

One Body, One Lord, One Mission

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 May 2023

Preacher: Jared

[0 : 00] I work now for a new organization.

! This is part of the new. I work for an organization called International Christian Response. We're similar to the Voice of the Martyrs. One of the things that we're doing currently is we are supporting those who have been impacted by the earthquake in February in Turkey and Syria.

Last night, as I was praying and preparing for the sermon, I went on their website, saw there's a great video from a ministry that we partner with called Al-Hayat.

And in it, there's a song in Arabic. And the song says, The real catastrophe will be if our hearts are blinded and our Christianity is superficial and our prayers are just words.

We are not better than them. Oh, Lord, please help them. You know their situation. Lord, have mercy. And the video concluded, Our brothers and sisters need help.

[1 : 16] And since that really connected with where I want to go today in the sermon, I thought I'd quote that. And then it led me to a question.

Will we stand with them, our brothers and sisters, in Turkey, in Syria, and really all around the world, our brothers and sisters who are persecuted in Sudan with what's going on there currently, in Nigeria, where I've ministered over parts of the last year, and Congo, and Burkina Faso, and India, and Indonesia, and China, and Mexico, and Cuba, and Iran.

All over the world, our brothers and our sisters are both suffering for the sake of Christ and are faithfully and steadfastly proclaiming boldly the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Will we stand with them, or will we just ignore them? And as we look at God's Word today, that's a question I want us to really ask ourselves, to really examine our lives.

And so today we'll be in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 1 through 16. Because I'm old school, I like to stand for the Word of God. So if you're able to, I would ask you to please stand as we read the Word of the Lord.

[2 : 38] Amen. Make sure there's no swiping or flipping. And we'll read, This is the Word of the Lord.

I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.

And saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth. He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

[3 : 57] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes, rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

This is the word of God. You may be seated. Thank you for standing to honor God's word with me. So I titled this sermon, One Body, One Lord, One Mission.

This is one of my favorite passages. The context really is one of my favorite books. It's hard to beat Ephesians. There could be debates. Probably everyone has their favorite Bible book, but Ephesians might be right there up at the top for me.

In chapters 1 through 3, Paul spends some time explaining to his audience that in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have been made into a new humanity, which 2,000 years later, we take for granted the fact that we can be one with the people that God had chosen in Abraham thousands of years before, but probably like me, you are not a Jew by birth.

I'm a Gentile as Gentile as it gets, and I'm proud of it, but I'm very grateful that we have been included in God's people through faith in Jesus Christ.

[6 : 08] Ephesians 2 says that Christ is our peace, and that he made us both one. He broke down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and that it was through his body on the cross that he reconciled us both to God, both Jews and Gentiles.

Our only hope for salvation is the work that Christ accomplished on the cross, dying for our sins, that we might be united to him through faith and might live forever with him.

Amen? And so, what's incredible about this is this is something that hadn't been revealed. If you were a Jew, you would have thought, whoa, the gospel, the Messiah, the one we've been waiting for, we thought he was coming to destroy Rome.

We thought he was going to come get revenge for what Assyria and Babylon, these pagan nations, have done for hundreds of years, destroying our temple, forcing us to worship false gods.

We want revenge. I feel like there's always that vindictive nature that kind of flows throughout time and history, right?

[7 : 34] We can even see that in our day and time. How dare they do blank? I'm sure you could fill that in. But Paul said that this mystery, the mystery that was prepared to be revealed, has now been revealed, and it's that Gentiles are fellow heirs.

They are members of the same body. And so if Christ has established this peace, if he has created unity with both Jews and Gentiles, we must maintain this unity.

This is essential. This is important. And so we are all one body, whether it's believers in Nigeria or South America or you name it, Turkey, Europe, we have more in common together because we are members of the same family, the same body, than we do maybe with our next door neighbor, maybe with our uncle or our brother or our parents.

We might have more in common with them. And because of that, we must maintain this Christ-created unity. That's what Paul says here in verse 1.

He's speaking as he's in prison and he says, this is so important that I want to reiterate that I am in prison for this case.

[9 : 06] I want to see the gospel advanced, but as a result, I want to see Jews and Gentiles coming together, worshiping together, loving one another, so the question we have is, are we walking in a manner worthy of our calling?

Because that's Paul's command here is that we must walk in a manner worthy of our calling, which means unity is essential.

We must maintain it. That means that if our lives, our churches, our homes are marked by arrogance, harshness, callousness, impatience, or pride, we are actively working against that which Christ died for.

