

The Church Is Not A Burger King

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 4 verses 1 through 6 is the text for this morning.

! We're only going to get through verse 3. As you know, since January we've gone through a series of sermons. First talking about the purpose of the church. What is the purpose of the church according to Scripture?

And then here over the past 4 or 5 weeks, what is the purpose of church membership? So today, we conclude on these series of sermons.

And so as you've noticed, a lot of the songs that we've sung this morning have a theme. Talking about how we're one to another in Christ. That collectively we are His church.

And how we interact with one another. How we treat one another. How we love one another is so important. Because we have an important mission that He's given us to do.

[1 : 09] The more that we are together, the more effective we will be for Him. So next Sunday, we'll go back to the Gospel of John and pick up in chapter 9 where we had left off.

I'm looking forward to that. But for right now, again, Ephesians chapter 4, excuse me, verses 1 through 6 is the text. If you don't have a Bible with you, there's a Bible in the pew that you can use. If you don't own a Bible, please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our congregation to you.

In hopes that you'll continue to read the Word of God. Would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together. Ephesians 4, verses 1 through 6. 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 in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were 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.

[2 : 19] May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? If you remember, some time ago, Burger King used to have a slogan and their slogan was, Have it your way.

You remember that? Have it your way. When I was in college, we had a strength and conditioning coach who was probably like 250 years old.

He was a little guy. I mean, seriously though. We were all, how old is this guy? He was short in stature, but he was mighty. And struck fear in all of our hearts.

No matter what size you were. He was a tough man. And so, he would have these signs all over the weight room. These slogans, these statements that he would constantly draw our attention to.

And one of those statements, signs that he had in our weight room said, This isn't Burger King. What he was saying, right?

[3 : 24] And when any of us messed up on anything that we were supposed to do, if our form or technique wasn't right, he would point to that sign and he would say, This isn't Burger King.

Meaning, when you become an athlete of this university, you obligate yourself to the standards of the school and those whom the school has employed to serve in roles of leadership over you, to instruct you.

And so, if you're going to be a part of this organization, if you're going to come into this weight room, you're going to do it Coach Cross's way. And if not, there's the door.

And sometimes he would kick people out. When a person joins an organization, they obligate themselves to live and act in accordance with the standards of the group, of the organization.

For example, American citizens, when they join the army, they take an oath and they obligate themselves to defend the Constitution against enemies, foreign and domestic.

When someone joins the police force, they also obligate themselves by saying that they are pledging, they are obligating themselves to protect and serve others.

[4 : 43] Athletes and coaches do the same thing, especially in the pros. When they sign a contract, often there is language in that contract that says, if you behave in such a way, or say things that are out of line with what we believe or represent as an organization, whether you do that on the field, whether you do that in social media, off the field, whatever the case may be, we can terminate your contract if we deem that your conduct or your words are detrimental to the organization.

Maybe even for you, at your work, surely there's some kind of a mission statement that says, this is what we're about, this is what we expect you to represent, and they may even have you sign something so that if you are not representing the organization correctly as they want you to, if you're not obligating yourself to them in the ways that they say that you should, then likewise they have the right to terminate you.

If you are going to be a part of an organization, there are going to be some kinds of standards, some kind of expectations that are involved with that, but if you are a customer of that organization, those same standards don't apply, right?

If you're an employee of the organization, standards apply. If you're a customer of the organization, no such standards apply to you. So long as you are spending your money, buying whatever product that they have for you to sell, and you're not stealing their stuff, you can have it your way.

And we like to have it our way, don't we? A pet peeve of mine is fast food drive-thrus. And what drives me crazy is people who are there at the drive-thru, you know, ordering at the speaker, and they're adding a bunch of stuff to their order, you know, like extra things.

[6 : 42] If you're at Taco, I want more extra tomatoes and extra sour cream and all this other stuff. Or they're doing the opposite. Take this off and take that off and take this off. And what drives me crazy is it's fast food.

