

# NEW LIFE

*What is it?  
How do we experience it?*



*by David Legge*

**preachthetnewword.com**



*David Legge is a Christian evangelist, preacher and Bible teacher. He served as Assistant Pastor at Portadown Baptist Church before receiving a call to the pastorate of the Iron Hall Assembly in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He ministered as pastor-teacher of the Iron Hall from 1998-2008, and now resides in Portadown with his wife Barbara, daughter Lydia and son Noah.*

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## New Life - Chapter 1

# "A Life Of Incalculable Blessings"

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**W**ell, good evening everybody. It's good to see you all gathered. 'Man of God, man of faith', supposedly, but I was just hoping you would all turn up tonight! It's great that you have come. I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to Ephesians, the book of Ephesians, we're not going to read anything just yet - in a moment or two. But let me just share a bit of the background of why I'm bringing these messages to you over the next number of nights. When I was asked to speak at this conference, an expression popped into my head - Acts 5:20 - this is the verse that came to my heart, I believe from the Spirit of God, *"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life"*.

Now let me give you a bit of context to this verse, this isn't what I'm preaching on, this is just an introduction to this whole series. The context in the Acts of the Apostles is that signs and wonders were being done by the laying on of hands of the apostles - that's miracles - and the Jewish high priest and the sect of the Sadducees were not at all happy. In fact, the context tells us they rose up in indignation - they were furious at supernatural acts of power! Now the reason for that was, it didn't fit into their theology. The Sadducees - in school I had an R.E. teacher called Charlie Gault, he was a rather elderly man, old school - and he drummed into us that the Sadducees were 'sad-you-see' because they didn't believe in spirit (when you died, you died), they didn't believe in resurrection, and they didn't believe in the angelic hosts, angels. So you might say that the Sadducees were Sadducees because they were anti-supernatural. Seeing is believing for many people, but not for them! What they were actually seeing, they were not believing. Isn't that incredible? They were seeing the miraculous with their own eyes, but they would not believe because it denied their theology. It shows you the blinding power of unbelief, doesn't it? These effectively were unbelieving believers.

I want to really establish for us at the beginning of our week, just as you have just sung, faith is the key that opens the door of God's kingdom. You've got to believe. 'These signs', Mark chapter 16 says, 'shall follow those who believe', and I like to think of that as 'These signs shall follow believing believers', believers who choose to believe God, what He says, what He declares in His word. So the Jewish leaders have the apostles arrested, and that was an attempt to contain what God was doing - how ridiculous! Who knows that just because you don't believe in a thing, it doesn't change reality? It's funny to me that the apostles get locked up, and who comes and breaks them out? Anybody know? An angel! So the Sadducees can have all the unbelief they like regarding the angelic and the supernatural dimension, but it doesn't stop God doing His stuff. These angels came and broke them out, and released them, and commissioned them with this verse on the screen: 'Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life'. That's what I want to bring to you in these nights, the words of this life. I want to use the epistle to the Ephesians, just certain highlights in it, not word for word, or verse by verse, but certain excerpts of it to expound to you the life that you're meant to be living as a Christian. What you're

meant to be experiencing as a child of God! Are you up for that?

Let's read chapter 1, and we may read a couple of verses of chapter 2, so follow with me. We'll not be doing as long a reading every night, but we really want to read this portion this evening, so follow with me. I'm reading from the New King James Version. Verse 1 of Ephesians 1: *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all".*

Surely somebody will say 'Amen'? Yes? That's mighty stuff, isn't it? Verse 1 of chapter 2: *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith" - you've been saved through faith - "and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast".*

I want to speak to you tonight on this 'New Life' being 'A Life Of Incalculable Blessings'. Do you believe that the Christian life is one blessing after another? Do you? You are out there? I mean these lights are very bright, and I can't really see past the first row, but you're going to have to work with me here tonight - this works two ways, OK? Do you believe this? That's what our reading says, and yet there is, I believe, infecting some sections of the church of Jesus Christ, what we might call 'a false humility'. I'm talking about, perhaps, a spirit or an attitude that glories in lack, want, poverty - you might call it 'a poverty spirit', maybe it even takes pride in poverty. Maybe that has happened down through the years in Christian history, where people have taken vows of poverty etc - I don't know, I'm not going to enter in to the whole origination of it; but certainly in our modern era, in the church, for some people this false humility and poverty spirit has been a knee-jerk reaction to what has been known now so-called as 'the prosperity gospel'. We'll not go into that too much either, save to say that some people seem to be preaching that everybody should be a millionaire, and everybody should walk in perfect health all the days of their life. So some people say: 'Well, that can't be true', and it breeds within them a poverty spirit, or a false humility.

Now I want to say categorically, right from the outset in this message tonight, that such an attitude is a counterfeit piety. It's foreign to the word of God. I'm talking about the disposition that squirms at the thought of seeking abundant blessings from God, let alone celebrating His blessings, and revelling in those blessings, and boasting about them. I think maybe it is a fear of the kind of 'Bless me' club that becomes self-centred and self-indulgent. I preached a year or two on Psalm 67, a couple of the verses from it read: 'God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him'. Do you see what it's saying? First of all: petition 'God bless me, bless us, and if You bless us and bless the earth that it yields a great harvest, then all the planet will know that we belong to You'. I called that message 'Sanctified Selfishness'. Now that's an oxymoron, isn't it? A paradox. You can't really be holy if you're selfish, but you understand what I'm saying here - the disposition of the Psalmist is 'Bless me', but it was with the view that 'If I get blessed, then people around me get blessed, my community gets blessed, my nation'.