Christ died that there would be unity, that we would love one another, that we would bear with one another, that there would be patience and kindness. Now, I'm not saying that's easy. We have three kids.

Patience is a lesson we try and learn daily, often fail, right? And I've been in many Southern Baptist churches. I know patience can be a challenge in these contexts as well.

[10 : 16] You all are wonderful, I'm sure, but we find a way to rub each other the wrong way from time to time. Is it not true? But God is glorified when we pursue unity, when we maintain that unity, when we fight for it, like a husband ought to fight for his marriage.

God is honored when we fight for our unity. Now, this does not mean we excuse false teachers, right? We've been told, warned, that there would be false teaching and false teachers.

It does not mean we excuse sin. It does not mean we look our brothers and sisters in the eye and say, well, I have to forgive you. And that means that you can have access to every part of your life. But it does mean that if Christ has forgiven us, that we forgive one another. It does mean we bear with one another. It does mean that personality differences are not enough that we say, I don't want to have any part to do with you, brother.

I don't want to spend time with you. You're driving me crazy. You're cramping my style. Right? So God is glorified. It says in Matthew 5, when our love for one another is seen.

[11 : 29] Right? They see our good deeds and they will glorify Father who's in heaven. Just heard about our response in Turkey. One of my new teammates, he went to Turkey and he said that he was visiting our brothers and sisters who were giving out food and different items that are meeting the needs of those who are suffering there.

In Turkey, for context, it's where I met my wife. It's where our oldest was born. It's a place we love dearly. But it's a country that's about 99.9% Islamic.

You get every variety of Islam. So you'll go to the water park and you'll see a girl in a bikini by a girl in the Burkina which is the fully covered and you're like, how are you?

The same people group and from the same culture but you are at, bless your mind. You see the Burka covered, fully covered in black. Girls at Burger King during Ramadan eating burgers and your mind's just kind of blown and you don't get it.

Turkey, the mission work there is relatively new. It's only been the last 35 years or so. There's a handful of believers, maybe 5,000 or 6,000.

[12 : 46] Most of the Turks are very proud of their Islam. But through this period, they've started asking questions because they're seeing brothers and sisters of ours actually care for them in their time of need.

And one of the things that these brothers and sisters keep hearing is that nobody cares like these Christians. What if that was a statement that was said about us?

What if that was a statement that was said about our families, about our churches, about our own lives? Nobody cares like the Christians. The government isn't really doing anything.

Islamic groups try and show up and take credit for things they're not doing. But the Christians, they're ministering to these people. They're praying for them.

They're meeting their physical and spiritual needs. I heard that one group intentionally didn't take Bibles because they didn't want to scare off the people they were trying to serve.

[13 : 49] And they had so many Muslims asking them for New Testaments. They said, we have to figure out how to get 400 Bibles here now.

And it's just so cool that when the body of Christ is unified with purpose, when we're not bickering, when we're not going into our bubbles, into our castles, at our home, when we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and when we love our neighbor as ourself, the kingdom of God advances, and people see just how good Jesus Christ is.

Now this unity is based on our shared faith. There's one body and one spirit. It says there's one hope we're called to, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father over all.

That's why I said earlier, we have more in common with a person whose language we don't know, whose people group we've never heard of, who may be in a different denomination of church, than we do if they are in Christ, than we do with people who have the same politics, root for the same teams, maybe in our very own families, but they don't know Christ.

And so, that's been one of my favorite parts of traveling the world. I wish you could all do it. Being able to sit down and say, you are my brother, I care for you.

[15 : 20] Tell me your story. You are my sister. Your husband was killed for the sake of the gospel. I want to weep with you. What an honor we have.

And that leads to a question, are we aware of our brothers and sisters? Are we doing the work to hear about them, to know about what God's doing around the world?

Are we aware of what God is doing and the needs that our brothers and sisters have? Glory in the church is God's ultimate purpose for our mission.

So, it's when we're unified that God's glory is seen. Ephesians 1.18, earlier in this book, it says that the saints are the glorious inheritance of Christ.

Christ. And Paul's praying for the church in Ephesus. I just pray the Lord will let you see how valuable you are as his people.

[16 : 24] That would be a prayer I have for you to understand about one another but also to understand about our global body. Christ died for you and he died for us.

He died for the guy in the bush in Africa who doesn't know another believer and is all alone and he doesn't have a Bible but he heard about the gospel through whatever means.