It's supposed to be fast. And all of your additions or subtractions is slowing them down in the kitchen, and it's going to take longer for me to get my food. But, but, amen.

But you can have it your way. And the customer is right to be able to sit there at that window and add and subtract whatever they want because they're the customer and the customer can have it their way.

Unless I ever start my own fast food chain. Then it's going to be, it's what's on the menu. You pick it off if you don't like it. Or you add stuff to it at your own house. But there's a problem, and I'd be out of business soon, so I'll just stick with ministry.

But seriously, there is a problem in many of our churches today, and it's the problem of Christian consumerism. Christians who behave as customers in their church.

[7 : 58] In fact, we even use terminology sometimes that expresses this thought. When someone is looking for a church, what will they say? Often they'll say, I'm church shopping.

Like a consumer. But the Bible does not speak of Christians in relationship to the church in consumeristic ways.

But as we've talked about, it talks about members as being precisely that. Members. Part of the body of Christ. Who, as we've seen, are called by the Lord to submit themselves and devote themselves to their church.

When a Christian receives Christ as their Savior, they don't become a customer of His. They become a citizen of His kingdom, and He's the King.

Not us. And we become members of His family, and He's at the head of the table. Not us. That brings many and tremendous blessings and privileges for us, though.

[9 : 17] But it also brings obligations. The Lord expects that we act like new persons. The new people that He has created us to be.

That He has saved us. Taking us from death to light. We are a new creation. He expects us to act like that in Him. He expects His standards to become our standards.

He expects that His purposes will become our purposes. That His desires will become our desires.

That His nature will be our nature. The Christian life is simply becoming what you are in Christ.

More and more. And with that, God expects conformity within His church. The body of Christ. It's not a forced, legalistic conformity to external rules and regulations, but a willing, inner conformity to

holiness, to love, unity, and devotion.

Not pursuing things our way, but pursuing God's way. His will. For us. Paul reminded the Philippians, the Philippian believers, of this very thing when he told them in chapter 1, verse 27, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

[10:53] So here we're in Ephesians chapter 4. We're just kind of parachuting into the text. But we see in verse 1, it begins with a therefore, meaning that Paul is now making a transition from what he has said to what he's about to say.

The transition here moves the church from doctrine to duty, from principle to practice. In chapters 1 through 3, Paul has explained their positional unity that they have in Christ.

Whether they were a Jew or a Gentile, they are together, one in Christ. He says you are one new man. Christ has made one new man in place of two.

That you have both been reconciled to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing any kind of hostility that existed between you before. You are one in Christ. He's telling them that positionally, they are one.

That they are a new organization. That they are the church. That they are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

[12:07] And now, in chapter 4, he begins to explain to them what this positional truth entails. You are positionally one body.

You are positionally citizens of heaven. You are positionally heirs of Jesus Christ. And now, he tells them, and because that is who you are, this is how you should act.

This is how you should conduct yourself in the church. And so, Ephesians 4, 1 through 6, appeals to the church to become what they are.

To practice what they preach. To be committed to Christ. To be committed to one another. To be committed to his cause together.

And so, the main idea for this morning's sermon is this. The church consists of members, not consumers, who work together to achieve Christ's purposes, displaying Christ's character to one another as they advance the gospel together.

[13:16] The church consists of members, not customers, who work together to achieve Christ's purposes, displaying Christ's character to one another as they advance the gospel together.

About a year ago, I think it would have been, before COVID, I believe, in an elders meeting, we were talking about the concern that we had in our members and a lack of commitment.

And I praise God that here we are a year later and we're seeing an influx of commitment in our church. People who want to be here. People who want to be involved.

And that needs to continue. Because it's biblical. It's the way that it should be. We are not consumers. We are members of the body of Christ connected to one another in a supernatural way. As members of His body, the church, we then should strive to accomplish at least two things according to this text. First of all, church members should strive to achieve Christ's purposes.

