glory.

We don't just look to Christ for salvation—we look to Him for mindset.

- He stooped.
- He served.
- He suffered.
- He obeyed.
- He was exalted.

And now, His Spirit lives in us. So let this mind be in you.

15 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Pressing Toward the Mark (Philippians 3)

Introduction: Trading Religion for Righteousness

Philippians 3 is Paul's personal testimony and doctrinal thunderbolt. In this single chapter, he renounces all fleshly confidence, religious credentials, and earthly gains, and declares one all-consuming purpose: **to know Christ**. He lays down a gauntlet against legalism, ritualism, and the counterfeit righteousness of works-based religion, and exalts the surpassing value of faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul's words are not cold theological axioms—they are **the burning cry of a heart set on fire** for eternal things. His spiritual autobiography shouts from the pages: "I had religion—but now I have Christ. I had heritage—but now I have heaven. I had prestige—but now I pursue resurrection."

In this chapter, Paul defines the true circumcision, exposes the false teachers of legalistic Judaism, and calls believers to **press toward the mark** of our high calling in Christ. It is a

blueprint for spiritual maturity and a dagger through the heart of every system that trusts in human merit.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1)

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord...”

Though “finally” appears here, Paul is not concluding—he is emphasizing. Joy in the Lord is **not circumstantial**, but spiritual. It's rooted not in what we have, but **who Christ is**.

“...To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.”

Paul does not mind repeating truth—it's a safeguard. False teaching is relentless, so truth must be reinforced.

2. Warning Against Legalists (Phil. 3:2–3)

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.”

This is a threefold warning:

- **Dogs** – unclean, aggressive legalists.
- **Evil workers** – those who promote works-based righteousness.
- **Concision** – those who mutilate the flesh (false circumcision).

Paul pulls no punches. These were Judaizers who demanded Gentiles keep Mosaic law to be saved. But Paul exposes them as spiritually dangerous.

“For we are the circumcision...”

True circumcision is not in the flesh—it's **spiritual**, through faith in Christ.

“...which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

This is the hallmark of the true believer:

- Worship in Spirit (cf. John 4:24).
- Joy in Christ, not ritual.

- No reliance on human effort or heritage.

3. Paul's Religious Credentials (Phil. 3:4–6)

“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh...”

Paul now lists his impressive religious résumé, to show how meaningless it is without Christ.

- **Circumcised the eighth day** – strict adherence to Jewish law.
- **Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin** – heritage.
- **Hebrew of the Hebrews** – cultural purity.
- **A Pharisee** – doctrinal zeal.
- **Persecutor of the church** – passionate commitment.
- **Blameless under the law** – outward righteousness.

Paul is not downplaying these things to the untrained eye—they were **the elite credentials of Judaism**. But he says:

“What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

4. Counted Loss, Suffered Loss (Phil. 3:7–8)

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss...”

Not only did Paul **count his religious accomplishments as loss**, he also suffered the **actual loss of reputation, security, and standing**.

“...for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...”

Knowing Christ is not just better—it is **infinitely greater**. Everything else is **dung** in comparison.

“...that I may win Christ...”

He's not trying to earn salvation—he's already saved. This is about **intimacy, nearness, depth** in Christ.

5. Righteousness by Faith (Phil. 3:9)

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness...”

Here’s Paul’s doctrine in a verse:

- Salvation is **not by works of the law**.
- Righteousness comes by **faith of Christ**, not faith in self.

This echoes Romans 3–5. It’s justification by faith alone. Paul **rejected self-righteousness**, and received the righteousness **which is of God by faith**.

6. The Ultimate Pursuit: Knowing Christ (Phil. 3:10–11)

“That I may know him...”

This is **not academic knowledge**—it’s intimate, experiential fellowship.

Paul desires:

- **The power of His resurrection** – victorious life now.
- **The fellowship of His sufferings** – partnership in affliction.
- **Being made conformable unto His death** – dying daily to self.

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

This is not uncertainty about eternal life. Paul already knew he was saved. He is speaking of **resurrection glory**, the final and full conformity to Christ at the rapture.

7. Pressing Toward the Mark (Phil. 3:12–14)

“Not as though I had already attained...”

Paul confesses that he hasn’t arrived. Christian maturity is **a race, a pursuit**, not a plateau.

“But I follow after, if that I may apprehend...”

He’s chasing what Christ chased him for—**conformity to the image of the Son** (cf. Rom. 8:29).

“This one thing I do...”

Singleness of purpose: **forgetting the past, reaching forward, pressing on**.

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

This is the upward call—**resurrection, reward, glorification**, and Christ Himself. Paul’s goal is **not the approval of men, but the prize of Christ’s call**.

8. Let Us Be Thus Minded (Phil. 3:15–16)

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded...”

“Perfect” here means **mature**. Paul calls for spiritual adults to adopt this **mindset of pursuit, humility, and forward focus**.

“...if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”

Paul trusts the Spirit to correct any wrong thinking. This is not softness—it’s confidence in divine sanctification.

“Nevertheless... let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

Unity is found in **doctrinal clarity and spiritual pursuit**.

9. Imitate Me, Avoid Enemies of the Cross (Phil. 3:17–19)

“Brethren, be followers together of me...”

Paul dares to say, “Follow my example.” Not because he’s perfect, but because **his life matches the gospel he preaches**.

“(For many walk... that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ...)”

Paul warns against those who:

- **Mind earthly things.**
- **Glory in shame.**
- **Serve their belly (appetite, flesh).**

They are enemies of the cross—not because they oppose Christ’s death—but because they reject **its call to die to self**.

“Whose end is destruction...”

Their fate is judgment. The contrast is stark: Paul presses toward heaven—they are anchored to earth.

10. Our Citizenship Is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20–21)

“For our conversation is in heaven...”

“Conversation” here means **citizenship**. The believer’s identity is not of this world.

“...from whence also we look for the Saviour...”

We are not waiting for a kingdom on earth. We are **looking for Christ from heaven**—a reference to the **pre-tribulation rapture**.

“Who shall change our vile body...”

Christ will **transform our lowly, corruptible bodies** into conformity with His glorious body. This is the **final transformation**, the blessed hope.

“...according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

Our future is not wishful thinking. It is **guaranteed by the power of the One who rules all things**.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Salvation by Works or Religious Heritage

Paul shreds his impressive credentials and calls them dung. Salvation is not by:

- Circumcision
- Law-keeping
- Baptism
- Denominational pride

It is **by grace through faith, the righteousness of God in Christ**.

2. Carnal Christianity

Enemies of the cross of Christ serve their bellies, live for earth, and glory in shame. Paul calls this **destruction-bound living**.

