

# Ephesians 4:1-16

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Almighty and most So we continue then our progress through the letter to the Ephesians we come then in this chapter 4 to Paul just taking this overview briefly of the first half where we see his emphasis on the need in the body for unity and humble interdependency that's what he's talking about humble interdependency each fulfilling their own role and valuing the role of each other and thus strengthening and rooting and anchoring the body against being blown off course as we see in verse 13 so that we come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the faith of God a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of God that we be no more children carried about with every wind of doctrine but a slate of men and cunning craftiness not being blown off course not being turned aside out of the way but rather because we strengthen one another and if that is what we're enabled to do by grace then the body is rooted and anchored and built up and made stronger and kept on its course because of that which each joint supplied so then we say

I therefore the prisoner of the Lord this issue that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called vocation literally meaning calling the prisoner now this is used here by Paul not as something to elicit you know people feeling sorry for him or pity and therefore hoping that they'll comply because they feel sorry for him out of pity for his situation but rather it's clearly used here almost as a title I therefore the prisoner of the Lord this issue that you walk worthy of the vocation a title which confers in Paul's mind you know certainly one confiding honour and therefore greater authority he's saying listen I am the prisoner of the Lord not only is that possible but the prisoner of the Lord you know this enhances his authority that all that he has endured that he is sort of blazing a trail for them he is the one calling them not to go out and do something that he's not doing himself but rather to follow where he himself was led so what if it's taken him to prison he says

I am the prisoner of the Lord but that if anything confers greater moral authority on that which he is saying so it's almost like a title I was going to say of which he is proud but pride of course would be the opposite of what this chapter is about but that which he takes as a badge of honour the prisoner of the Lord they seek you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called now then he goes on to the main subject of this first half of the chapter which is the need for lowliness and meekness with long suffering the fruit of the spirit of course you might say it's what he writes in the Galatians of course in chapter 5 fruit of the spirit love, joy, peace long suffering gentleness, goodness faith meekness temperance all lowliness and meekness with long suffering forbearing one another in love and this is what is required if they are going to live out the gospel witness here if we see what he writes to the Romans for example in chapter 12

I say through the grace given unto me verse 3 of Romans 12 to every man that is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith for as we have many members in one body it's the same theme there again and all members have not the same office so we being many are one body in Christ and every one members of another in other words each one fits in a sense into the other so we being many are one body in Christ every one members one of another having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us and then he goes on whether prophecy let us prophesy according to poetry or ministry or exhortation or whatever but the point is he's saying it's about gifts it's about grace it's not about attainments if you've been given different tasks or called to different places or positions or parts of the body or in the church of Jesus Christ then you're not where you are because of lack of attainments it's grace it's gifts it's where the Lord is it this is what I need you to be for now this is the part of the fort that I need you to hold it's like the Lord has commissioned especially there if you if you say you're a part of a there was a royal procession somewhere and you're the policeman on duty in London or Edinburgh or wherever it would be and you've got your place at the crash barriers and you might think well my little bit of the route isn't very important

here's the crowds pressing here but really I'd like to be in the main big plaza where everybody's going to see the carriages coming round and there'll be all the cameras there that would be the place I want to be but it is vital that each part of the route be guarded and kept and preserved and safety if all the policemen or the safety officers simply say well let's not bother let's go off and have a key break you know and just leave the crowds to overflow the barriers or run all over the road and then the horses stampede and the carriages get overturned and so on and all these disasters happen because people didn't keep and observe the place the office the position that they were given by their superiors now our superior is Christ and he places us in different places he gives us particular functions or paths or duties in the church of Christ and it's not about attainments that's what Paul was writing to the Romans so even having gifts according to the grace not attainments not because you're so great or you're so clever or because you haven't got these gifts or because you're not as good as the other guy that gifts according to the grace that has given us whether prophecy or ministry or exhortation or love or whatever it may be recognize that where we are is a vital part of the body and you're here for a reason and you've been given a particular task of duty for a reason and for a time and the Lord needs that to be fulfilled there it's vital in his scheme and his plan of salvation that each one of his children fulfill the place in the body that he gives to them and we think oh no