He cares about the brothers and sisters in Eritrea, it's a country you may not even know exist. They have the worst prisons and Christians are constantly thrown in them whenever they're found having a Bible, worshipping the Lord, thrown in chipping containers out in the desert to bake and cook alive and we don't even know their country exists.

There's so much that we could learn, so much that we could pray about and I'm not wanting to heap guilt upon us, I want us to be spurred on to say, ah, I want to learn about my brothers and sisters, I want to know about their situation, if I can help, I want to help, I'd rather help them than ignore them.

I was just up in the Northwest, I'm a Northwesterner, so if I have a weird accent, I apologize, I'm not used to the hot weather, we like rain and coffee, we don't use umbrellas, if you go to Portland, don't use an umbrella, you'll stand out like a tourist immediately, we'll laugh at you, and you're just going to get wet, embrace it, but I was up there, and there are a lot of reasons why, but one was my grandma, we say grandma, grandma for you guys, my grandma was pretty close to passing away, she still is, she'll be going on hospice soon, I would hate if my mom didn't tell me, you know, hey, grandma's in a bad spot, you probably should come back, you should spend time, or my niece, she's about to have a kidney transplant, Lord willing, she's had a lot of different problems, we've joked recently that my family's started dabbling in genetic disorders, and I didn't know that that was a hobby, but it seems to be something we've been doing, learning about just the brokenness of the world and the assumptions that we have that our son's going to be born, you know, healthy, it's just an assumption sometimes, or that my family might not be a carrier of things, and as you learn that death has so infected all of this world, you realize just how important

[19 : 09] Christ is, how much we need the hope of life everlasting with the Lord Jesus Christ, but if I was a match for my niece's kidney transplant, I would want to know, I'll hop on a plane tomorrow, I told them when I was there, and my wife said, make sure you know what you're signing up for, don't just offer something, but I would want to know that there is a need, and I can meet it, why?

Because we're family, how much greater should that reality be, brothers and sisters, if that's our one body, we're members of one body, our spiritual family, if they're in need, are we ready to learn about it, and meet that need, and serve them, are we going to act as if they're not part of this one body that Christ died for?

I think it's so, so important that we're aware, that we're praying faithfully, that we're not ignorant, that we don't hide behind those things.

Last September, I was in Nigeria, I met a brother, his name's Gideon, he's an incredible brother, the Fulani terrorists have left two death notes on his front door, hopped into his courtyard, pinned it up, he's been basically revealing the evil that they've been just causing all throughout his community, they go to villages that are Christian villages, and kill everybody, and violate the women, and burn down fields, and just harass my brothers and sisters, while the military is a mile down the road, but won't intervene, because they've been told to stand down, and so, Gideon is one of the most courageous men, he has three daughters, I got to meet two of them, they were super sweet, and I was talking to him, and he said, you know, the reason I stayed here, is because there's 116 college students that I'm ministering to, and on top of that, we met hundreds of displaced people in his community that he is sheltering with his church, that he is feeding, that he is caring for, and he said, I just can't leave them, and the support that I've been given through this project that we've been doing is the reason I stayed. You standing beside me is the reason I'm here, and we were talking to the displaced believers, some who have been displaced for 15 plus years, you see kids in this old run-down church, dirt floors, and you realize that kid's never been to his home village, that kid's never had a home, that kid's 12 years old, and he hasn't seen where he's from, because it's too violent there right now.

[22 : 18] And Gideon said, when an American says he'll be somewhere at 5 p.m., he's going to be there at 5 p.m. Now, it's not always true, some of you might have a spouse, it's not quite like that, but compared to Africans, you can praise the Lord and be grateful that your spouse isn't really that late.

He said, if they'll be where they said they will be, at the time they said they would be there, how much more will they pray for us if they say they're going to pray for us? And I felt convicted because here I'm standing and I know the lack of faithfulness that I've had at times in my prayer life.

I see their condition. I even told them, I pray for you, and as I'm writing this sermon, I'm like, God, I'm praying for those people again, thank you for reminding me. If there is one body that the Lord Jesus Christ died for, and we are called to maintain that unity, and that body is beyond Bartlesville, is beyond Highland Park, is beyond Oklahoma, then we ought to pray faithfully.

We ought to know their needs. We ought to be steadfast and stand with them. But not only that, we also have to be aware that we have to maintain the unity amongst us as a church because the biggest distraction, or one of them, that the enemy uses to keep us from the mission of God is internal fighting, bickering, gossiping, blaming, right?