True Christians:

- Press forward.

- Live with eternity in view.
- Embrace death to self.

3. Kingdom Now Theology

Paul says our citizenship is in **heaven**, and we **look for Christ from heaven**, not to bring in a kingdom on earth. The focus is **rapture and transformation**, not political dominion.

4. Christian Perfectionism

Paul denies having attained full conformity. There is no sinless perfection in this life. The Christian life is **ongoing pursuit**, not final arrival.

5. Universalism

The enemies of the cross have an end: **destruction**. Not everyone is saved. Not all roads lead to heaven. Christ is the only way.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 3:21–22** – Righteousness apart from law.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** – Made the righteousness of God in Him.
- **Romans 8:29–30** – Conformed to the image of His Son.
- **Colossians 3:1–4** – Seek things above, not on earth.
- **1 Corinthians 9:24–27** – Run to obtain the prize.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16–17** – Rapture and resurrection.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Philippians 3 confirms:

- Salvation is by **faith alone**, not law or circumcision.
- The believer's hope is **heaven**, not an earthly kingdom.
- Our prize is **resurrection glory**, not prosperity here.
- The Church looks for **Christ from heaven**, not dominion on earth.
- Sanctification is an ongoing pursuit until glorification.

This is **pure Pauline doctrine**, distinct from Israel's program and Kingdom teaching. It is the **heavenly calling** of the Church, rooted in Christ's righteousness, animated by the Spirit, and awaiting the upward call.

Practical & Devotional Insight

This chapter challenges you:

- What are you trusting in—Christ's righteousness or your own?
- What are you pursuing—earthly gains or heavenly glory?
- What are you forgetting—and what are you reaching for?
- Is your mind set on Christ—or on comfort?
- Are you pressing toward the mark—or coasting in comfort?

Paul's life was one long pursuit of Christ. Not perfection. Not applause. Just Christ.

Closing Thought: Pressing On with Purpose

Paul burned every bridge to the past. He refused to boast in religion, and he refused to settle for spiritual mediocrity.

"This one thing I do..."

He pressed forward—not for earthly applause, but for a heavenly crown.

You don't need to look back. You don't need to impress men. You don't need to be ruled by failure.

Just press.

- Toward Christ.
- Toward the prize.
- Toward the call.

Let this be your one thing.

16 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Rejoice in the Lord Always (Philippians 4)

Introduction: Joy, Contentment, and the Power of Christ in Every Season

The final chapter of Paul’s epistle to the Philippians is a spiritual masterpiece—wrapping together themes of **joy, peace, contentment, and divine strength** into a closing exhortation that has encouraged believers through the ages. Philippians 4 is not just a conclusion; it is a clarion call to **stand fast in unity, walk in joy, cast away anxiety, and rely on Christ’s sufficiency.**

Written from prison, Paul does not ask for release. He does not complain about injustice. Instead, he urges others to **rejoice**—not once, but continually. And he gives one of the most quoted declarations in Scripture: **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

This chapter is not abstract theology. It is intensely **practical Pauline doctrine** for how the Body of Christ should live in a world filled with pressure, division, fear, and lack. It teaches believers how to be spiritually rich—even when materially poor.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Stand Fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1)

“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”

Paul begins with tender affection. He calls the believers his **joy and crown**. They were not just projects or members—they were his spiritual reward and eternal legacy.

He exhorts them to **stand fast**:

- Not in themselves.
- Not in circumstances.
- **But in the Lord.**

Standing fast means **remaining rooted in truth**, unshaken by persecution, heresy, or fleshly distraction.

2. Unity Among Servants (Phil. 4:2–3)

“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Even in a joyful church, conflict arises. Paul publicly urges these two women—likely leaders or faithful workers—to reconcile.

“And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women...”

Paul calls for a **peacemaker** (possibly Epaphroditus or a local elder) to help restore unity.

“...whose names are in the book of life.”

Despite their dispute, they are saved. But disunity among saints can harm the church’s testimony. Paul calls for resolution based on their shared eternal destiny.

3. Rejoice in the Lord Always (Phil. 4:4–5)

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

Joy is not optional. It is commanded—**twice in one verse**. This joy is not in comfort or success, but **in the Lord**.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

“Moderation” refers to **gracious gentleness, patient forbearance**. In a world of vengeance and anger, the believer is to be marked by **calm strength**—because “the Lord is at hand.” His presence is near, and His return is soon.

4. Be Careful for Nothing (Phil. 4:6–7)

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

“Careful” here means **anxious**. Paul’s remedy for anxiety is not therapy or escapism—it is **prayer**. Specific, thankful, persistent prayer.

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

This is not peace from circumstances. It is **peace in spite of them**. A supernatural calm that **guards** (Greek: “garrison”) your inner life against worry and fear.

5. Think on These Things (Phil. 4:8)

“Whatsoever things are true... honest... just... pure... lovely... of good report... if there be any virtue... any praise, think on these things.”

The Christian life is won or lost in the **mind**. This verse is a mental filter—a checklist to determine what should fill your thoughts.

Paul teaches the believer to **actively direct the mind**, not passively consume whatever is loudest. Dwelling on truth leads to peace. Dwelling on fear or impurity leads to chaos.

6. The God of Peace Shall Be With You (Phil. 4:9)

“Those things... do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Peace is not only a feeling—it is a **fruit of obedience**. The believer must:

- **Learn** sound doctrine.
- **Receive** instruction.
- **Hear and observe** godly examples.
- **Do** what is taught.

Then, not just peace from God—but the **God of peace Himself** will be present and active in your life.

7. I Rejoiced Greatly in the Lord (Phil. 4:10)

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again...”

Paul now thanks the Philippians for their **financial support**. They had helped him before (cf. Phil. 1:5), but had lacked opportunity until now.

Notice Paul’s joy is not merely in the gift—it is **in the Lord**, who stirred their hearts and provided through them.

8. I Have Learned to Be Content (Phil. 4:11–12)

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

Contentment is not natural—it is **learned**. Paul had been abased and abounded, full and hungry. And he learned to **be content in all things**.

This contentment comes not from stoicism, but from **union with Christ**.

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound...”

Too many Christians only know how to serve God when things go well. Paul knew how to remain faithful in **every circumstance**.

9. I Can Do All Things Through Christ (Phil. 4:13)

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

This is often misquoted. Paul is not claiming superhero power. The “all things” refer to **enduring both abundance and lack, trials and ease, with consistent joy and faithfulness**.

The power to do this comes not from human grit, but from **Christ’s strength within**.

10. Communicated with My Affliction (Phil. 4:14–16)

“Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.”