I'm not very important I don't really matter yes you do oh I don't have any gifts yes you do the Lord does bless each one gives he does equip that's the truth of his word otherwise we may say well God's a liar God hasn't given us anything that we can do that even that which may seem the most humble may seem the most insignificant it is vital that it be done you know you could name any number of jobs in our ordinary scheme of things you know whether we might think well pretty low down the socio-economic spectrum what about the people who empty the bins or empty the septic tanks or whatever we don't think that's a very glamorous job or a vitally important one up the big financial and economic scheme of things but supposing these people were not faithfully fulfilling their jobs then where would we be as communities and as societies it is vital that each task and duty be done in a community in a society and so it is in a body if any one of your organs stops functioning you soon feel it you soon notice it you have all been in the situation

[ 7 : 59 ] I'm sure where perhaps you skin a wee bit of your finger or you get you get a scalp or something or you burn the end of a finger and think well it's only one finger I've got ten fingers it's okay but then you how many times do you bash that finger or knock it against something or need it to put your hand in a glove or to pick something up and you never realise how much that little individual finger was being used it was a vital part of everything you did every day until there was something wrong with it until there was some shooting pain through it or some little injury to it and it couldn't function as it always did so it's only sometimes when things go wrong that we realise just how vital each seemingly insignificant part of the body may be that's not the excuse to make sure things go wrong so we get a bit notice of whatever but it does indicate to us just how vital each part is the commentator

Matthew Henry writes this he says the first step towards unity is humility without this there will be no meekness no patience or forbearance and without these no unity pride and passion break the peace and make all mischief humility and meekness restore the peace and keep it humility and grace and meekness restore the peace and keep it Proverbs 13 we read it verse 10 only by pride cometh contention but with the well advised is wisdom pride and self seeking and self assertion that is which does damage it damages other people because we can only climb to the top as it were of the dunghill by treading on others as we do it the Lord doesn't want us to live in a dunghill the Lord wants us to grow up into the fullness of manhood and womanhood and belonging to the one body of Christ and each fulfilling the part that he has given us to do but we won't do that if we're either copping at each other or finding fault with other Christians or saying well I'm better than him or I should be farther up the line than him this need for humility the first step towards unity is humility Matthew Innocent without this there will be no meekness no patience or forbearance and without these no unity therefore it is with all lowliness and meekness with long suffering forbearing one another in love endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace we are called to this unity called to this peace that's what the Lord desires of us where the devil gets in he wants division where the Lord comes in he brings peace Colossians 3 verse 14 we read above all these things put on charity love which is the bond of perfectness and let the peace of God rule the senses there is like an umpire ordering a match a rule in your hearts to the which also you are called in one body

and be thankful a sense of God directing as it were the traffic of our lives ruling like the umpire or the referee in a game that when we are inclined to infringe that which he is commanded he will as it were blow the whistle and call us back again to the truth of his word we are kept by the love and supervision of Christ there is endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace there is one body and one spirit even as you are called in one hope of your calling one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all now we should notice here again that this kind of trinity the scriptural trinity of faith hope and love being mentioned again here we see for example verse 2 and it says forbearing one another in love above all these things the greatest of these is charity and then again in verse 4 one body one spirit called one hope of your calling and then verse 5 one Lord one faith one baptism here they come in verse after verse after verse love hope faith and so on and now abideth as he said to the

Corinthians the greatest of these is love love will be the bond that unites all the others together there is one body and one spirit well actually you know there's lots of different denominations there's not exactly one body yes but denominations are not different bodies if it is the one Lord Jesus Christ that we are serving then it is one body with different parts to it and yes of course you might get you might get different ones that believe substantially the same thing I've got a right hand and I've got a left hand they look very much substantially the same but they are distinct from each other and so likewise there are denominations that may seem as if they almost believe almost exactly the same thing why is there two of them there will be two of them for a reason in God's providence there will have been some issue maybe that divided them long ago maybe it doesn't divide them now but the point is they are both there and each one will be there reaching some individual soul who we must take in God's providence might not otherwise have been reached had not that particular congregation that particular branch of the church been right there where it was in their lives to reach them at that point in time in a previous congregation