It's really hard to minister to your community and share the gospel at Sunfest or something like that if you know so-and-so is going to be there and she's been spreading rumors about you and you hate her guts.

[24 : 12] Or it's hard if you have conflict in your own household sometimes to even serve people in your church because you want to put on that happy face and look right and look put together.

And brothers and sisters, the enemy uses this internal fighting, bickering, and we've been saved and called to so much more. We've been called to love one another and to express the goodness of Jesus Christ and forgive one another and to bless one another.

So we have one body. The second point is we have one Lord and this one Lord is our triumphant Lord Jesus. In verses 7 through 11, we really see that Paul makes two main points about Jesus in this passage.

The first is that Jesus fulfilled scripture by triumphing over his enemies. We see that in verse 8 and if verse 8 through 10 can be kind of strange, you're reading the Bible sometimes, you need some help, that's okay, there's so many resources.

One of the easiest things we can miss is that there's sometimes a little letter that says this is a quote from the Old Testament. And what Paul is doing here is he's quoting Psalm 68 which is all about Yahweh triumphing over his foes, triumphing over his enemies.

[25 : 39] It even calls Yahweh the rider on the clouds. It's one of my favorite biblical pictures. It's used seven times. It was a phrase that the surrounding nations used for Baal. He was called the one who would ride on the clouds and it was this idea of being over, sovereign, ruling, reigning, over the area.

And the Israelites took that and said no, no, no, no, you've got the wrong rider on the clouds. The true rider is Yahweh. And then just as a little nugget, it's used in Daniel 7.

The only place that's not used of Yahweh is the Son of Man. And he's coming with the clouds and he's ruling and he's reigning. And that's what this passage is about.

When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives. We see this in Colossians 2.15, that he disarmed the rulers and authorities, that's spiritual evil beings, put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

So God conquers the evil powers of the cosmos that are set up against the knowledge of God through Christ on the cross. That's what Colossians 2 tells us.

[26 : 47] And what's cool about this passage is it kind of, Paul, because he's an apostle and I'm not, he kind of changes the second phrase. And it says in Psalm 68 that God took gifts from mankind.

It's this idea of tribute, that he's ruling and reigning, the king comes in, here's my enemy, as I took their money, our kingdom is richer, our kingdom has more power.

Here it says that Jesus gave gifts to men. And so he kind flips it. So Jesus robs the powers that are over nations, that are over people's lives, right?

Satan has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers. He robs that, claims that for his because all authority in heaven and on earth is his. And then he gives it to his body.

And that's the second point. So God triumphs over his enemies. And then the second point about our one Lord that Paul wants to highlight. is that Jesus empowers his people for ministry.

[27 : 55] So Jesus is the triumphant Lord. When he calls us forward, the battle's already been won. He is ruling and reigning. He's in the heavens. He has ascended on high.

This idea of ascension is really important because he's ruling and reigning. He's on his throne at the right hand of the Father. And he's not drinking a Coke or watching Netflix or the latest Chelsea match or football or whatever the case is.

I'm a soccer and baseball fan. Because he'd be sad. Chelsea's really bad. We're really bad at soccer right now. It's terrible. But he's ruling and reigning.

It says in Isaiah 9 that of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. And so he's victorious. And his victory he shares with his people.

He empowers us. In verse 7 it says that grace is charis was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. The word for spiritual gift that's used in 1 Corinthians is charismata.

[29 : 05] That's where we get charismatics. Right? This idea is grace gifts. Right? The Lord blesses us with these gifts so that we can minister to our brothers and sisters around the world.

But the gifts are even more specific here and I like this. The gifts in verse 11 are people. It says that in Christ and he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, the teachers.

So your leaders are God-given gifts to benefit your church. Now this doesn't mean they have to do the work and you get to sit back and watch because it continues.

They have a purpose and the purpose is this, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. This is huge.

In Titus 3, 14 is one of my favorite verses. It says, let our people learn to devote themselves to good works. so as to help cases of urgent needs and not be unfruitful.

[30 : 15] And so it's your pastor, it's your other leader's responsibility to equip you with what you need to minister to one another.

It's not Pastor Mike's job to just meet your needs here in this congregation or your community's needs. It's his job to help you do the work of the ministry.

You might say, oh, I don't feel called to that. I don't get paid to do that. I am busy. I have gutter problems at home and I need to deal with those and they're obnoxious.