“Communicate” here means **shared, partnered**. Giving is not just a transaction—it is **spiritual fellowship**.

“No church communicated with me... but ye only...”

The Philippians had supported Paul faithfully—even when others didn’t.

“Even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”

They didn’t wait until Paul was famous or in need—they **proactively gave** out of love and gospel partnership.

11. Not Because I Desire a Gift (Phil. 4:17–18)

“Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”

Paul clarifies—he’s not greedy. He wants them to **bear spiritual fruit** through generosity.

“An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.”

Their gift was not just to Paul—it was **an offering to God**, pleasing and sacrificial.

12. God Shall Supply All Your Need (Phil. 4:19)

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

This promise is given **to generous believers**, not to the greedy. God promises to meet needs—not wants—out of **His limitless supply in Christ**.

This verse is not a blank check—it’s **a promise to those who live by faith and give by love**.

13. Final Greetings and Benediction (Phil. 4:20–23)

“Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Paul ends in worship. Doctrine always leads to doxology.

“All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

Even in prison, Paul had reached people **in Caesar’s palace**. The gospel cannot be bound.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

The epistle closes as it began: with **grace**. Because the Christian life starts, runs, and finishes with **grace alone**.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Prosperity Gospel

Paul was **in prison, in need**, and yet overflowing with joy. He teaches contentment in **abundance and in lack**, not a life of unbroken material blessing.

2. Anxiety as Normal

Paul says, “Be careful for nothing.” Worry is not normal—it is **to be replaced with prayer, thanksgiving, and trust**.

3. Positive Thinking Theology

“Think on these things” is not about visualization or mind power. It’s about **dwelling on godly truth**, not fantasy or wishful delusion.

4. “I Can Do All Things” Misapplication

Philippians 4:13 does not promise athletic triumph or business success. It teaches **sufficiency in Christ to endure and overcome hardship.**

5. Automatic Financial Blessing

Philippians 4:19 is often misapplied. It’s a promise to **generous, sacrificial givers**, not to those who hoard or give manipulatively.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Matthew 6:25–34** – Don’t worry; seek the kingdom.
- **2 Corinthians 9:6–8** – God loves a cheerful giver; He supplies our need.
- **1 Timothy 6:6–8** – Godliness with contentment is great gain.
- **Hebrews 13:5–6** – Be content with what you have.
- **Romans 12:12** – Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation.
- **John 14:27** – My peace I give unto you.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Philippians 4 is rich in truths specific to the Church Age:

- We are not under law—we are to **rejoice in grace.**
- Our peace is not circumstantial—it is **through Christ.**
- Our hope is not in earthly rewards, but in **heavenly riches.**
- Giving is not mandated by tithing laws, but is a **freewill sacrifice of love.**
- The Body of Christ is **empowered to suffer, abound, or be abased** through Christ’s strength.

Paul teaches believers not to **escape reality**, but to live **spirit-filled lives in the midst of it**, shining as lights in a crooked world.

Practical & Devotional Insight

This chapter demands personal reflection:

- Am I rejoicing in Christ or reacting to circumstances?
- Do I pray about everything—or worry about everything?
- Am I content—or constantly discontent?
- Do I think on what is true and pure—or dwell in mental clutter?
- Do I give sacrificially—or hold back in fear?

Philippians 4 is not a promise of an easy life—it is **a promise of a stable heart in a chaotic world.**

Closing Thought: Strength in Every Season

Whether you're in prison like Paul or in plenty like the Philippians, the same Christ empowers both.

- **Rejoice** in the Lord—He never changes.
- **Pray** through everything—He always hears.
- **Think** on the right things—He transforms your mind.
- **Give** freely—He supplies all needs.
- **Stand** fast—He will keep you.

In every season, in every trial, in every joy, this truth remains:

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

17 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Complete in Christ (Colossians 1)

Introduction: The Glory and Supremacy of Christ in You

Colossians 1 is one of the most exalted, doctrinally rich chapters in all of Scripture. From the opening salutation to the final verse, the apostle Paul puts Christ at the center of everything—**creation, redemption, the Church, and the believer's daily walk.** He magnifies the Person and work of Jesus Christ with such clarity that no room remains for legalism, mysticism, or religious substitutes.

Writing to the Colossians, whom he had never met personally, Paul refutes early forms of **Gnosticism**—a heresy that claimed secret knowledge and angelic intermediaries were necessary to approach God. In contrast, Paul reveals that **everything the believer needs is found in Christ**, and that the glorious mystery is this: **Christ in you, the hope of glory**.

Colossians 1 lays the theological foundation for the Christian's completeness in Christ. It is a towering testimony to **Christ's deity, sufficiency, and preeminence**, and a blueprint for how the Body of Christ is to grow in knowledge, strength, and fruitful service.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Introduction and Identity (Col. 1:1–2)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother...”

Paul asserts his apostolic authority—**not self-appointed**, but by the will of God. This confirms the epistle's divine origin and weight.

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse...”

Paul addresses **both their spiritual identity** (“in Christ”) and their physical location (“at Colosse”). This dual identity reminds us that we are **heavenly citizens living on earthly ground**.

“Grace be unto you, and peace...”

As in all his epistles, grace comes first, peace follows—**because peace flows from grace**, not works.

2. Thankfulness and Faithful Testimony (Col. 1:3–5)

“We give thanks to God... since we heard of your faith... and the love which ye have to all the saints...”

Paul rejoices in the **gospel fruit** evident in the Colossian believers:

- **Faith in Christ.**
- **Love for others.**
- **Hope laid up in heaven.**

Their testimony reflects the triad of Christian virtues—faith, hope, and love—not based in emotion, but in **truth** (v. 5).

3. The Power of the Gospel (Col. 1:6–8)

“Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world...”

The gospel is **global**. Even without Paul’s direct ministry, it had reached Colosse. It bears fruit wherever it goes.

“Which bringeth forth fruit... since the day ye heard of it...”

This confirms the **self-authenticating power** of the gospel. When truly received, it produces visible fruit.

“...and knew the grace of God in truth.”

Grace is not vague favor—it is **truth-based transformation**.

4. Paul’s Prayer for Spiritual Growth (Col. 1:9–12)

“That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding...”

Paul doesn’t pray for physical prosperity, but for **doctrinal depth and spiritual discernment**. His prayer includes:

- **Knowledge** of God’s will.
- **A walk worthy of the Lord**.
- **Fruitful service**.
- **Increasing knowledge of God**.
- **Spiritual strength and patience**.
- **Joyful thanksgiving**.

“Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance...”

We are not trying to earn a place—we have already been **qualified** through Christ.

5. Delivered and Translated (Col. 1:13–14)

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness...”