I was in I remember when it came to its centenary and the small congregation didn't have lots of huge numbers of members coming every year at comedians or whatever being converted but over the years there had been a little trickle of souls and I went back over the Kirk Session records and added it up and worked out that from the congregation coming into being in 1900 until its actual centenary in 2000 obviously then there had been approximately a hundred souls had professed faith whether or not they'd gone on with the Lord but they'd come forward they'd professed their faith and we must assume that at least some of them had gone on with the Lord all the way through to a blessed eternity and these are souls that might not have been reached if that congregation hadn't been there maybe some would have gone in with a neighbouring denomination maybe some would have worshipped elsewhere but we have to take it in the Lord's providence that where that particular church was where that particular congregation was and those affiliated with it and those who even loosely belonged to it were drawn to Christ through that particular grace and that particular body of people and these 100 souls over the course of 100 years a small modest average of one a year but still each one precious in the sight of the

[ 15 : 27 ] Lord who knows what it is that all these different little branches and congregations and gatherings of the Lord's people are doing in all the places where they are who knows how many individual precious souls have been gathered in this particular net or that particular net or caught as it were with the angle or the fishing rod as it were of some fishing for men somewhere or other who have been brought in by that means who might not humanly speaking have been brought in at all so although we say yeah there's lots of different branches and denominations sure yes but there is at the end of the day one body and one spirit even as you're called in one hope of your calling now just by way of looking at it from the other side you have to recognize that as far as the devil is concerned there is only one body if the devil attacks the lord's people then he's not going to say well actually these ones are episcopalians so I'll leave these ones alone but I'll go after the presbyterians

I don't like baptists today but I'm going to have a go at congregationalists or whatever he's not concerned with that it is Christians of whatever background or denomination or particular church body that they belong to you will find that all over the world where the lord's people are persecuted the devil does not stop and ask which denomination you belong to oh well it's ok I'll leave you alone if it's that one one body and he hates that body because that body is of Christ why does he hate that body because the one spirit dwells within the one body where there is the body there needs must be the spirit one body one spirit even as you're called in one hope of your calling remember what

James says chapter 2 verse 26 of James he says as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without words is dead now usually we might look at that verse or that passage in James to think in terms of the relationship between faith and works but I'd like us to recognise what James says about the body and the spirit if the body is not indwelt by the spirit then the body is a mere corpse it is dead and I'm sure we have all at times at some point or other sat in a service of a church that we could tell was pretty much dead because the spirit of Christ was not there and maybe Christ himself was not being honoured in it but the body without the spirit is dead therefore where the Lord's people are if the spirit of Christ is there there the body of Christ will be and where the body gathers together wherever two or three are gathered together in my name

Jesus said there he will be in the midst of them he won't be there with his physical body he hasn't put his physical body down here on earth anymore that's in glory from whence he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead but it is by his spirit that he shall be amongst his people even where they gather by two or three together the spirit of Christ dwelling with them he said to his disciples it is expedient for you that I go away if I go not away the comforter will not come to you but if he comes to you then he the spirit will dwell with you where the spirit of the Lord's people is in amongst the Lord's people and is a living body where the spirit is absent however many people may be gathered all you've got is a corpse it is dead as the body without the spirit is dead James said so faith without works is dead so there's one body one spirit even as you're called one hope you're called one Lord one faith one baptism it is one faith in Christ in which we trust and the implication here is not so much it's not so much oh yes we all believe the same thing we all sign up for the same confession of faith it's more the sense of it here in verse 5 is of putting our trust in that one Lord one faith one placing of our trust it's one commitment to him in faith and one baptism now of course that becomes a slightly contentious verse when you think in terms of our Baptist brethren and so on who might baptize people more than once because they will say their first time wouldn't have counted but you know that's their particular view on a particular sacrament we shouldn't get sidetracked or criticize those who differ from us but at the end of the day baptism with water in the name of the Holy Trinity where there's faith that is what we must take as genuine we'll leave others and disagree in love with them but one Lord one faith one baptism at the end of the day it's not really talking about how many times you do it it's really talking about in whom this one baptism is and this baptism is in Christ it is in the name of the Holy Trinity it is in the Spirit one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all now obviously he is in and through all that he has created and we're going to say oh well the Lord dwells in absolutely everyone even if they're lost even if they're even if they're going to hell

God dwells in them and so on it's not in that sense it is in you all he is writing Paul is writing to the Ephesians he is writing to Christians the Lord certainly dwells by his Spirit in the heart of each and every one who belongs to them certainly he has made all things he is above all things he is in and through all that he has created and he dwells especially in the hearts of his people but unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ back again to what we refer to in Romans remember it is according to the gifts and the grace that we have been given the more lowly mindedness we have going back to remember what Matthew Henry said about humility the more lowly mindedness we have the more like mindedness we cannot walk worthy of our vocation if we have not meekness and lowliness of heart for he by whom we are called and to whom we are called has commanded us to learn it from him and that's a reference to of course