No, brothers and sisters, this is part of why we were saved. It says in Ephesians 2, that great passage by grace we've been saved through faith, continues and says, for you are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for what?

Why were you created? To do the good works that he prepared beforehand. Those works we're supposed to walk in. And Paul keeps going.

[31 : 23] He doesn't just say any kind of ministry. He says the ministry is to build up the body of Christ. Christ. And so here's some questions for your leadership.

Are people equipped with what they need to minister to one another's needs? Have we helped shape their world view so that it's different drastically than the consumerism that's so rife in our culture?

Are we helping them walk as families, loving one another, as somebody wants to go overseas? Do we know how to equip them? Do we know how to pour into them? Do we know how to follow up with them?

Because as sent out ones they're probably going to have hardships and loss and be displayed to open shame. That's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians that the apostles and the lowercase sins here, the sent out ones, right?

They're the ones who are exposed. Are we going to follow up with them? Do we have people who are disciples and know how to make disciples? And do we even know how to judge that?

[32 : 35] Because it's the saints who build the church. It's the saints who build the church. That leads to our third point. So we have one body, one Lord, and the third point is one mission, and this one mission is building up the body.

That's how Paul puts it. Now, this is very similar to the Great Commission. I don't think these are two missions that are at odds with one another, fighting one another. Because in the Great Commission, when we go and make disciples, what do we do?

We teach them to obey, to observe all that the Lord has commanded. So Paul's putting that a little different.

He's saying we need to build the body up. So you build the body up, one, by, if there is no body planning, bodies, local pictures of the one true global body.

We have local churches, so there has to be church planning, but then also there's discipleship, there's leadership development, because we want the body to minister to itself.

[33 : 45] So building up the body, what is success? If that's the mission, how do we define success? Because one of the issues and missions that I've seen as I've been a practitioner now for a little while, decade plus, is that if we define success incorrectly, it's going to impact everything.

So if success and building up the body, whether that's planning churches where there are none, helping churches grow in health, helping leaders be able to better equip their people, if we define that incorrectly, it's going to impact everything.

So there's a couple things just off the top of my mind that success is not. Success is not typically tied to numbers. Sometimes numbers are just a blessing from the Lord, his spirit blows, and we have revival, I'm praying for that for our nation, renewal, revival, right, reformation, but it's not always tied to how many baptisms, the size of our congregations, the amount of converts.

This is a big issue in missions because there are so many methods out there that push rapidity, that push pragmatism.

If you take some time learning about the history of American evangelicalism, pragmatism is so rife because of revivalism and the impact that the methods that people like Finney used to get numbers.

[35 : 26] So like he would have a hot seat to preach the gospel so that people, he could come over here and stare at them and condemn them of their sins and then have an altar call and of course they have to come up because everyone knows they're evil, wicked sinners, right?

So we're not going to manipulate the means through which we do ministry. We have to proclaim the gospel. We have to be in people's lives.

We have to pray. We have to seek the Lord and proclaim his word and let the Holy Spirit do what the Holy Spirit alone does. Second thing that success in building up the body is not, it's not just right doctrine because, or how much we know things, because we can believe all the right things about God and Christ, be able to explain the Trinity, which if you can, that's wonderful, even have our doctrine of the church or ecclesiology correct and not be building up the body.

We might just be stuck in an office reading and preparing to teach, but we never actually build the body. We don't even really know what that means, it's just kind of this vague thing that we have the Christian truisms, we're going to make followers who follow Jesus and help other followers, but we don't have a vision of how does the Lordship of Christ impact their family and their marriage and their children and their workplace and the church and this community.

No, we can believe the right things and miss what God is doing in the body. And if I'd be so bold to say it, sometimes the people who I think believe some of the wrong things end up being the ones who have really ministered to the body more than I ever have in my life.

[37 : 19] It's like, brother, I'd love to pull you aside, let's talk about this secondary issue and maybe don't say that. But I love your heart. I love your faithfulness in prayer.

I love your proclamation of the gospel. Yes, it's not that. God's purpose for the church is the purpose for our mission and that is making mature disciples who know the Lord, love one another, and then make other disciples.

And in chapter 3, Paul says that the manifold wisdom of God is displayed through the church. We're not God's plan B or C or D. This is God's plan A.

And what is maturity? Paul goes into it here and we're going to cover it quickly. But it's that we attain. We continue striving to attain to the unity that we talked about earlier, the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God.