Every believer is **rescued** from Satan’s dominion and **translated** (transferred) into Christ’s kingdom. This is not a future hope—it is a **present reality**.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood...”

There is no salvation without the **blood of Christ**. This refutes modern translations that remove “through his blood” from this verse.

“...even the forgiveness of sins.”

Redemption is not abstract—it results in **total forgiveness**, not partial, not progressive.

6. The Supremacy of Christ (Col. 1:15–18)

“Who is the image of the invisible God...”

Christ is not a reflection—He is the **perfect visible manifestation** of the invisible God. He is **fully divine**.

“...the firstborn of every creature...”

“Firstborn” here does not mean created first, but **position of preeminence** (cf. Ps. 89:27). He holds supreme authority over all creation.

“For by him were all things created...”

Christ is **the Creator**, not the first creation. All things—**heavenly, earthly, visible, invisible**—were created by Him, through Him, and **for Him**.

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

He is **pre-existent and sustainer** of the universe. The cosmos holds together **because of Christ’s ongoing power**.

“And he is the head of the body, the church...”

Christ is not just Lord of creation—He is **head of the Church**. No pope, bishop, or pastor holds this title. Christ alone is the **source, authority, and goal** of the Body.

“...that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

This is the heart of the chapter—**Christ must be first in all things**. Not a place, not prominence—**preeminence**.

7. Fullness in Christ and Peace Through His Blood (Col. 1:19–20)

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell...”

All divine fullness dwells in Christ **permanently** (cf. Col. 2:9). He is not part of God—He is fully God.

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross...”

There is no reconciliation without the **bloody cross**. Peace with God was purchased **not by our repentance, not by sacraments, not by law**, but by Christ’s blood.

“...to reconcile all things unto himself...”

Redemption will ultimately restore harmony in creation (cf. Rom. 8:21). But presently, **only believers are reconciled through the cross**.

8. You Were Alienated... Now Reconciled (Col. 1:21–23)

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works...”

This is the natural state of man—**hostile, not neutral**. Enemies in mind and deed.

“Yet now hath he reconciled...”

This is the miracle of grace. Hostile rebels are made **friends of God**.

“In the body of his flesh through death...”

Reconciliation is physical and literal—**Christ’s human death on a real cross**, not allegorical or mystical.

“...to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable...”

That’s the result: **total justification**. Positionally, believers are spotless.

“If ye continue in the faith...”

This is **not conditional salvation**, but a **call to perseverance**. True faith endures. The phrase challenges false professors, not true possessors.

9. The Gospel Preached to Every Creature (Col. 1:23b–25)

“...which was preached to every creature which is under heaven...”

By this time, the gospel had reached throughout the Roman world. This is **hyperbolic language** emphasizing its **global expansion**.

“Whereof I Paul am made a minister...”

Paul was not a freelance preacher. He was **divinely commissioned** to proclaim the mystery.

“According to the dispensation of God which is given to me...”

Here is **Pauline dispensationalism**. He was entrusted with a **specific stewardship**—the revelation of the mystery **hidden from ages**.

10. The Mystery: Christ in You (Col. 1:26–27)

“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations...”

This truth was **not revealed in the Old Testament**. It’s not a shadow—it’s a secret now revealed.

“...but now is made manifest to his saints.”

The mystery is now known—but only to saints, not the world.

“Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

This is the **center of Pauline revelation**: not God above you, not Christ beside you, but **Christ in you**.

The indwelling Christ is:

- The **guarantee** of future glory.
- The **power source** for holy living.
- The **mystery that levels Jew and Gentile** into one Body.

11. Warning, Teaching, Presenting (Col. 1:28–29)

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom...”

Preaching includes:

- **Warning** – rebuking sin, error, complacency.
- **Teaching** – instruction in truth.

“...that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

Paul’s goal is not converts—it’s **mature, equipped believers**.

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working...”

Paul’s effort is **Spirit-powered**. He labors, but the energy comes from **Christ’s working within**.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Gnosticism

Paul crushes early Gnostic heresies that claimed secret knowledge, angelic mediators, and Christ as a lesser spirit. He declares:

- Christ is Creator (v. 16).
- Christ is full deity (v. 19).
- Christ is in the believer (v. 27).

2. Legalism and Ritualism

There is no mention of circumcision, feast days, or law-keeping. Redemption comes **through His blood**, not through ceremonies.

3. Universalism

Only those who “continue in the faith” are presented blameless (v. 23). Not all are reconciled automatically.

4. Catholicism (Mary Worship and Priestly Mediation)

Christ is the **sole head** of the Church (v. 18), not Mary or any human priest. Reconciliation comes **through His death**, not through sacraments.

5. Charismatic Overemphasis on Experience

The mystery is **Christ in you**, not signs or ecstasies. The emphasis is on **spiritual maturity**, not sensationalism.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Ephesians 1:7** – Redemption through His blood.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17–21** – Reconciliation through Christ.
- **Romans 8:9–11** – Spirit of Christ dwells in you.
- **Galatians 2:20** – Christ lives in me.
- **John 1:1–3, 14** – Word was God... Word became flesh.
- **Hebrews 1:2–3** – Christ is the exact image of God.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Colossians 1 highlights several Church Age truths:

- We are **translated into Christ's kingdom** now.
- Christ is **the head**, not Peter or a human hierarchy.
- Our hope is **Christ in us**, not temple worship or covenant promises.
- We are made **complete in Him** (cf. Col. 2:10), not through law.
- The **mystery** revealed to Paul defines our identity and calling.

This is not kingdom doctrine or Old Testament shadow—it is **Pauline revelation** for the Body of Christ.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Colossians 1 teaches us:

- Your identity is **in Christ**, not in performance.
- Your redemption is **finished**, not ongoing.
- Your purpose is to **know Christ and make Him known**.
- Your confidence is in **Christ in you**, not Christ around you.
- Your goal is to **grow in knowledge and maturity**.

Let these truths rewire your mind and refocus your purpose.

Closing Thought: The Hope of Glory is Already Within

You don't need to ascend into heaven.

You don't need religious rituals to access God.

You don't need secret knowledge or external signs.

You have **Christ in you**.

- The Creator lives in you.
- The Redeemer empowers you.
- The Head leads you.
- The Mystery has been revealed to you.

So live worthy of it. Preach Him. Warn. Teach. And press forward in the **power of His working**, until we see Him face to face.

18 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Complete in Him (Colossians 2)

Introduction: The Fullness of the Godhead Bodily

Colossians 2 builds upon the Christ-centered doctrine of Colossians 1 and takes direct aim at **false philosophies, religious traditions, legalism, mysticism, and asceticism** that had begun to creep into the early church. Paul pulls no punches. He teaches that **Christ is not only supreme—but sufficient**. The believer is **complete in Him**.