Matthew 11 where Jesus says come up to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls we are to learn of Christ to take his yoke take his cross upon us and learn of him why because he is meek and he is lowly of heart and if we are to learn from him then what we need must be learning is meekness and loneliness of heart he says this burden is not heavy to bear my yoke is easy my burden is light but you've got to take it you've got to take it no matter how weary and heavy laden you may be take up this yoke that you fear will be heavy but you find will be light if it is born of loneliness and meekness you see as others have said you might survive rumours and walks amongst you again

[ 23 : 17 ] I think that's James again it's usually from pride it's usually from a desire I want to be better than him I want to climb up higher I want to show to the world how good and strong I am it's pride it's the vanity of man that brings in this strife that brings in this desire always to do better we're all susceptible to it perhaps men more than others and I just think of myself for example on any kind on a car journey don't you have it where you start overtaking and the other guy speeds up and

you're not going to let him do that and you ride up a bit more and he speeds up a bit more and then there's another car coming the other way so you're going to quickly get in or else falling behind him and then you're just raging because why didn't he let you go past but he wasn't going to let you go past it's a little thing it's a small little thing we think oh that does not affect your spiritual condition but it can if you're wound up by this thing it doesn't matter this car you encounter on the road and it's there for a few seconds and if you end up overtaking and he turns on it's gone in a few minutes it wouldn't matter but the devil can use it to wind you up and to get you really riled and to get you really angry and to eat into your peace of mind

I just take that as one instance we can have it whatever the instance may be it may be something somebody says on a phone call or somebody makes a comment you take the wrong way if we are determined to be prickly if we are determined to be to take offense then it is our pride or our vanity that we are nurturing rather than loneliness of heart rather than meekness that says oh well I'm sure they meant it well I'm sure they didn't mean nothing by it well I'm sure he's got his journey to make just like I it doesn't he's going to turn off in a minute just let it go and he can do that it's easy to say that now in the pulpit it's not always easy to say that when the road I don't realize that but it is the truth of what we need to recognize that Christ needs to permeate every aspect of our lives and where that doesn't happen it's because personal pride and ambition gets in this unity and the bond of peace that we need is because although we are individually weak when we are bound together in the spirit of Christ we become stronger that sounds like just a sort of you know a trite little phrase just a sort of platitude but if you think about it there was in the days of the Roman

Empire which Paul was writing there was a symbol of Roman military strength which was a bundle of sticks bound together with a chain to symbolize that whereas one twig might be easily snapped if you bind them together into one big thick binding then that can't be broken and it can't be destroyed now this was a Roman military symbol more controversially of course it was taken over in the 1920s by the party of Benito Mussolini in Italy and the bundle of sticks thus bound together was known as a fascist and this from this we get the name of his party the fascisti which is what we get the name fascists from and it's because originally this was the symbol of their strength that individual sticks like with the ancient Romans individual sticks might be broken or easily bent or whatever but bind them together in one and then they can't be broken because there's unity and there is strength bound together however diverse the twigs might be like the different thicknesses different shapes different bits sticking out of them whatever bind them together and nobody can break them nobody can destroy them now as I say that's a slightly sort of controversial political example maybe not helpful let's think of one that's less controversial although again it probably dates me a bit telephone directory anybody knows you over a telephone directory the pages are so so thin and you try and tear one of those pages it's easy you can tear no bother at all but you try and tear the whole telephone directory and it's not so easy to tear now of course nowadays youngsters they don't know what the telephone directory is or use it they've got apps they've got things they download it's all done on their handheld phones and so on so let's think of something else even of the bible it's in front of you bibles traditionally have extremely thin pages the paper one of a bible pages is very very thin and yet strong okay you could tear it without any difficulty it could be bent it could be dog-eared but you then fold it together even if you were to take the binding cover off the front try and tear a whole bible