It's not mere head knowledge, but it includes walking with the Lord, having our worldview shaped by the gospel and by Christ, and then living out in faithful obedience the things that we've been commanded to keep.

[38 : 32] It includes mature manhood or Christ likeness, that we wouldn't be immature, that we wouldn't be gullible or naive or credulous, but that we would be solid, that we would be standing and firm in our hope in the gospel.

And lastly, it's a measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. So day by day, sometimes it's up and down and it's all around, but we should be looking like Jesus Christ.

And this is essential when we talk about missions because one, as I said, we can be disqualified of being any help if we aren't growing in Christ ourselves.

But two, the need for the global community of believers is for mature, knowledgeable, humble, hardworking, cross-cultural workers.

Often you're dealing with first-generation Christians. I have so many stories, things you never expected. These two are living together, they come to faith, they both have spouses in their own home country, their new believers, how do we help them understand they're not actually married to each other, you know, here.

[39 : 43] Or we have a confer and he starts living, a follower of Jesus who starts living with a non-believer and they're not married. Or all sorts of things, right?

I could go on and on and on. It gets really, really messy. And we need a vision of what maturity is. we need to know what that looks like in our own context before we can apply that cross-culturally as well.

Finally, in this section about our mission, it's cool, in verse 16 it says that each part is needed. It's only when the whole body is held together by every joint with which it's equipped, when each part is working properly, that the body will grow and build itself up in love.

So you are needed. You might think, I have nothing to give to missions, to the global body, I'm barely making it, I have all these things stacked against me, I have physical needs that I can't even meet myself, I need help from others, I'm weak, my marriage is falling apart, or whatever it may be, I have no money, I don't know how to feed my own family, how will I bless others?

Brothers and sisters, when Highland Park is working properly, you as a whole will continue and even more so faithfully bless the global community.

[41 : 18] So you might think, oh, I don't have a role to play. You could have a really negative role to play in keeping the church from fulfilling his calling, or you can be somebody who blesses those around you.

You could pray, you could love others, you could become passionate about a country and learn all about it and share it with other people. There's so many ways in which you can build up the body here and be a part of building up the global body.

So we have one body, the church of Christ, and it's central to God's plan, one Lord, our victorious leader, Jesus Christ, and one mission. And that mission is advancement of the kingdom through the building up of the body.

So I just, I want to conclude by praying for you here. I'm grateful for the chance to share. And I love that whether I'm in Africa or Bartlesville, which is almost as foreign since I'm a true Portlander, kind of, not really.

My parents are Clevelanders. I don't have home. I'm kind of like the kid who's gone everywhere. That whether I'm in Central Asia or the Pagan Northwest, wherever I'm at, they're brothers and sisters, and I get to meet them and love them and pray for them.

[42 : 41] And I'm encouraged by your faith. I was so blessed this morning by the music. And so I want to pray that the Lord continues to bless you, that it's a cohesive whole as one body.

You might be able to faithfully pray for the nations. You might become more and more aware of what the Lord is doing globally, that you would care more about news about the church than news about politics as a congregation.

And that if the Lord calls anyone out, they would be equipped. They would be empowered. They'd be followed up on. So I'm so grateful. I pray the Lord will bless you and keep you, make his faith to shine upon you because you are brothers and sisters I care deeply about, and neighbors as well, which is awesome.

So let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this church. We thank you that you love each and every person here. And we thank you that we are a part of a greater whole, a greater body, and that there's not three bodies, ten bodies, a hundred bodies.

There's one body. And we're all members, and we all have a role to play. Lord, I pray that this church would be known by their love, that they would be known by the unity of the faith, the unity of the spirit, and the bond of peace.

[44 : 12] God, I pray that you would bless marriages, that you would bless households, you would bless small groups, you would bless this church, that they might be a light to the nations.

Lord, that they would hear about stories, that they could meet needs that are desperate. God, and that even in this community, as they proclaim the gospel at things like Sunfest, that the love, unity, the camaraderie that they have in Christ would be just such a beautiful picture to those around them.

God, we thank you that you died for us, your church. We thank you that we are your bride. Lord, we praise you. God, I pray for the leaders here.

May they faithfully equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Lord, we love you. We praise you for this morning. Lord Jesus, we praise you because you are victorious.

And Holy Spirit, we ask that you would come empower us to fulfill your mission, united and steadfast. Lord, loving you with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

[45 : 25] It's in your name, Lord Jesus, that we pray. Amen.