Ephesians chapter 1 teaches us that we, as New Testament born-again Christians, are in a favoured space, because we are blessed - verse 3 - with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Who knows what the Greek word for 'all' means? 'All', that's right! It means 'all', every single spiritual blessing is in Christ. If you look down this portion that we read and circle, in fact all through Ephesians, the phrase 'in Christ' - everything that comes to us as Christians is through the Lord Jesus, yes, we know that - but we are abundantly blessed in Him, we've got everything in Him! It's similar to what Peter says in 2 Peter 1:3-4: 'God's divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness' - think about that! Everything that you need to be alive and live a holy life has been given to us already 'through the knowledge of Jesus who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust'.

You cannot be more blessed! Christians out there - and I know there are maybe folk,

and you're not sure where you stand, and we'll get to you, don't worry - but you who are Christians here tonight, do you know you can't be more blessed than you are? Why don't you tell your face? It would help me preaching to you tonight! But perhaps I'm being facetious, and you're sitting here tonight and you don't feel blessed? That's not a description of who you are right at this moment in time, or who you think you are, and in fact maybe that old green-eyed monster, jealousy, looks at other Christians that you know - maybe they're even here tonight - and thinking 'Why does God never bless me the way he gets blessed, or she gets blessed? Why does that not happen to me? Why have I not had that experience?'. Well, I want to say to you tonight: your perspective may seem like that is true of your experience, but that is not the truth. Did you get that? It may seem true to you, but it's not the truth. You have a bit of catching up to do, because God's word says you are blessed, if you are in Christ, with all spiritual blessings - period - in heavenly places. Peter says you've got everything that you need in Jesus.

So, who are you going to believe? What you're hearing in your head? What your experience is telling you? What this is saying is: God has given you everything in Jesus, He's given you everything. You can't bankrupt Him. You might be sitting here tonight and thinking: 'Oh, here we go, you know, all this blessing-blessing-blessing stuff. It's just too good to be true - and he's going to call people out at the end and pray for them for healing, and freedom, and blessing, and all sorts of things. It's too good to be true!'. Can I tell you something: if it sounds like it's too good to be true, it's probably God - because God is a good, good Father. He is infinitely good.

So I want you to see first of all tonight the blessings on paper, from verses 3-14, the blessings on paper. Here it is in black and white, hopefully, if you've got a Bible or something electronic that gives you the Bible. What you have in verses 3-14 is called a doxology, that means a hymn, a kind of hymn of praise to God. The interesting thing that doesn't come across in our English translation - although I felt kind of breathless as I was reading it - is that it's all one Greek sentence. Do you know that the New Testament was written in Greek? That's news for some of you: it wasn't written in English, it was written in Greek. This is one long sentence, so basically the apostle Paul, as he opens his mouth - even though his writing, but I imagine that he's probably saying this as he's writing - via his heart comes like a conveyor belt of superlatives describing God's blessing in Christ in heavenly places to us as Christians. It's without taking a breath almost, he's almost winded by worship, describing what we have in Jesus.

The image that came to my mind when I was thinking about this - do you remember when you were a wee fella or a wee girl, and you drew a breath, a really deep, deep breath, and you just went 'Ahhhh'? Did nobody ever do that, no? Just me. And you just kept going until you exhausted the resource of your lungs, and were out of breath by the end of it all. It's as if Paul, as he's praising and worshipping God, is left empty of air - wow! What's he doing? He's describing how blessed you are. Are you getting this?

He describes it in this way: the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's what you've got. First of all he says: 'we are planned by the Father', verse 4 says we are selected by the Father. Now we're not going to deal with the 'how' of that tonight, that's a whole other conference, but we're going to deal with at least the 'when'. It says 'Before the foundations of the world God had His eye on you'. Now I can't explain that, OK, and I don't believe anybody truly can - but I believe it. Before

the mountains were formed, and the seas, and everything that is, God had His eye on you. That gives me goosebumps! The Father planned this - to bless your life - He selected you. Why? Look at it, verse 4: 'So that we would be holy and without fault' - now, that's big (anybody that knows me), to think that I could be without fault. I imagine there are a few people know you too! That's why God selected us, and planned to bless us, so that we could be sinless eventually.

Not only did He select us, it says that He adopted us - verses 5 and 6, if you look at that: 'He predestined us to adoption in Jesus Christ'. Do you know what adoption is? Well, you become part of the family, isn't that right? But what that means in a New Testament sense is that we enter into the inheritance of God, that now we are part of the family, we are no longer strangers but we are in God's will, His inheritance. That means that everything that comes to Jesus, everything that Jesus gets for being God's Son, I get! Is that not incredible?

Before a child was adopted, if they were a slave in the home, they had to call the head of the home, the father, 'Pater'. But whenever they were adopted into the family, they got to call the father 'Abba' - which means 'Daddy'. That's the nearness we now have with God. We're no longer standing outside looking at God as awesome and transcendent, beyond us - and He is - but we are brought into His very bosom as sons and daughters, so that we can cry 'Abba, Father', 'Daddy God'. This is the adoption that the Father has planned. Wait till I tell you: there is no need for a poverty mindset when that is your experience of Christianity, because that means you've got the credit card - yes? Do you ever give your kids credit cards? Don't do it! I don't, but God gives us His credit card - do you understand? Deposited in our account is the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. You're chosen, that's adoption, isn't it? You're chosen - I mean, when you have kids naturally, you get what you get, isn't that right? Whatever they look like, intelligence level, sporting ability, all the rest, you get what you get - but when you adopt, you choose. You're wanted, but it's even better than that: a child that is adopted will never ever, no matter how much they are loved, even if they are loved more than the biological siblings, they will never ever have the DNA of their parents. But when you're adopted by God, what did Peter say? You get to become a partaker of the divine nature - you get God's DNA! Wow! This is good, isn't it? And the Father planned it - what a blessing! Do you feel blessed?