Unlike religion, which always tells you what you're missing, this chapter declares that the believer **lacks nothing** in Christ. There's no need for extra knowledge, external rites, or spiritual intermediaries. Every need—justification, sanctification, power, peace—is met in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a bold corrective to heresies that still plague the Church today, Colossians 2 is one of the clearest Pauline statements on the **believer's spiritual position** and the **irrelevance of religious ordinances** for salvation or growth.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Paul's Heart for Their Stability (Col. 2:1-3)

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you...”

Paul had not met the Colossians face to face (cf. Col. 1:4), yet he felt deep spiritual concern for them. “Conflict” means **inner struggle or burden** for their stability in the truth.

“That their hearts might be comforted... knit together in love...”

Spiritual health includes:

- Comforted hearts (assurance).
- United love (not isolation).
- Rich understanding (doctrinal clarity).

“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Christ is the **source of all spiritual truth**. Believers don't need secret knowledge from Gnostics or deeper enlightenment through religious rites. Every treasure of wisdom is found **in Christ**.

2. Beware of Deception (Col. 2:4-5)

“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.”

False teachers don't always come with heresy at the front door—they come with **enticing arguments, clever speech, and subtle misdirection**. Paul wants them grounded so they cannot be led astray.

“For though I be absent... yet am I with you in the spirit...”

Paul rejoices in their **order and steadfastness**—military terms suggesting discipline and loyalty to the truth. But he still warns them: even strong churches are susceptible to deceit.

3. Walk in Christ, Rooted and Built Up (Col. 2:6-7)

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him...”

How did they receive Christ? **By grace through faith.** So that's how they are to continue. Growth doesn't come through law, works, or rituals—it comes by the **same faith that saved them.**

“Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith...”

Spiritual growth is:

- Rooted (like a tree).
- Built up (like a building).
- Established (like a foundation).

“...abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

A grateful heart keeps the believer from discontent and doctrinal deviation.

4. Beware Philosophy and Vain Deceit (Col. 2:8)

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit...”

“Philosophy” here refers to **man's wisdom apart from God.** The Greek word means “love of wisdom,” but Paul says it leads to **spiritual robbery** when it's not rooted in Christ.

“...after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

- **Traditions of men** – Jewish rituals and man-made doctrines.
- **Rudiments of the world** – basic principles of human religion and morality.
- All of it is **not after Christ.**

This rebukes any form of **man-centered spirituality**—from Catholicism to charismatic excess, to modern psychological Christianity.

5. All the Fullness Dwells in Christ (Col. 2:9)

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

This verse slams the door on:

- **Arianism** – that Christ is a lesser god.
- **Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses** – who deny His deity.

- **New Age mysticism** – that treats Jesus as a spiritual guide.

Christ is **fully God**, and His deity is expressed **bodily**. He is not a force. He is a Person—**God manifest in the flesh**.

6. Complete in Him (Col. 2:10)

“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

This is one of the greatest declarations in Scripture. The believer:

- Has full righteousness.
- Is seated in heavenly places.
- Lacks no spiritual resource.

There’s nothing to add—not circumcision, baptism, sacraments, tongues, or experience. We are **complete in Christ**—positionally, eternally, and fully.

7. Circumcision Without Hands (Col. 2:11–12)

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands...”

Paul contrasts physical circumcision (the Jewish rite) with **spiritual circumcision**. At salvation, the **body of the sins of the flesh is cut away**. This is **not baptismal regeneration**—it’s a **spiritual operation of God** (cf. Rom. 2:28–29).

“Buried with him in baptism...”

This refers to **Spirit baptism**, not water (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). Believers are spiritually placed into Christ’s death and resurrection.

Water baptism symbolizes this, but the real operation is **spiritual**, performed by God at the moment of salvation.

8. Quickened and Forgiven (Col. 2:13)

“And you, being dead in your sins... hath he quickened together with him...”

The believer was **spiritually dead**—but God **made him alive** with Christ. This new life is not through performance—it’s a resurrection by grace.

“...having forgiven you all trespasses.”

This is full pardon. Past, present, and future sins—**nailed to the cross**. There's no probationary period, no sacramental system—just **complete forgiveness**.

9. Blotting Out the Handwriting of Ordinances (Col. 2:14)

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us...”

The “handwriting” refers to the **legal code of the law**, which condemned us. Christ took the entire system—**moral, ceremonial, and civil law**—and wiped it away.

“...and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”

This destroys any theology that says Christians must keep:

- The Sabbath
- Dietary laws
- Jewish feasts
- Mosaic regulations

All were nailed to the cross. The believer is not under the law (Rom. 6:14). We are under **grace**.

10. Christ's Triumph Over Evil Powers (Col. 2:15)

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly...”

This refers to **Christ's victory over demonic forces**, who once held humanity in bondage through fear and deception.

“...triumphing over them in it.”

At the cross, Satan was defeated. The powers of darkness were stripped of their authority over the believer. This is a cosmic victory, and **we share in it** through Christ.

11. Let No Man Judge You (Col. 2:16–17)

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday...”

Paul dismantles the **legalistic systems** creeping into the Church:

- Dietary laws
- Sabbaths
- Feast days

“...which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

Those things were **shadows**—Christ is the substance. Why cling to shadows when you have the Person?

12. Let No Man Beguile You (Col. 2:18–19)

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels...”

Paul now attacks **false humility** and **mysticism**:

- Pretending to be humble while exalting self.
- Claiming visions and mystical experiences.
- Worshipping angels or spiritual beings.

“...not holding the Head...”

These practices disconnect believers from **Christ**, the true Head.

“...from which all the body... increaseth with the increase of God.”

Spiritual growth doesn't come from rituals, rules, or experiences. It comes from **being connected to Christ**, the Head of the Body.

13. Dead with Christ from the Rudiments (Col. 2:20–23)

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world...”

If you've died to the world's religious systems, why live as though you're still subject to them?

“Touch not; taste not; handle not...”

These man-made rules **appear wise**, but they lack power.

“...which things have indeed a shew of wisdom... but are not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

Asceticism may look spiritual, but it can't conquer sin. Only **Christ in you** can do that.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Baptismal Regeneration

Colossians 2:12 refers to **Spirit baptism**, not water. Salvation and spiritual circumcision happen **without hands**, by God's power.

2. Legalism and Hebrew Roots Movement

The law, ordinances, sabbaths, and Jewish customs were **blotted out and nailed to the cross** (v. 14–17). Christians are **not under the law**.