[14:27] We should strive to achieve Christ's purposes together. Look at verse 1 again. I therefore, Paul says, a prisoner for the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

And so here, right off the bat in chapter 4, Paul reminds them that he is a prisoner. Literally, he is in chains. They were evidence of his commitment to achieving Christ's purposes with his life.

He wasn't lounging around in some ivory tower being fanned by other servants, you know, giving directives to the church. I think you should do this. No, he is in prison.

He is a prisoner of Christ. But he didn't see himself as a prisoner of the state. He saw and he understood that his chains were a result of his motives being Christ's motives.

of his obligating himself to Christ's standards, not seeking to have it his way. Everything he thought, everything he planned, said, and did was in relation to Jesus Christ.

[15:42] He was Christ-centered. He was a captive of Christ. Jesus had him totally and completely. So again, Paul saw everything in relation to his Savior.

Fulfilling his call for the betterment of his church. No matter what the personal cost might be. And that is very different.

Tragically different from a lot of what we see in the church today. Isn't it frustrating to be a part of an organization when someone in that organization is always looking out for themselves?

Think of something that has been happening more so in college football is the season is over. The statisticians have gotten together and say, hey, these guys are going to go in the top ten first round. And what happens is a lot of time one of those players, their team is in a bowl game. Post-season bowl game. They've been working hard to get to this point. And what that player does is say, I'm not going to play.

[16:56] I'm not going to play with you guys because I don't want to get hurt. Got to look out for number one. Got to get drafted. Got to sign that contract. I played with a guy.

He was another pitcher. And we noticed that the only time he rooted for the team was when he was pitching. If he wasn't pitching, he was back in the dugout, you know, joking around with somebody else.

And eventually you see that. And eventually you realize that, you know what, this person cares more about their stats, cares more about their recognition than they do for the team.

And it's frustrating to be a part of an organization with somebody like that, isn't it? And if we have those kinds of attitudes in the church where we're always looking out for ourselves primarily, we're not going to have the kind of attitudes that we need to have in the church.

We won't be achieving Christ's purposes. And so that's why Paul is urging this church to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which they have been called. Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

[18:06] That made me think of John the Baptist. Remember John the Baptist? He's prepared the way for the Lord. He's got his own set of disciples who are helping him do that task.

And one day, Jesus is on the scene and Jesus and his disciples are baptizing more than John and his disciples were. And so John's disciples come to him and they're concerned, hey, we've got some competition here.

They're baptizing more than we are baptizing. And what does John say to them? He, Christ, must increase and I must decrease.

That's the attitude of someone who is walking in a way that is worthy of their calling. It's not about me. I'm not in competition with Christ. How crazy is that?

I live and I serve him. That he may increase in my life. At the decreasing of myself. So Paul says here that you are to walk in this worthy manner.

[19:13] Walk is a word frequently used in the New Testament to describe a person's daily conduct, to describe their daily life. So he's talking about how you live every day. And he says you are to walk worthy.

Worthy in the Greek that's *axios*. And it has the root meaning of balancing the scales. It was used to describe corresponding proportions. If you work this hard, you should get paid in a way that corresponds to that, right?

It should balance. The scales should balance. And so Paul is saying the believer who walks in a manner worthy of their calling is one whose daily conduct corresponds to the great position that they have in Christ as a part of his body.

As a child of God. As a fellow heir with him. It shouldn't be a situation where what you are isn't balanced with the way that you live.

So how do you strive to achieve Christ's purposes by living a life that corresponds to your spiritual position? I think we need to look at Matthew 22. I think the Lord lays down some pretty basic things for us to understand here.

[20:28] Matthew 22, verse 36 through 40. Someone came to Jesus and asked him, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? The greatest commandment in the law. And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might.

This is the great and first commandment. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and prophets.

He's saying everything really boils down to these two things. And so we understand to live in a manner worthy of our calling means that we always put the Lord first and we put others second.