I'm not suggesting you do it but I mean if you were to try and tear a whole bible you wouldn't be able to do it because it's so thick the individual pages though so slender are bound together so many of them in such strength that it cannot be destroyed that way thin paper thick book thick strength and this is what we have when we're united together unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ wherefore he said when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men now this is a reference to psalm 68 verse 18 of course where it says thou hast ascended on high thou hast led captivity captive thou hast received gifts for men now when it talks about receiving the gifts and distributing the gifts and so on when it says he gave gifts unto men and it says he received gifts for men the one is not excluding of the other the sense the illustration being used here is of an ancient triumph of a victorious general if he was coming in his chariot through the city and he was leading captivity captive the captives that he had would be part of his procession the chief kings or princes or leading generals of his defeated enemy who once had oppressed them but now are being led in chains as part of a procession it is leading captivity captive it is the victory procession showing the victory over your enemies but not only that

but that which had been the wealth of the enemy all the spoil that was taken from it would be distributed amongst the victorious generals soldiers so there's a sense of having received all the gifts the spoil the riches and then distributing them out again they've been received in now they've been distributed out now of course that carries with it in terms of the actual illustration it carries the sense of theft in the Roman sense or military exploitation of the defeated it's just a metaphor it's an illustration but in terms of the psalm of course it's talking about the Messiah the Messiah who having come down to earth and died and descended as well into the lower parts of the earth has then ascended up on high and received all this largesse of gifts to be distributed amongst his church to be distributed amongst men and women when was the gift of the Holy Ghost poured out upon the disciples yes at Pentecost but only after the ascension of Christ after he ascended into heaven and then the spirit was poured out and all the gifts and all the accomplishments and so on that the early church had was distributed amongst them by Christ now he continues to give gifts to his people when he calls men and women and boys and girls to follow him he doesn't just leave himself stuck he gives them he endows them with gifts and blessings and abilities which are to be used to be enhanced to be applied to the greatest cause their life can have now friend whatever your calling may be or your employment or your particular career may be that may be great in itself but there is a greater still and there is nothing greater to which you can apply your life your talents your ability every breath that you have than to the furtherance of [ 31 : 43 ] God's kingdom and to the living out that life in all its fullness for Christ at the end of your life whenever it should be if you look back over the years the Lord has given you you will be enabled to say well I've used the years the Lord has given me to the very fullest that I could because they have been expended for Christ's sake now yes we have to spend a certain amount of time fulfilling our day to day calling our normal employments and our duties and our vocation and so on so we have to work like Adam is given that commission six days shall thou labour and do all thy work we have to work we have to earn our daily bread but also even in that context we can be witnesses for the Lord that which we receive by way of our appropriate wage we can then apply some of that to the Lord and to his work we can do whatever the

Lord gives us opportunity to do in and through our calling because whatever we may be joiners or builders or office workers or secretaries or housewives or sailors or airmen or nurses or whatever we might be but what the Lord calls us to is primarily not one of these job descriptions we may be these as well but he primarily calls us to be his to be Christ that the first and greatest identity of each of our lives if we are his is not oh yeah I'm a joiner or I'm a builder or I'm a soldier or I'm a seaman or whatever it might be no it's I'm a Christian not I'm Scottish or Irish or Welsh or French or whatever but I'm a Christian I'm a Christian first and all the other identities follow after that when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men or that in the sense of the original Hebrew he gives gifts among men now that he ascended what is it that he also descended first and the lowest parts of the earth and he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens and he might fill all things he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers now obviously the apostles were simply for a time the Lord does not continue to make apostles in the New Testament sense prophets the prophets of course although people in the New Testament did have some have the gift of prophecy the sense of prophets with a capital P or even in the New Testament sense we should probably take as having now ceased with that time of the church but evangelists the Lord still endows people to be about to go out with the evangel with the gospel but the sense there is of when the evangelist goes out of bringing the good news as it were for the first time to people who haven't heard it and as they receive it and as they become gathered then from amongst them or brought in for them there are pastors and teachers the sense of the sense is of pastors and teachers being for a more settled gathering of the Lord's people a more settled environment to nurture and build up the Lord's people evangelists although we're all called to be evangelical in our lives the sense is of the cold face the kind of first impact of the gospel coming to those who haven't heard it before he gives different people gifts for the perfecting of the sins for the work of the ministry for the edifying that word means building up of the body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of