3. Catholicism

Paul says **no man** is to judge you in meat or holy days. That includes popes and priests. Christ is the Head. **Mysticism and ascetic rules are condemned**.

4. Charismatic Extremes

The “worshipping of angels” and claim of “**intruding into those things which he hath not seen**” rebuke modern visions, angel encounters, and emotional sensationalism.

5. Christian Asceticism

Extreme self-denial is **not godliness**. It has no power to restrain the flesh (v. 23). Sanctification comes from **Christ within**, not harsh treatment of the body.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 6:1–11** – Dead with Christ; risen to walk in newness of life.
- **Galatians 2:20** – Crucified with Christ; Christ lives in me.
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – Salvation by grace, not works.
- **Romans 8:1–4** – Law fulfilled in us by the Spirit, not by law-keeping.
- **Hebrews 10:1–14** – The law is a shadow; Christ is the fulfillment.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – New creature in Christ.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Colossians 2 reinforces:

- The **abolition of the Mosaic law**.
- The spiritual **union with Christ** through Spirit baptism.
- The sufficiency of **grace and the Headship of Christ**.
- The rejection of all religious intermediaries and rituals.
- The reality that we are **complete in Christ** now—not waiting for another system.

This is **pure Church Age doctrine**—distinct from Israel’s covenant and from the Millennial Kingdom. The believer is not under earthly ordinances, but under **the spiritual authority of Christ in heaven**.

Practical & Devotional Insight

This chapter challenges us:

- Are you living in the reality of being **complete in Christ**?
- Do you walk in **freedom**, or are you bound by religious traditions?
- Do you rely on **Christ’s strength**, or on spiritual performance?
- Are you rooted in the **Head**, or distracted by man-made spirituality?
- Do you trust in **your crucifixion with Christ**, or are you still trying to fix the flesh?

Christ doesn’t need supplements. He needs surrender.

Closing Thought: Christ Is Enough

This is the declaration of Colossians 2:

- You are **complete in Him**.
- The law is nailed to the cross.
- Religion is finished.
- Asceticism is powerless.

- Christ is the Head.

So live like it.

Cling to the Head.

Reject false humility, mysticism, and religious show.

Walk by faith in the finished work of Christ—and never let anyone **beguile you of your reward**.

19 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Risen with Christ (Colossians 3)

Introduction: Living Out the New Life from Above

Colossians 3 is the practical pivot of the epistle, turning from the doctrinal foundation laid in chapters 1 and 2 toward the **daily behavior expected of those who are risen with Christ**. After establishing that believers are complete in Christ and not subject to legalistic ordinances (Colossians 2), Paul now turns to what true spirituality looks like: **putting off the old man and putting on the new**.

In this chapter, Paul emphasizes that the believer's life is hidden with Christ in God. This is not merely a theological idea but a transformational truth. The Christian has died to this world and is now alive in the heavenlies. Because of this new identity, Paul calls for a radical shift in focus, desire, language, relationships, and daily decisions.

Whereas worldly religion focuses on external rituals, Paul shows that **true Christian living flows from the inside out**—from a mind set on things above, and a heart transformed by grace.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. If Ye Then Be Risen with Christ (Col. 3:1–2)

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above...”

This verse assumes the truth already established in chapter 2: that we **died and rose with Christ** spiritually. Paul is not questioning their salvation but challenging their focus.

“...where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

Paul immediately shifts the believer's attention to the **heavenly realm**, where Christ now reigns. This connects with the doctrine of **positional truth** (cf. Eph. 2:6)—we are seated with Him.

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Our **affections (desires, longings)** should not be grounded in earthly things. This doesn't mean ignoring responsibilities—it means **valuing eternal priorities above temporal distractions**.

2. Your Life is Hid with Christ (Col. 3:3–4)

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

The old self—the flesh—was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). Now, the believer's life is **spiritually secured** in Christ. The world doesn't understand us because **our life is hidden in a Person they don't know**.

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

Paul shifts to **eschatological hope**: the rapture and future glorification. Our hidden life will one day be **revealed in splendor**. This is not wishful thinking—it is **the anchor of our holiness and hope**.

3. Mortify the Flesh (Col. 3:5–7)

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth...”

To “mortify” means to **put to death**. This is not self-harm or asceticism. It is a **Spirit-led execution of sinful desires** (cf. Rom. 8:13).

Paul lists:

- Fornication (sexual sin).
- Uncleaness (impurity).
- Inordinate affection (unnatural lust).
- Evil concupiscence (wicked craving).
- Covetousness, which is idolatry.

These sins aren't just “bad behaviors”—they are rooted in idolatry, where desires replace God.

“For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh...”

This is a sober warning. God’s wrath falls on such lifestyles—not on believers (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10), but on the world that practices them.

“In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.”

Past tense. This was our former life—**not our present identity**. We are not to wallow in what we died to.

4. Put Off the Old Man (Col. 3:8–9)

“But now ye also put off all these...”

Paul moves from **sensual sins** to **social sins**:

- Anger.
- Wrath.
- Malice.
- Blasphemy.
- Filthy communication.
- Lying.

These sins destroy community and testimony. Paul doesn’t just rebuke them—he commands the believer to **put them off** like dirty clothes.

“Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds...”

This is positional and practical. The old man was crucified (Rom. 6:6), but the **old habits remain**, and must be removed daily.

5. Put On the New Man (Col. 3:10–11)

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him...”

The “new man” is the **regenerate self**, created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). Renewal happens **through knowledge**—specifically, the knowledge of Christ.

“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew... bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”

In Christ, all believers are equal. Earthly distinctions don’t matter in the Body. Christ is not only the source of unity—**He is the center of all**.

6. Put On the Garments of Grace (Col. 3:12–14)

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved...”

Paul reminds them of their identity—**elect, holy, beloved**—and then gives the attire that matches it:

- Bowels of mercies (compassion).
- Kindness.
- Humbleness of mind.
- Meekness.
- Longsuffering.
- Forbearance.
- Forgiveness.

“Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Christ is the **pattern and power** for forgiveness. This is not natural—it is **supernatural grace flowing through us**.

“And above all these things put on charity...”

Charity (agape love) binds all the virtues together in perfect harmony. It is the **belt of grace** that holds the garments of righteousness in place.

7. Let the Peace of God Rule (Col. 3:15)

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...”

“Rule” means to **act as umpire**—let God’s peace **decide what stays and what goes**. If a decision robs you of peace, don’t proceed.

“...to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

Peace is not just personal—it’s corporate. The Church is to be a **thankful, peaceful body**, not a place of strife.

8. Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly (Col. 3:16)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...”