The Father planned it, but it was purchased by the Son. Verse 7 says we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, the priceless cost of our salvation when Jesus died on the cross. We are forgiven for God's glory. Verse 10 says that someday, through the cross of Jesus, God is going to bring together everything in Jesus Christ - that's amazing to me, I'm going to talk a wee bit more about that tomorrow night. But isn't that incredible? All the division that there is in society, but one day God is going to bring it all together in Jesus. Purchased by the Son - all these blessings come because Someone died, Jesus died for you and me. It's planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and it's preserved by the Spirit - it's threefold, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Having heard the Gospel, verse 13 says, and you have believed the Gospel, I hope, you're sealed with the Spirit of promise; and verse 14 says that's your guarantee - wow! What a blessing to have the guarantee that you're right with God, that your sins are forgiven, that you've got peace with Him through the blood of Christ, that you know Him as your Father now, when you die you'll go to be with Him in heaven - what a blessing! Do you have that?

I didn't write the Bible, alright? Verse 14 says it's a guarantee of inheritance, that's what it says - you argue with God if you have a problem with that, but that's what it says, it's in the bag. Not because of anything you have done, but because of what Jesus did. Then chapter 2 elaborates on that, it talks about what we once were. Verse 1 says we were dead in sins, that means we were cut off from God, we didn't know Him. Verse 2 says we were influenced by Satan, he was pulling our strings like a puppet. Verse 3 says we were controlled by lust, that's not just the sexual lust, but all sorts of covetousness and ungodly desires and drives. Verse 3 also says we were under God's wrath, we had chosen to be enemies of God - so we were under His judgement. Verse 11 says we were pagans without God. Verse 12 says we were separated from Christ, verse 12 also 'without hope in this present world' - what a bleak picture!

Then we see what God did. Verse 4, He loved us. I love that verse, verse 4, look at it: 'But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us' - isn't that incredible? He loved us, He liberated us, He set us free, and He has lifted us into heavenly places, verse 6, we are seated with Jesus Christ. What we once were, then what God did, why God did it - verse 7 says He did it that He might display in us trophies of grace through the eons of eternity. That's what verse 7 says, do you know what that means? Throughout all of eternity - which is hard to describe of course - He's just going to be unravelling the wonders and mysteries of His love and grace toward us, and He's going to be setting us up on a cosmic trophy cabinet to say: 'Look at what I'm able to do with sinners!'. Wow!

How did He do it? Through special favour, verse 8: 'By grace you are saved'. It's not by what you do, it's by what He has done. Do you not know that? Please understand tonight, you cannot work for being right with God, you can't get there on your own steam. Grace is God's favour, a free gift that is given to you by God's hand, and you receive it through faith - verses 8 and 9. By grace you are saved through faith, God gives it freely because Jesus died, you receive it freely through faith because of the blood of Jesus, verse 13.

Now I know that's a lot to take in, but here: we've got incalculable blessings in Jesus! I'm only starting! But listen: it's one thing to have the blessings on paper - and some of you know all this stuff I'm talking about tonight - it's another thing to have them in your possession. I want to ask you tonight: are you living in the will, or are you living with the wealth? Which? If somebody dies, and they are rich, and they leave you in their will - and you get a piece of paper saying you're in it, you're an inheritor, you're so chuffed and enamoured. But what good is a bit of paper? I say it reverently: what good is the word of God if you're not possessing your possessions? If you're not living in the wealth? If you're not cashing in, by faith, at God's bank in heaven from what has been deposited in your account?

So I want to talk to you in the time that remains about the blessings that need to be unwrapped and experienced. This is the way Paul describes it - all this is on paper, and he's exasperated describing it - but he now gets on his knees to pray for these Ephesian Christians, this is my prayer for you folk: that they would experience a renaissance, an enlightenment; that their eyes would be opened to see the blessings that they have, and to unwrap them and enjoy them. Are your eyes open, tonight, to everything that you have in Jesus, to the incalculable blessings that you have in Christ?

My mind goes to the prodigal son, you know that story in Luke chapter 15? We always focus on the prodigal, because we usually call it 'The Prodigal Son', when it's actually a parable about two sons - and it's really not about two sons at all, it's really about the father, just to confuse you a little bit more. It's all about the father, it's about the father's heart, and the young son actually understood something about the father's heart that the older son didn't. This is how I know: when he went to the far country, he took the father's inheritance - which was saying 'I wish you were dead, so that I can get my hands on your money' - he went to the far country, spent it all on drunkenness and prostitutes and wild living. When he hit rock bottom and despaired of his very life, he remembered that there was bread in his father's house and to spare. He knew something of his father's heart, to believe that he could journey home and he would get some kind of place. He thought it might be just as a servant or a slave, but he knew he could go home. Do you agree?

But the old fellow, the elder brother, at the latter part of the parable - we don't tend to focus on him - he was in father's house, he never left home, yet he had never seen into father's heart. In fact, he remarks, when there is a party being thrown because his younger brother has come home - he heard the singing and dancing, and he asked what was going on. When he heard that there was a celebration and his father had killed the fatted calf for his brother, he was angry. That's what it says! He was angry and he would not go in, and his protest was: 'I have served you these many years, and you have never killed the fatted calf for me. I've never broken any of your commandments, and you never had a party for me'.

What's going on here? He didn't understand what he had, and his father had to say to him: 'Everything I had was yours. Everything I had was yours'. In other words, 'You could have enjoyed any of this, any time, but you've never seen into my heart. You're living like a slave when you should be living like a son. You're behaving towards me like a master, rather than a father'. Mark Batterson, whose books I would highly recommend, said: 'We don't see the world as it is, we see the world as we are' - that's profound. How do you see the world? It will be according to how you see yourself. The elder brother saw himself as a servant of his master, rather than a son of his father. He needed his eyes opened. Isn't that interesting? Here's this religious guy, a Pharisee - that's who Jesus is punching at, it's the Pharisees, and boy does it get home to them, they're appalled! But it was the young fella that was a drunkard and a whore-monger, it was he who understood the heart of Abba Father.