And I think you can be sure that you are on the path to achieving Christ's purpose for your life and for our church when you are doing, when we are doing those two things.

Putting God first and thinking about others second. But thinking this way and living this way wouldn't be possible without God's first having called us.

[21 : 44] Which Paul draws their attention to. The calling that he refers to there in verse 1 refers to their being called to salvation which he's already talked about in chapter 1 verses 4 through 5.

There Paul says to this church even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will.

So we've got to understand that we can't do this without God's first having called us. Without God's having first chosen us. Because we'd never choose him.

Without him calling us we'd never put him first. We'd never put others second unless we stood to gain something from doing so. Even if it was just we felt good about ourselves for our day because we think we're such a good person because we helped somebody out.

We'd never seek him. We'd never seek to achieve his purposes with our life without his first seeking us and saving us. And this is the marvelous truth about the gospel.

[22 : 49] It's not only that God the Father sent his son to provide the way for our salvation but he sent his son to seek and to save the lost who didn't know where they were going.

Who didn't know what they were doing and he came and he saved the lost. Without Christ saving us our lives would be without hope. And knowing this knowing that Christ has come to save you and has found you and has saved you should change your life shouldn't it?

Completely change your life. The more you read through scripture and the more you see this same theme popping up over and over again.

I am so unworthy that God has saved me yet I have so much value to him because Christ his son was willing to come and seek and save me and die on the cross for my sins in my place.

And the more you read that and the more you see that the more it just changes you doesn't it? I have had conversations with people who say well God has chosen you you must feel special and I say absolutely not.

[24 : 04] I feel totally unworthy because I know what my sin has done and I know the payment and the just payment for it and I know that Christ has willingly died in my place for my sins and I am totally unworthy.

And it gives me all the more reason to worship my Savior who has given me hope now and forever. Why wouldn't I want to live my life completely for him?

Why wouldn't you? Paul turns from this point in this verse to focus on the life to which believers are called to live.

You've been called. You've been saved. Now here's how you should pursue that calling. These are the attitudes he says that should characterize you and your church and every member.

So secondly church members should strive to demonstrate Christ's character. Strive to demonstrate Christ's character. So in these verses Paul tells us how the church and its members should demonstrate the characteristics of Christ to one another.

[25 : 13] And that first characteristic that Paul mentions is humility. Humility. At the beginning of verse 2 he says with all humility. Of all of these characteristics that we are going to see that Paul has said humility is listed first and it's not listed there first by accident because it's foundational to all of the other characteristics that he will share.

If church members do not possess this characteristic of Christ they will not demonstrate the other characteristics of Christ. Humility is a compound word that literally means to think or judge with lowliness.

So when applied to oneself it means to think of yourself lowly. Now that does not mean that you should think less of yourself but that you should think of yourself less.

There's a difference. And we know from our Lord's example that he demonstrated humility perfectly for us didn't he?

Again in Philippians 2 3-8 Paul speaks to this very thing. This church they have some conflict. They have some issues. They're not being united like they should and so what does he do?

[26 : 36] He points them to Christ as the example and his humility and he does that right here. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. How can you do that? Well have this mind among yourselves which is yours. You have it in Christ who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself if that wasn't enough he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

Christ was humble and his people must be humble too. we must display that characteristic ourselves into one another. If we don't we could be in danger of displaying a characteristic that is the opposite of humility which is what?

Pride. Pride. Which was really the first sin recorded in Scripture. Adam and Eve trusted in their own understanding being tempted and deceived by Satan but in pride they believed that they knew more than God and they fell in all of us with them.

Isaiah 14 12-15 depicts the coming destruction of the nation of Babylon and its prideful king. Many traditionally have seen this passage as referring and corresponding not just to that situation but to Satan and his fall from heaven.