The Word should not visit occasionally—it should **dwell richly**, producing wisdom and worship.

“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...”

True Christian music teaches doctrine. It exhorts, encourages, and glorifies God. This verse also shows the role of **corporate worship in mutual edification**.

“...singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Worship is not a performance—it is a **grace-filled response to truth**.

9. Do All in the Name of the Lord (Col. 3:17)

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...”

Paul elevates **all of life** to sacred ground. Every action, every word, is to be done **under Christ’s authority, for Christ’s glory**.

“...giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Thanksgiving is the atmosphere of the Christian life. We serve and speak with gratitude, knowing our lives are **hidden with Christ**.

10. The Christ-Centered Home (Col. 3:18–21)

Paul now turns to family relationships.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”

Biblical submission is not inferiority—it is **God-ordained structure**. It is **voluntary respect** offered as unto the Lord.

“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”

The command is not to rule, but to **love**. Bitterness arises when expectations are not met. Christlike love **sacrifices, forgives, and leads with humility**.

“Children, obey your parents in all things...”

Obedience is right, but the motivation is “in the Lord.”

“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger...”

Harshness breeds rebellion. Fathers are to **nurture, guide, and affirm**.

11. Servants and Masters (Col. 3:22–25)

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh...”

This applies today to **employer-employee** relationships. Paul urges sincerity, not just “eyeservice.”

“...fearing God.”

The believer’s work ethic is ultimately about **servicing Christ**, not impressing men.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men...”

This transforms mundane labor into worship. Every task becomes sacred when done for Christ.

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward...”

This anticipates the **Judgment Seat of Christ**. Earthly roles don’t limit eternal reward.

“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong...”

God is impartial. Believers will be **chastened and judged as sons**, not condemned (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13–15).

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Legalism

Paul never roots holiness in law-keeping. He anchors it in **Christ’s resurrection**, the believer’s position in Him, and Spirit-led renewal.

2. Mysticism and Asceticism

Having rejected mysticism in chapter 2, Paul now shows that **true spirituality is grounded in daily obedience**, not ecstatic experiences.

3. Replacement Theology

Paul speaks to **distinct roles in the Body**, not as Israel under law. There's no mention of temple, sabbaths, or feast days. The believer's focus is **heavenly, not earthly**.

4. Gender Role Reversal and Egalitarianism

Biblical marriage roles are upheld:

- Wives submit.
- Husbands love.
- Children obey.
- Fathers lead gently.

Modern reinterpretations of Scripture are rebuked by this order.

5. Sacred-Secular Divide

Paul abolishes it: "whatsoever ye do... do all in the name of the Lord." Whether home life or hard labor, all is sacred when done unto Christ.

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Romans 6:4–11** – Dead to sin, alive to God.
- **Ephesians 4:22–24** – Put off the old man, put on the new.
- **Galatians 2:20** – Christ lives in me.
- **1 Corinthians 10:31** – Do all to the glory of God.
- **Philippians 2:5–11** – Christ's example of humility and obedience.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Colossians 3 is quintessential Church Age doctrine:

- The believer is risen with Christ—**positionally glorified**.

- No priesthood, law, or ordinances are mentioned—only **Spirit-led living**.
- Spiritual growth is rooted in **knowledge of Christ**, not rituals.
- The Body of Christ transcends social distinctions—**Christ is all, and in all**.

The Christian life is not about climbing toward God through rules—but **living from God, who now lives in us**.

Practical & Devotional Insight

Colossians 3 calls the believer to:

- Stop living like they're alive to the world.
- Start living like they're alive to God.
- Set their sights upward.
- Put their sins to death.
- Love, forgive, and serve.

This chapter transforms:

- The **mind**—by focusing above.
- The **heart**—by ruling with peace.
- The **mouth**—by singing with grace.
- The **home**—by submitting in love.
- The **job**—by working unto Christ.

Closing Thought: Alive in Heaven, Active on Earth

Colossians 3 is a heavenly call to earthly holiness. It doesn't shout with thunder—it walks in truth.

You are risen.

So rise above:

- Petty anger.
- Lustful desires.

- Bitter words.
- Legalistic rules.
- Carnal divisions.

You are hidden in Christ.

So live like it.

Put off the old. Put on the new.

Let Christ rule your heart, renew your mind, and radiate through your relationships.

You are risen with Him—so rise.

20 of 20: Pauline Truths for the Body of Christ – Speak with Grace (Colossians 4)

Introduction: Graceful Speech, Faithful Ministry, and the Final Words of a Soldier

The closing chapter of Colossians, though brief, is packed with pastoral exhortations, personal greetings, and practical wisdom. Paul has spent three chapters laying the doctrinal foundation of Christ's supremacy and the believer's completeness in Him. Now, in Colossians 4, he concludes with a charge to live wisely before the world, speak graciously, and stay faithful in every duty—no matter how small or great.

While some may be tempted to skim through lists of names and final instructions, these verses offer profound insights into how the **Body of Christ should function**—not in theory, but in daily life. From how Christian masters should treat their servants, to how believers should engage with outsiders, to how fellow laborers co-labored with Paul in adversity and travel—every verse is **alive with application**.

The Pauline truths in Colossians 4 remind us that our faith is not just to be **believed** but **lived**, especially in our relationships, our testimony, and our words.

Doctrinal Breakdown

1. Masters, Give What is Just and Equal (Col. 4:1)

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

Though chapter divisions are modern insertions, this verse continues Paul's instruction on **domestic and workplace relationships** from chapter 3.

Paul addresses Christian masters, reminding them:

- Their authority is **not absolute**.
- They are accountable to **Christ in heaven**.
- They must treat those under their authority with **justice and equality**.

This balances the earlier command to servants (Col. 3:22). Paul **redefines social roles under grace**, where masters and servants are brothers in Christ (cf. Philemon).

2. Continue in Prayer (Col. 4:2)

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving...”

Prayer is not an afterthought. Paul urges steadfastness—a **life marked by ongoing communion with God**.

Key aspects of biblical prayer:

- **Continue** – persistent.
- **Watch** – alert, not passive.
- **With thanksgiving** – grateful, not demanding.

Thankfulness protects prayer from becoming selfish or manipulative. Watching means praying with **discernment and spiritual sensitivity**.

3. Prayer for a Door of Utterance (Col. 4:3–4)

“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance...”

Paul, though imprisoned, doesn't ask for release—but for **opportunity to preach**. This is the mindset of a true soldier.

“...to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds...”

The mystery of Christ (Col. 1:27) was the truth **hidden from ages, now revealed**: Christ in you, the hope of glory. Paul was imprisoned **because of this message** to the Gentiles.