You see, we need our eyes opened, we need our eyes opened to the blessings that we have in Jesus Christ - that's what this week is about. You need your eyes open, I need my eyes further opened to the new life that we have in Jesus. This is not a recent problem, this was a problem in the New Testament, it was a problem in the Old Testament. Do you remember Elisha's servant who was terrified because the Syrian army had garrisoned around the prophet because he was able to tell what was going on in the King's bedchamber and what he was plotting about and whispering to his wife about? So he hated him so much that he sent an army to exterminate him, and the young servant is terrified. Elisha prays to God and he says: 'Open his eyes that he may see', and the Lord opened his eyes and he saw the chariots of Israel and the horsemen of God, the angelic hosts, all around about. We need our eyes opened to see as God sees! We don't see the world as it is, we see the world as we are.

So, who are we? This is not just about seeing with the eye, whether it's physical or

spiritual, this is also about perception. Do you remember Jacob, and he lies down for a sleep, and he puts his head on a rock as a pillow? He falls asleep, and as far as he's concerned he's in a wilderness, he's in no place. Do you ever feel like that? All of a sudden he has a vision, a dream, a revelation from God, and there is a ladder going from heaven down to earth, and the angels of God are ascending and descending on it - and he has an epiphany, an awakening, a revelation, an enlightenment experience. What does he say? 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it'. Do you see what's happening here? When did this cease to be a desert? When did this cease to be no place and all of a sudden became 'Bethel', the house of God, the gateway to heaven? That's what he says, 'This is nothing else but the gateway to heaven, this is holy ground'. It wasn't a few seconds ago, Jacob, what has happened? His eyes have been opened, 'I was not aware of it'.

I have seen this over the years, people who have perception and awareness of spiritual things, and people who don't. Two people can be sitting in the same meeting, sitting beside each other - and God can be doing stuff, and one is sitting there absolutely overwhelmed by God's presence, and the other is like a telegraph pole in a fridge. What is it? It's perception, it's awareness. You know, we're having pretty good weather, aren't we? It's unusual walking down the main street in Newcastle with your shorts and T-shirt on, isn't it? It's wonderful! But we all know what it's like to walk down a main street with our rain mac on, don't we, and our hood up? You know, you could walk past your brother, your sister, your mother, your father in that condition and not perceive them - yes? Theoretically you could actually bump into them, brush against them, and not even know it was them. There are people here tonight, and you maybe have not sensed the presence of God around you this evening the way others have, or you come to conferences or meetings like this and it seems to evade you, and you feel 'I don't get the blessing, I'm not like the rest of those people who are just overwhelmed by this whole thing'.

You need your eyes opened, your spiritual eyes opened - surely that's what a lot of the miracles of Jesus were about? You know the miracles of healing the blind men, it was about literal healing, don't misunderstand me, it was about the fact that Jesus can heal blindness - but it was also a spiritual lesson fulfilling Isaiah 61, that He would come to give recovery of sight to the blind. So what am I saying? This is what I'm saying: we don't need to be asking God to come, God came in Jesus, and at Pentecost God came in the Holy Spirit - and I believe that from that moment the Holy Spirit has been continually been poured out, and will be poured out upon all flesh. But we don't need to pray God down, God is here. We believe in the omnipresence of God, God is everywhere - I tell you what we do need: we need Him to manifest His presence, yes, His power and His glory, but we need to start becoming aware, we need a perception of God's presence. Equally so, we don't need to any longer, in a sense, beg God for His blessings - 'Please bless me, please bless me, please bless me' - we don't need to do that, He has blessed us! If you're in Jesus Christ, He has blessed you incalculably; what we need to do is see our blessings - and this is what Paul is praying for, that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened, that we would be given a spirit of wisdom, verse 17, and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus to see our blessings in the spirit and to possess them by faith.

So, are the blessings unwrapped for you? I find that many Christians are living on what we might call 'a cerebral level'. Now I'm not anti-intellectual, don't misunderstand me, and I'm not advocating brainless Christianity. The Bible teaches us that we are to love

the Lord our God with all our mind, isn't that correct? But we've also got to be aware that, no matter how intelligent we are, no matter how intellectually adept, the Bible is clear that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Some things cannot be perceived with the five senses, some things cannot be deduced through reasoning. The things of the Kingdom of God can only be conceived by the revelation of the Spirit. You see, the Holy Spirit gives us a kind of extrasensory perception - you can call it a 'sixth sense' if you like - but it's beyond the human mind. That's what you need.

All of you, whether you're a Christian or not, need the spirit of wisdom and revelation to open your inner eyes and your inner senses to who God is, what God has, and what God has done and wants to do in your life. So, what's your eyesight like? Mark Batterson, again, puts it like this, he says 'When babies make their grand entrance into the world their visual resolution is one fortieth of what is of a normal adult. They lack the depth perception, and their visual range is only about thirteen inches. The world is low definition, two-dimensional, and only thirteen inches in diameter. Slowly the world begins to take on width, breadth and depth. By four months a baby can perceive stereoscopic depth. By six months visual acuity has improved fivefold. Their black-and-white world has burst into a kaleidoscope of colours, and they have volitional control of their eye movements. By his or her first birthday, the child sees the world almost as well as an adult'.

How well can you see in the spiritual dimension? Do you know what Jesus said to Nicodemus - who was a very, very religious Pharisee? 'Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'. If you are not born again tonight, you can be as religious as you want but you'll not see spiritually - because the natural man can never get there. You can study all you like, and you can pop around all the religions and philosophies and beliefs - you know there are Christians, fundamental, evangelical, conservative Christians, and they are very similar to those types of people because they're trying to get to know God through their skullcap rather than through their spirit.