[28 : 23] Let's read that. Isaiah 14 12-15 How you are fallen from heaven O day star son of dawn How you are cut down to the ground You who laid the nations low You said in my heart I will ascend to heaven and above the stars of God I will set my throne on high I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north I will ascend above the heights of the clouds I will make myself like the most high but you are brought down to Sheol to the far reaches of the pit The point that I hope to make here is that an I will attitude is nothing like a Christ's will attitude I will or my will attitude does not demonstrate Christ's likeness so what does it demonstrate?

Satan and his attitude I mean if you really think about it and this sounds pretty heavy but an I will or a my will attitude has its roots in Satan the father of lies the great enemy of God and man it's a satanic attitude pride is at the heart of who he is it's at the heart of how he tempts us to disobey God but we must strive instead as Paul has told this church as he's telling us urging us to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord be humble do not be prideful be humble towards one another and unbelievers heard this amazing story about the days of slavery in the West Indies and there was a group of Moravian Christians who found it impossible to witness to the slaves because the slaves were totally separated from the rest of society can't even talk to them couldn't be seen with them they were so busy in their labors and they were believed to be so beneath everyone else that they weren't allowed to be a part of the rest of society and there are two of these missionaries two of these men realized that we're struggling to be able to share the gospel with them but we want to do that and they were determined to reach these slaves at any cost and so they became slaves they sold themselves into slavery so that they could live amongst these people shoulder to shoulder with them working and living right by their side becoming totally like them by being humble enough to identify with them sharing in their arduous work sharing in their beatings in their abuse and those two men were led by God to bring many of those slaves to faith in Jesus

Christ why well they demonstrated Christ's humility in a faithful way they practiced what they preached they were living lives worthy of their calling and God used them in a powerful way and if you think about it a person cannot become a Christian without humility without recognizing that they are a sinner worthy of God's just wrath and realizing their helpless situation their total need for Christ to save them church members must demonstrate the humble character of Christ if they are ever going to be used as they can be to advance the gospel together but if we are more concerned with ourselves we've got to understand that that characteristic that attitude does not demonstrate Christ but Satan and so I challenge you as you come to church

I know I've said this before and it was convicting for me as you come to church whether it be Sunday morning Sunday evening Monday Wednesday whenever how often are your thoughts in the car about you what you're going to do who you might see who you might want to avoid for being honest who you know just anything you know I hope that we sing some songs today that I like I hope that Mike Sermon isn't boring whatever the case may be but how often do we go into church thinking oh you know I know that I know that that brother lost his job this week I know that that sister just came out of surgery a couple weeks ago I wonder how she's doing or just you know hey I haven't talked to such and such in a while I'm going to make it a point to go seek them out and find them how often do we come to church with other people on our mind how often do we come to church with the Lord on our mind I'm about to go worship my Savior with my church humble attitude

will get us there a second characteristic is gentleness gentleness how should we as a church conduct ourselves in ways that communicate

[34 : 00] Christ to one another well we must be gentle as he was gentle humility always produces gentleness or meekness meekness does not mean weakness but power that is under control a meek person is a self controlled person never acting vindictive never feeling like they've got to be self defensive towards others there's power but it's under control we see this in one example in our Lord's life in Matthew 26 35 when the soldiers came to arrest him in the garden of Gethsemane before he was to be crucified and you remember what Peter did Peter drew his sword and he was ready to start hacking off limbs in fact he did he cut off a guy's ear and what did Jesus say to him oh thank you Peter man I didn't know how I was going to get out of here I'm going to fall behind your back and you just keep hacking away and we'll get out of here no he said to him do you think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once put at my his power was always under control even in his humanity

Jesus had access to infinite divine power but obeying his father's will was his aim always and his power was always controlled in such a way to achieve that great purpose if church members are quick to be angry quick to lash out at one another maybe quick to use our position whatever it may be in the church to exercise power over another person that doesn't characterize Christ being easily offended and angry are not fruits of the spirit amen but gentleness!