“That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

Paul asks for clarity and boldness—not ease. This challenges our often self-focused prayer lives. The mission matters more than comfort.

4. Walk in Wisdom Toward Them That Are Without (Col. 4:5)

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”

“Them that are without” refers to **unbelievers**. The Christian life is to be marked by **wisdom in conduct**, not foolish behavior that undermines the gospel.

“Redeeming the time...”

This means **buying back every opportunity**. Time is fleeting, and the believer is called to **live purposefully in light of eternity**.

This is especially relevant in our day of distraction. Paul calls for **urgency, discernment, and integrity** in our public lives.

5. Let Your Speech Be Always with Grace (Col. 4:6)

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt...”

The believer’s speech should be:

- **Always gracious** – even in rebuke or disagreement.
- **Seasoned with salt** – not bland, but bold and purifying.

Salt preserves, adds flavor, and heals. Our words should reflect truth, love, and holiness—not gossip, sarcasm, or flattery.

“...that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

This requires **thoughtful engagement**, not canned answers. The believer should **study, prepare, and speak** with Scripture-guided wisdom.

6. Tychicus and Onesimus: Faithful Messengers (Col. 4:7–9)

“All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you...”

Tychicus was Paul’s trusted envoy (cf. Eph. 6:21). He carried letters, gave updates, and ministered on Paul’s behalf. He was:

- A **beloved brother**.
- A **faithful minister**.
- A **fellow servant in the Lord**.

“With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.”

Onesimus, once a runaway slave (cf. Philemon), had become a believer and is now **commended** as a faithful brother. This reflects the **transforming power of grace** and the restoration found in the Body.

7. Greetings from Fellow Laborers (Col. 4:10–14)

“Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you...”

Aristarchus, from Thessalonica, was often in trouble with Paul (Acts 19:29). He endured hardship as a **fellow prisoner**, showing that ministry often involves suffering.

“And Marcus... receive him...”

Mark had once abandoned Paul (Acts 13:13), but now he’s restored (cf. 2 Tim. 4:11). This shows **grace and second chances** in ministry.

“Jesus, which is called Justus... these only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God...”

Paul notes that few Jewish believers labored alongside him. Even in fruitful ministry, **loneliness is real**, and faithful partners are few.

“Epaphras... a servant of Christ, always labouring fervently for you in prayers...”

Epaphras planted the Colossian church (Col. 1:7). His ministry wasn’t only preaching—it was **prayer warfare**. He prayed for:

- Spiritual maturity.
- Full assurance of God’s will.

Paul testifies of his zeal and intercession for not only Colosse but Laodicea and Hierapolis.

“Luke, the beloved physician...”

Luke was not only Paul’s doctor but **his loyal companion**, historian (Gospel of Luke, Acts), and comfort in trial (2 Tim. 4:11).

“And Demas greet you.”

At this point, Demas is a co-laborer. But in 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul would say, “**Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.**” Not all who start well finish well.

8. Salute the Brethren and Read This Letter (Col. 4:15–17)

“Salute the brethren... and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”

The early church met in homes—not temples. Paul honors both churches and individuals.

“When this epistle is read... cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans...”

Paul expected **circulation of inspired Scripture**. He did not view his writings as mere letters—they were to be read **publicly and preserved**.

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received...”

This is a public exhortation—likely because Archippus was **wavering or discouraged**. The entire church was to encourage him to **fulfill his calling**.

9. Final Salutation (Col. 4:18)

“The salutation by the hand of me Paul...”

Paul likely dictated the letter, but now **adds his personal signature** as authentication.

“Remember my bonds...”

This is not self-pity. It’s a call to remember the **cost of gospel ministry** and the price of standing for truth.

“Grace be with you. Amen.”

Grace opened the epistle (Col. 1:2), and grace closes it. This is the **bookend of the Christian life**—from beginning to end, we live by grace.

Erroneous Doctrines Refuted

1. Legalism

Grace governs our speech (v. 6), not law. Paul does not instruct the Colossians to follow Mosaic customs but to **walk in wisdom and grace**.

2. Clerical Hierarchy

Paul honors a wide variety of servants—men and women, free and bond, new converts and old warriors. Ministry is **shared by the Body**, not reserved for clergy.

3. Works-Based Evangelism

Paul doesn't rely on cleverness but asks for a **door of utterance** (v. 3). The gospel is **proclaimed**, not marketed.

4. Mystical Experiences as Proof of Spirituality

The true mark of maturity is not visions or voices—but **grace-filled speech, prayer, labor in the gospel, and faithfulness in service**.

5. Once Saved Always Useful

Demas reminds us that **not all who start strong endure**. Grace saves us, but **only faithfulness secures reward** (1 Cor. 3:13–15).

Cross References to Strengthen the Case

- **Ephesians 6:18–20** – Prayer for boldness and open doors.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:11–12** – Walk honestly toward them that are without.
- **1 Peter 3:15** – Be ready to give an answer.
- **Philemon 1:10–16** – Paul's plea for Onesimus.
- **2 Timothy 4:10–11** – Demas forsook Paul; Mark restored.
- **2 Corinthians 5:20** – Ambassadors for Christ; speak as from God.

Dispensational Application for the Body of Christ

Colossians 4 is thoroughly **Church Age doctrine**:

- There is no mention of temple worship, sacrifice, or Levitical priesthood.
- Ministry is **Spirit-empowered and grace-filled**, not law-based.
- The gospel is shared through **open doors**, not force.
- The Church is led by **faithful servants**, not institutional priests.

- Believers are exhorted to **walk wisely in the world**, not to dominate or “bring in the kingdom.”

This is pure Pauline instruction for the **Body of Christ in the Age of Grace**.

Practical & Devotional Insight

This chapter touches every believer:

- **Do you pray consistently?**
- **Is your speech gracious and wise?**
- **Are you aware of your witness to the lost?**
- **Are you serving faithfully—even in obscure roles?**
- **Do you value fellow laborers—or compete with them?**
- **Do you finish what God has assigned to you?**

Colossians 4 is not glamorous—it’s **daily Christianity**, lived out in prayer, speech, conduct, and faithfulness.

Closing Thought: Grace in Word, Wisdom in Walk

The epistle to the Colossians began with Christ’s supremacy—and ends with your speech.

The world doesn’t need a louder Church. It needs a **gracious one**:

- Full of wisdom.
- Full of prayer.
- Full of boldness.
- Full of humility.
- Full of Christ.

Let your words be **seasoned with salt**, and your life **fragrant with grace**.

Finish your ministry.

Speak like an ambassador.

And walk like one who knows he is **complete in Christ**.