But those who are born-again sometimes stay in infant shortsightedness. Are you here tonight, and maybe you have been a Christian for decades, several decades, and you don't have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus? You're living, if you like, in low definition vision rather than in the ultrahigh definition of the spirit. Have you ever walked into one of those TV shops, ultra high-definition TVs - have you ever seen one of those things? Have you ever seen one of those televisions? The last one I ever saw, it's the bang up-to-date one, is it 4k or something like that - it was more real than reality! Have you ever noticed that? It's even better than reality! But I want to tell you tonight that, if you can get your spiritual cataracts removed, and if you will allow the Holy Spirit to put on His three-dimensional - yes, and we will see on another night, four-dimensional - glasses on you, you will see a kaleidoscope of colour that you have never dreamed of. You will experience an explosion of the love of God that will blow your mind.

The Lord wants you to internally experience His explosive love and His power. Look at verse 20, as we bring this to a close tonight. He wants to give us this spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, verse 19: that we may know 'what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of

His mighty power', listen to this, 'which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places'. Wow! The power that raised Christ from the dead, God says, is in you. Do you believe that? Do you? Yes? Yes! Do you really believe that? Yes! Come on! Do you really believe it? If we really believed - and remember now, Jesus didn't get resuscitated, and He didn't just get resurrected in the sense that Lazarus did, or the widow of Nain's son, or Jairus' daughter; He was raised to die no more, He was raised to a new race, to be the Firstborn of a new kind who would never die - do you understand? Never ever die again, eternal life, resurrection life - and that power that raised Christ from the dead, God says, is alive in you. If that is alive in you, I want to tell you: Ireland would be a different place, Northern Ireland would be a different place - do you not think? I think, perhaps, we don't possess our possessions. I'm not saying it's not true, it's on paper, we've seen that; but for some of us here tonight it hasn't been unwrapped. You're not experiencing the atomic explosive power of the resurrection of Jesus in your life. You're not experiencing the incalculable blessings that are yours in Jesus Christ.

Do you want to? Do you want to know more than what is on paper? Do you want to experience an enlightenment? Do you want to experience an internal takeover of resurrection power? Will you respond to the Lord tonight? As Paul prayed for you, will you pray for yourself, and will you say: 'Lord, open my eyes, open my heart, open my spiritual senses that I may go deeper in Your love, and deeper in Your power; that I might know this new life that Jesus died to purchase for me'.

Let's pray. We're going to take a few moments. I want to first of all give an appeal to Christians here tonight - I know this is tricky, because some of you maybe are known to folk around you, forget all about that. Maybe you've been on the road as a Christian a long time, but you know that this is not what you are experiencing. I'll never forget a big fundamentalist Christian man who heard me preach on the prodigal son, and he didn't really like what I was preaching - the night before he fell out with me because of something I said, which is quite normal, but the next night he came up to me with the tears tripping him and he said: 'David, I disagree with what you teach, and what you said last night I had a real problem with, but I know I don't know God the way you're talking about tonight'. Maybe that's you. Maybe you're not the big hard fellow or lady, but however long or short the road has been for you in your Christian experience, you know you don't know God like Paul is talking about here. You want the eyes of your heart to be opened, you want to experience this in an overwhelming way. We are going to talk more about this right throughout the week, but this is the new life that Jesus died and rose again to purchase for you. I'm talking to Christians tonight.

Now, let's bow our heads and close our eyes, but is there any person and you're a Christian here this evening, and you want to say: 'I want this, I want this'. Would you be prepared, where you are, to stand to your feet right now? Would you be prepared? Just where you are. People are standing, why not join them if you truly want to know this? Thank You, Lord. I'll just leave it a moment or two. Is there anyone else, Christians now. I don't know whether you can get out to the rest of the meetings, but I'd encourage you to do that to find out more. But where you're at tonight, now, why not just say what Paul said: 'Lord, open my heart, open the eyes of my heart, open my spiritual senses, give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, that I will know what He died to purchase for me - and I will not just know it, but I will experience it, I will live in it and walk in it, and I will sense that risen power within me, that victory and triumph'. Just receive, just believe that this is for you, receive. You

might need to confess legalism, you might need to confess trying to do things through your head, or through the sweat of your brow and good works, rather than by grace through faith. You just talk to the Lord yourself. But just where you're at right now, you deal with God, deal with Him - just believe and be honest. He is your Abba Father, He has adopted you. There is no fear, you're accepted, there is perfect love that casts out all fear. Will you come into this life? Will you come into this love? Come on! Step in in faith! Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and overwhelm you. Certainly confess your sin, repent of anything you need to, but drink deep at the wells of the Spirit tonight. Drink deep. You can sit down when you want to.

Is there anybody here and you would class yourself as a backslider? Now maybe some of those people that stood are in that category - but you've wandered away from the Lord, and you're like that prodigal we talked about, but you've heard something of Father's heart tonight and you want to come home. Is there anybody, a backslider, would you stand to your feet just where you are? Any backsliders? Just where you are, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed - I just want to give that opportunity.

Now, is there anybody and you have never become a true born-again Christian, you've never had that guarantee that we were talking about tonight that you will inherit in Jesus, and that you're right with God, and you're secure, and you're safe? You're here tonight, and you want that - just where you are right now, would you stand to your feet and say: 'I want to become a Christian. I may have been religious, I may have done things that I thought would bring me to God, but I realise this is not what I have. Jesus died to purchase this for me, and I've been trying to work my way' - or whatever your issues are, I don't know, but you say tonight: 'I want this that is offered, and I want to receive it by faith, and I want to believe God. I'm going to get this forgiveness, I'm going to take God at His word'. Would you stand where you are? Would you stand just where you are? I'll leave it a moment or two, there are people standing. God knows your heart. Would you stand to your feet if that's you? That might be a step too far for some of you, that's OK, we can talk about that in a moment. But listen: Jesus hanged on a cross for you, He took your sin for you. I tend not to make things too easy for people these days, because then you get easy Christians, easy-going Christians. Jesus hanged naked on a cross, and bore the wrath and shame of judgement outpoured upon Him for our sins - can we not stand and own Him as our Saviour, and say 'I'm not ashamed to own Him'? Is there anyone?