gentleness is proverbs 16 32 whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty in he who rules his spirit more than he who takes the city and again we cannot be gentle unless we have been saved by Christ and he truly rules in our hearts third characteristic that we must display to one another as a characteristic of our Lord is patience with patience long suffering is another way to translate this word the patient believer accepts God's plan for everything without questioning him or grumbling against him they do not complain when their calling seems less glamorous than someone else's they remember that Christ has left his heavenly home and his glorious place to come to earth and to be hated to be rejected to be spat upon to be beaten to be crucified without returning evil for evil and so we understand here

I hope you see we should be patient and listen a church our size has a lot of different personalities within it and it can be hard to be patient with one another can't it nobody hollered amen on that one that's good but we understand that Christ has been patient with us man I've been saved but I continue to struggle and sin but Christ has continually been patient with me and so we must continually be patient with others making an effort to understand even the motivations behind their personality what has happened in your life caring to know so that you can be used to help and being patient fourth characteristic that we must demonstrate to one another that characterized our Lord is love Paul says bearing with one another in love in the Greek there are three words used for to describe different kinds of love there is eros which describes romantic love or lustful love it's essentially self love because it cares for others only because of what they can get from them physically there's philia love which is primarily a brotherly kind of love a reciprocal kind of love I love but I'm expecting to be loved in return and then there's agape love which is what Paul is saying here agape love is unqualified love it's unselfish love it's love that gives whether or not love will be received in turn it's love that is oftentimes unconditional it's the kind of love that our Lord told us to have not just towards other believers but towards our enemies peace and for those who persecute us church must be marked by love and then fifthly unity

[39 : 25] Paul says in all of these things you must be displaying them and eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace Paul's not speaking of organizational unity but inner unity by which every church member is bound to everyone else in the church in Christ when church members demonstrate humility when they demonstrate gentleness and patience and love you know what will result unity will result we won't really have to work for it if we're doing all these other things we will be united together but if we don't display these things then we'll be a Burger King church a have it your way church but a Christ centered church that will not only strive to achieve his purposes but will achieve his purposes when they demonstrate his character to one another and when we do that there will be great results and I want to look at

John 17 20-23 here our Lord knows his time to be crucified is soon and he's gathered with his disciples and he prays to the father and this chapter is amazing I want to highlight this prayer here and part of this prayer in verses 20-23 listen to what our Lord prayed for you and I he looks into the future he looks into the church and this is what his request is I do not ask for these only but also for

those who will believe in me through their word that they may all be one just as you father are in me and I in you that they also may be in us here's the results of our unity so that the world may believe that you have sent me the glory that you have given me I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one I in them you in me that they may become perfectly one here's the result so that the world will know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me if we demonstrate the characteristics of Christ to one another if we're united as Christ has called us to be the world can't help but notice and they will and they'll see that we are one and they'll look around they'll turn on the news they'll go to their work they'll look at their neighbors look at their family and they'll realize I don't have that why do they have it and they'll see we pray it's not because of who we are it's because of who Christ is he has come he has died he has taken our place he has risen from the dead he has ascended into heaven we look forward to his soon return and if he doesn't come we die we're going to be with him to live as Christ to die is gain and I love all these people who you know they're different than me they don't look like me we don't have a lot of things in common all of us but I love them because Christ loves them and he's loved me you know in a church times of transition times of change times of growth can test our ability to demonstrate these characteristics to one another and if we're honest sometimes it can create moments of tension growing pains remember when you're growing middle school and your joints would always hurt and you'd wake up and you're old it's not growing pains you're going down the other way