God unto a perfect man well that doesn't mean a sinless person it means one who is full grown fully matured one who is as it were ripe for heaven that is what we're to be aiming for a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ you see the thing is that if somebody has the

spirit of Christ in them then they will continue as a Christian to grow I remember hearing when I was a very young minister a very old senior retired minister saying that he wished that he knew when he began in the ministry what he knew now when he was as it were at the end of it but of course we can't do that and I wish I could just download everything that he's got and sort of imbibe it and just sort of learn it up and suck it in and the point is that even if you read it all and even if you knew it all in theory it won't necessarily be that which you can put into practice because we all have to ripen and grow each one ourselves this is what is meant at verse 16 from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted that is consolidated by that which every joint supplies you think how much of your body is made up of joints you know there's the joints between your wrist and your hand and all the joints in your fingers and then the joint in your elbow and the joint in your shoulder the joints onto your torso and the joints of your legs and your hips and all the other parts of your body the joints are just everywhere and so that which every joint supplies it may seem an insignificant joint but it will be vital and you'll see how vital it is the minute it stops working for any reason that which every joint supplies according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase that is the sense of carries on the growth maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love now of course you might think oh wait a minute we can't edify ourselves only the lord can do that we cannot build up that's what edify means edifice build up the body of christ we can't do that ourselves only the lord can do that yes but the lord gives us means by which we are to work you know we can say well the lord the lord doesn't feed me the lord may put the food in front of you and expect you to actually get on with it he may prepare the meal he may plop it in front of you and he doesn't expect to have the spoon feed you he expects that having given you arms and legs and hands and feet and given you the food that you will eat it likewise he expects that you know if let's say we we don't have the skills to be able to accomplish a particular task but we've got a brother or sister in christ right there they've got the skills they can do it as a former minister i once worked with when i was a student and i've used this illustration before we say sometimes we ask the lord for green and he gives us blue and yellow he expects us to get on with what he's given us so that the body will itself grow with that which he gives it according to the effectual working the measure of every part make a increase carries on the growth unto the edifying of itself in love you see when jesus came to the fig tree that had leaves on it we read that you know he didn't find any fruit there on because it was not the time of fix we think well that's not very fair is it imagine cursing a fig tree when it wasn't the time of fix but remember where he was he was coming over the mount of olives which is called mount of olives because there's olives there but also he begins his journey with the donkey from there from where bethany and bethagy which means the house of

fix which means that scattered over that part of the mount of earth there'll be lots and lots of fig trees why does jesus hone in on this one he hones in on that one because at a time when it was not yet the season for fix this tree nevertheless had leaves it was beginning to show forth that it was active that it was fruitful or so it appeared to be but when he came to it he found that despite all the big show of leaves there wasn't actually any fruit and the other trees the other fig trees that he didn't go to they hadn't pretended that they had any fruit but this one oh and it leaves it and it was flourishing foliage surely there's life in there surely there's growth but he went and he found nothing and it is possible of course for us to have the outward show and to talk the talk and to seem on the outside to be that we are genuinely followers of christ but when he searches through the leaves he doesn't actually find any fruit and he puts us under that curse and we wither and perish without him if we are the lords we will continue to grow we will continue to grow in the faith we will continue to grow in the fruitfulness of the lord now i think you would think to myself well i don't see any growth in me no of course you don't you have a little child that lives with you and it lives with you for five years now you pick up that child out of its bed five years after the start date and it's going to be a lot bigger and a lot heavier and a lot wider than it was when you put it in five years ago into its little bed and day by day as it had its breakfast and went out whether to school or whatever and then came back and played with its friends and did its homework and went back to bed day by day for five years suddenly when did it get so big when did that child suddenly grow so much you didn't see it happening before your eyes but it was feeding and it was growing and it was going through the normal process of life so life was with us the body grows it bears fruit it shows forth the spirit dwelling within it and so we strengthen one another and because we strengthen one another we're henceforth no more children tossed to and thrown carried about with everyone in the doctrine by the slated man and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in weight to deceit but speaking the truth and

love may grow up into him in all things which is the head even Christ that is who we are to be becoming like that is who we are to imitate in his lowliness and meekness of heart and where there is that imitation of

[ 42 : 07 ] Christ there will be that following of Christ and there will be that growth in Christ but to do it we need one another a finger does not grow by itself in isolation nor does a knee or a foot or a shoulder it only does so as part of the wider body you may not think that you'll give it so much you may not think that your place in the body is important but trust me it is vital because the Lord who does not make mistakes has put you there and endowed you with what you need not to do somebody else's job but to fulfill the calling which he has placed upon you for the time that he requires it of you for this this is your place in his body the body of Christ you you you you you you you you you you