If you're here tonight and you have any need - guess what? We are blessed with, how many spiritual blessings in Jesus? All! Come and get prayer. If there are issues of healing, inner healing, freedom, struggles you're going through, suffering, whatever it might be - come, and there is grace from God here to help you in Christ.

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www.preachtheword.com  
info@preachtheword.com

## New Life - Chapter 2

# "A Life In A New Humanity"

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**G**reat to have you with us tonight again for the second of our New Life Conference, Great to have you back again. We had a really special night last night, I think, in God's presence - and I certainly felt that, and there was a sense of God moving down here in the front in particular as people were being prayed for, so it's in anticipation that we come tonight to look forward to what God is going to do.

Turn with me to the book of Ephesians please. Last evening we began looking at 'New Life' from the book of Ephesians, and we studied - as Gary has already alluded to - the incalculable blessings that we have in Christ in heavenly places. Tonight we are going to look at the fact that this new life in Christ is 'A Life In A New Humanity'. So I want to begin reading from Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10, just where we left off last night, and we're going to read right through to chapter 3 verse 13 - so that you know where we're going to end, OK.

*So, chapter 2 verse 10 through to 3:13: "For we are His", God's, "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh; who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands; that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles; if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this*

*grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory".*

Look at verse 10, please, of chapter 2, where we left off last night. Paul says: 'We are God's workmanship, we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which He prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'. The greek word for 'workmanship' is 'poiema', it literally could be translated 'creation' or 'what is made'. We are what God has made, we are His creation, we might say 'new creation'. We are His 'poiema'. Who knows that God is the great Creator? As such, in nature, He is the Divine Artist. We see in a place like the Kingdom of Mourne the wonderful spectrum and majesty of God's handiwork - yes, it's incredible, isn't it? Breath-taking! He is the One who has made us, created us in Christ Jesus, poiema - but 'poiema' in Greek is what we derive our English word 'poem' from - 'poiema', 'poem'. So God is not only a Creative Artist, but God is the ultimate original Creative Poet, Lyricist. We are His poem.

Now, the context of what Paul is saying here in verse 10 is all to do with the mystery that is the body of Christ, what we would call the church of Jesus. Paul is saying this new body is God's masterpiece, the church. Now, let me press the fast forward button and go right to the end, where we get a glimpse of the complete exhibit of God's body in Christ. We read there, in the book of Revelation, that from every tribe, from every tongue, from every people, and from every nation there will be a collective group that will composite this race of God's handiwork - God's new humanity.

This new life that we're trying to expound these nights is a new life in a new humanity altogether. Just as there are mysteries in the creative universe, in this new creation it is mysterious. Paul says it doesn't make any sense to the religious world or the religious mind of Paul's day - and, for that matter, it still doesn't make any sense to religious people today. Paul says that God revealed to him, and to the apostles and prophets, this mystery. He expounds it in particular in chapter 3, if you look at verses 5 through 6 again: 'which in other ages was not made known', this is something that nobody ever knew in the Old Testament, 'as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets' - what is this mystery? - 'that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ through the gospel'. You see, this was not merely mysterious to Jewish people who were hearing this new gospel in Christ, it was utterly unthinkable, it was abhorrent! Utterly offensive! We would say it was anathema for them that non-Jews, Gentile people, could be included in God's community.

I don't think we here in the Western world and in our culture really enter into what it was for Jewish people to have to accept that God was now drawing non-Jews to Himself through Jesus. We really see this exhibited, I think, in the story of the apostle Peter. If you want to turn with me to Acts chapter 10 quickly, we see this, because Peter has a dilemma. We forget that early on in the Acts of the Apostles, the whole church was Jewish, the church of Jesus was a Jewish sect, there were no Gentiles in it,

really, worth talking about. It was an arm of Judaism. Here in Acts 10 there is a God-fearer who is an Italian, a Roman centurion, a Gentile. He is a righteous man, he's been praying and fasting to God - he isn't right with God yet, but God has honoured his charitable deeds and his prayers and heard him, and given him a vision to send for Peter. Then Peter is on a housetop at a particular time of day, and he's hungry, and God gives him a vision. He goes into a trance, and he sees a sheet of cloth coming down from heaven with all these ceremonially unclean animals that Jews are not meant to eat according to the laws of Moses. As he's looking at these unclean animals, God says to him: 'Peter, kill and eat'. He says 'No, Lord'. That's not really a statement that you can make: 'No, Lord'. He is either Lord, which means you say 'Yes'; or you say 'No', and then you're really not submitting to His Lordship - but Peter gets a bit muddled up, as we often do ourselves, and he says 'No, Lord, I have never eaten anything that is unclean'. The Lord came back with a staggering statement in verse 15 of Acts 10: 'What God has cleansed you must not call common'.

So here's this Jew looking at all this unclean fare, the menu that we are not allowed, prohibited and forbidden - yet what he is seeing with his eyes, and what he's hearing with his ears (and remember, he's hearing the voice of God), are contradicting. Now, just in case you don't know, that means there's something wrong with you - there is something wrong with you. Someone once said to me: 'If you put God in a box, guess what? God is not in the box, you're in the box!'. You can't put God in a box. So, if something you're seeing with your eyes does not agree with the conviction you have, and something that God is clearly saying, you've got to change. 'Do not call unclean anything that I have cleansed', the Lord says. So he goes down to Cornelius' house - remember that Jews weren't even to set foot in the house, the living quarters of a Gentile - he goes down, raps his door, goes in. To cut a very long story short without reading this chapter, he preaches to them, and in verse 34 if you look at it, he preaches: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him'.