I guess just pain pain but we'll experience growing pains and we are and it's good but the one thing that we've got to make sure that we do and we're conscious of every single one of us is that we're striving together not against one another we're striving together intentionally coming together intentionally working together to pursue Christ's purposes and to demonstrate Christ's character and by his will I trust that we will conversation I had a conversation with Eric after Eric Hare after youth group on Wednesday and you know we were kind of talking about he asked me what was the sermon going to be on Sunday and I told him and he said well has anybody come up to you and said anything about how one of these sermons has really helped them and I said no but but I told him but you know what even though that hasn't really happened what I've seen is I've seen a change I've seen as I talked about a year ago we were struggling to find people to commit to different things within this church and now all of a sudden we have an influx of people wanting to commit we've got 75 people who have signed up to participate in a new thing a change these community groups and so many other things people are wanting to be involved in their church and I thank the Lord for that but we've got to continue to strive together because we can do more and the Lord I believe wants us to do more not for our glory but for his I want to read three application questions and I do have something to show you at the end first of all we'll talk about these tonight encourage you to think about them today and even this week how should a Christian salvation change the way they think about themselves and members of their church how should a Christian salvation change the way they think about themselves and members of their church second which of the characteristics listed in verses 2 through 3 do you struggle the most with demonstrating because listen we're all struggling let's be honest

[45 : 54] I don't think any of us is getting an A plus in this area which one do you struggle with the most and how will you seek God's help to change that and then third how do church members best demonstrate humility gentleness patience love and unity to one another and I would even challenge you this week be praying about and be thinking about how you can demonstrate all of these characteristics to somebody in your church this week Annie Armstrong wrote 18,000 letters maybe you can get going on that this week I do want to conclude by showing you a church covenant this is a draft this is still a work in progress something that we hope to present to you at our next business meeting in April to be adapted into our bylaws we're not asking anybody to sign anything but we want to make it clear to everyone who's a part of

Highland Park Baptist Church that we understand from scripture that there are expectations of what a church member should be and we are going to hold one another accountable and responsible to upholding all of these expectations that scripture has for us as members so on the back of your notes you have an example there if you want to follow along I just want to read it having as we trust been led by the spirit of God to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior and having been baptized upon our profession of faith in the name of the father and the son and the holy spirit we do now relying on his gracious aid solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ we will pray and strive to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace we

will encourage one another to pursue Christ and demonstrate his likeness we will exercise affectionate care and watchfulness over each other faithfully reproving one another in love as occasion may require we will pray for one another and seek each other's well-being rejoicing in each other's happiness and endeavoring with tenderness and sympathy to bear one another's burdens we will commit to regularly assembling together for worship we will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church as we sustain its worship ordinances discipline discipleship and doctrines we will cheerfully contribute our time talents spiritual gifts and finances to the support of the ministry and the expenses of the church to advance the gospel where we live and to the nations we will seek by divine aid to live carefully in the world denying ungodliness and worldly lusts countering what is false with what is true striving to become the salt of the earth and a city on a hill that testifies to the truth and reality of the gospel by which we have been saved we will submit to the inerrancy of the bible acknowledging it as the final authority on all issues to pursue righteousness by god's grace through the power of the holy spirit and obeying its instruction encouraging one another to do the same may the grace of our lord jesus christ and the love of god and the fellowship of the holy spirit forever mark the fellowship of highland park baptist church amen if you have questions about this i'd like to hear your feedback me or the elders but we're moving towards making it more clear what it means to be a member of this church it's a high calling it's a great calling we've got to be together we've got to be acting like christ pursuing christ's will and as we do the gospel will advance amen let's pray heavenly father we pray that we would demonstrate all of these characteristics all of these attitudes to one another father you have set the perfect example for us you have saved us from our sins you have given us your spirit making it possible for us to live in this way god we need your help lord we pray that you would be working to convict our hearts when we are wanting to pursue things our way whenever we're not thinking primarily about you we're not thinking about our neighbors father we pray that you would gently in the way that you do remind us that we are a part of a greater calling and that together lord we would strive that we would work to accomplish your purpose that in highland park baptist church lord even more so than we do now we would demonstrate more greatly these characteristics these attitudes towards one another and to the nations lord our prayer is that we would be a church that you use to advance the good news of Jesus Christ where we live and beyond and we pray that all of it would bring pleasure to you that you would be pleased by what you see here we love you and we ask these things in Jesus name