God is not partial. Isn't that interesting? Peter had this revealed to him through revelation, because it was counterintuitive to his Jewishness - it didn't come naturally, this. Peter starts preaching the cross of Jesus: 'For God so loved the Jews?' - no - 'God so loved the world'. He preaches the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that He's alive to save the world. Then in verse 44 something very interesting happens: they believe the message that Peter is preaching, and the Holy Spirit falls upon them. Verse 44: 'While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered...'. What's going on here? I mean, it would be wonderful to be in a scenario like this, wouldn't it? It would be great if it happened tonight - please, God. I'm preaching the word, the Holy Spirit falls - but imagine, what would it be like to be in the middle of all that, and thinking: 'Oh, what's happening? Oh, this isn't right! Oh, this is not what I learned. Oh, hold on a wee minute, what would the rabbi say?'. That's what's going on with Peter, he's not enjoying this great baptism of the Holy Spirit, he is totally conflated within himself. He is in a dilemma, he is experiencing doctrinal disorientation - have you ever had that? Because what he's seeing, and what he's believing are not agreeing - but he's big enough to say in verse 47: 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?', and they were baptised in the name of the Lord.

Now, there is a whole lot of ironing out of creases having to go on here in Judaism at this point in time, and in the early church; because they're having to deal - and many of the chapters in the Acts of the Apostles are all about councils in the church in Jerusalem and how they negotiate this dilemma, this problem. It's a problem! 'Unclean people are getting right with God! What do we do about this?'. God has to reveal a lot of stuff to them, and change, shift things inside of them. But I want you to see tonight, chapter 11, this is reported back in Jerusalem, and the litmus test of whether or not the apostles in Jerusalem are going to tick the box of what was going on here in Cornelius' house and say it was of God - what was the litmus test? It certainly wasn't 'Are they Jews?', because they weren't Jews. It wasn't, 'Do they keep the cleanliness laws, or the rituals, or the feasts, or the festivals?', that that wasn't even considered because it was utter impossibility. The litmus test is found here in verses 17 and 18 of chapter 11, look at it: 'If therefore God gave them the same gift', that's the Holy Spirit, 'as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life''.

This is a new humanity. This is something different than Judaism, and the division between Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean. As Paul put it in the book of Galatians: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus'. Now that doesn't mean there aren't any distinctions between men and women and all that, that's not what it's teaching - it's teaching us that God is not partial when He's pouring out His Spirit. You heard Gary quote from Joel 2, recited on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, that God pours out His Spirit on all flesh - all flesh. Wow!

He is our peace - look at chapter 2 of Ephesians again please, verses 14 through 18: 'He Himself is our peace, who has made both one', the Jew and the Gentile, 'and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity', the tension that there is, and division, 'that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances', those things that disqualify us from coming to God, 'so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity', and the tension, 'And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near'. I love this verse: 'For through Him we both', or we could say 'we all have access by one Spirit to the Father'. Wow! Does that excite you? He is our peace!

This life is a life in a new humanity. The Christian is of a new kind, a new breed, a new race altogether. Listen to Romans 8:29 and 30 in The Message - you might be able to see it on the screen: 'God knew what He was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love Him along the same lines as the life of His Son' - isn't that wonderful? 'The Son stands first in the line of humanity He restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in Him. After God made that decision of what His children should be like, He followed it up by calling people by name. After He called them by name, He set them on a solid basis with Himself. And then, after getting them established, He stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what He had begun'. Isn't that incredible? Listen to that statement again: 'He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love Him along the same lines as the life of His Son'. His Son stands first in the line, we might

say, of a new humanity that He has restored.

Have you ever noticed the obsession that there is with life on Mars these days? The millions, if not billions of pounds and dollars that are spent every year looking for life in outer space - and there is new life right here! Now, the church has produced some rare specimens over the years - and that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a new, renewed, redesigned humankind who can establish a new society. They are no longer following after in the normal race of Adam, but they are a new breed. God has established, if you like, the plumbline of what this humanity will be like in Jesus, and we follow Him. A new community which transcends the social and cultural divides of Adam's race. Paul calls it, in the reading that we gave tonight, one new man - the church.

I don't know whether you already know this or not, but this is what the world longs for. Has the penny dropped? This is what our kind has been striving for throughout its whole history and existence. Unity. World peace. Who can remember the World Cup 2011? Do you remember the theme song for it? 'The World in Union', Charlie Skarbek wrote it, and the words go like this:

'There's a dream, I feel  
So rare, so real.  
All the world in union,  
The world as one.

Gathering together,  
One mind, one heart,  
Every creed, every colour,  
Once joined, never apart.

It's the world in union,  
The world as one,  
As we climb to reach our destiny  
A new age has begun.

We face high mountains,  
Must cross rough seas,  
We must take our place in history  
And live with dignity'.

Some of you can remember 2011, but some of you can remember John Lennon in 1971 when he said:

'Imagine all the people living life in peace,  
You may say I'm a dreamer,  
But I'm not the only one.  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world will be as one'.

This doesn't have to remain a daydream of lyricists, I'll tell you why: this is the vision of God. This is the new humanity. It's actually what society has tried to duplicate, but it can't do it. The irony is, the church - that's you, if you're a Christian - the church is the answer; not just has it, it is the answer! But so often the church has become the problem! This revolutionary manifesto is the very DNA of the church: to bring divided people together. However, our nature has been kind of mutated by other factors: politics, power, fear, man-made teachings, traditions, institutionalism, sectarianism,

denominationalism. So we really end up looking more like the bride of Frankenstein, than the bride of Christ - isn't that true? Rather than being a thermostat affecting the climate, she has become a thermometer reflecting, displaying the climate around.

Let me ask you a question: how has the church in Ireland reflected the spirit of the age, rather than regulated it and affected it? I'm sure you don't have to think too far. When have we followed the crowd, rather than taken the lead? Where have we failed in our role as intercessors - that is, go-betweens, as priests to bless, a kingdom of priests to bless the people of our land and bring them closer to God? This is God's new man, this is what God has dreamt up, what God has designed as we saw last night - this is why He has given us so many blessings, this is why Jesus shed His blood and rose again, and put His resurrection power within us: so that we might live this dream that He has. God wants His church to step onto the field and engage in a way that no other segment of society can.

We read it tonight, the NIV translates chapter 3 of Ephesians verse 10: 'His intent', God's plan, 'was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms'. So the church would be God's demonstration of His life, of His hope, of His love and power; so that all the heavenly realms looking down, those fallen beings, and even the kings and the rulers and the potentates of society, would look on aghast at God's wisdom that is demonstrated through His people. Wow, it's jaw-dropping! Is that what has been happening? Or have people's jaws been dropping for other reasons as they look at the church?

We are meant to be stepping into the forum that God has placed us in in society, to show people how life is done, to show people what society should look like. We are meant to be colonies of heaven. We are meant to be the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God one day will rule completely over the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, but we are meant to be foreshadowing that, forerunners of it now in spirit and in truth.

Let me digress for a moment or two. I was talking about the Day of Prayer that we're going to have on the 8th of September, God willing. Some of us who are organising this event have been chatting about the situation in our land, and the desperation, the pressure that is coming upon us from all sorts of areas in society. We were talking about the political arena, and how the Assembly hasn't met for I don't know how many days - 500 and something odd days - and how there are not even any talks about talks. You remember there used to be talks about talks? Now there are not even talks about talks about talks! There's just no talking at all! But we were asking the question: why is that? It is a bit odd that nothing is happening, zero! Some of us were considering: why is this? Is God trying to say something? We started to realise, and I am in full agreement with this now, I'm utterly convinced that we are where we are in this stalemate in Northern Ireland because the politicians can't do it. That's not to disparage them in any way, we are meant to pray for them and honour them - but I believe that this window of opportunity has been created. That's the way we need to see it, not moan, and grumble, and gripe about it; but actually realise that perhaps God is waiting for the church to take up her mandate that He has given her, to step into that place, into our identity, and take our responsibility to do what we are meant to do!

But first, we need to step into our true identity in the new man, and some of us haven't done that. Some of us have other identities. For some, our identity is

Protestant; for others, it's Catholic - and that almost comes above the name of Christ, Christian. I'm not saying you can't designate whatever way you like, that's your business. Maybe it's other distinctions, denominational ones - but I want to say to you tonight: whatever you believe, or whatever the name is above the building that you enter on a Sunday or any other day of the week, the new identity, the new man transcends all of that. It is above and beyond it all! Can I give you my heart tonight: I believe the church in Ireland needs to actually reverse to a pre-Protestant, a pre-Catholic, apostolic age - because we are never going to sort out our differences! We actually need to get back to Christ.

That's what Paul said here in verse 20, if you look at chapter 2 verse 20: 'having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone' - there it is. The only way to build is found again in the next verse: 'in whom the whole building', that's the church, not bricks and mortar; that's not the church, but you, as living stones, the whole building is fitted together, it 'grows into a holy temple in the Lord'. You see, this is what God wants us to be: the foundation is the apostles, and Jesus the Cornerstone, and this house - and the reason why it's being built is verse 22: 'in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit'. God wants to come and possess His people!

Oh, and I'm sure this will not go down too well, but I'm past caring. Instead of Protestants saying to Catholics 'You must become one of us'; and Catholics saying to Protestants 'No, you've got to come under our umbrella' - why not just lay it all down and become what God gave genesis to originally in the new man, because that was God's vision. In fact, this was Jesus' prayer in John 17:22-23: 'That they may be one, Father, just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me'. What that means is, Jesus is saying: 'When the world sees true Christian unity in spirit and in truth, they will know that God sent Me', Jesus says, 'They will know, Father, that You sent Me into the world'.

I've heard people for years say: 'Oh, well, you know, this is the invisible, the spiritual union of the celestial church'. Really? Well, how do people see that, and then know that Jesus was sent by God? Can you tell me? This has to be something that they can see. Jesus is saying: 'Just as We are one, they need to see unity among My people so they believe that God actually sent Me to this world'. It's not invisible, people need to see it, people need to know it. But I'm asking you tonight - and this has got to be honest, this has got to be real: if you want revival and renewal in Ireland, and it's not just lip service, we need to start asking the question 'What do people see when they see the church in Ireland?'. What do they see when they look at us?

I heard a guy recently relate a story on how he had gone off as a young man to a country to do mission work. He took a taxi, and he was really excited - I think it was a Muslim country - and he was really excited to witness to this taxi driver. He had loads of leaflets, and he was all pumped up. He started an ordinary conversation with him, and the guy said, driving the taxi: 'Where are you from?'. 'Oh', he says, 'I'm from Northern Ireland'. 'Oh, that's where all the Christians kill each other!'. Now, we know that's not an accurate statement, OK? But is that what people see?

How about, the world sees a new thing here? Would you like that? Would you like our country to be known for something different? I know there's a lot of pain, there's a lot

of trauma - I know, believe you me. You can't just flick a switch and make that right. There are many people afraid: 'Oh, false ecumenism, we don't want anything to do with that, or some one world church of deception'. Listen, I believe there is a false unity, I do, but I also believe there is a true unity - where is the true? So many people are so obsessed with warning against the false, that they can't tell you where the true is!

Recently I was reminded about Martin Luther King Jr. Whatever you think of his politics or some of his actions or beliefs, he was charged for being an extremist. This is what he replied: 'Was not Jesus an extremist for love: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you', He said, 'Do good to them that hate you, pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you'. Was not Amos an extremist for justice: 'Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream'. Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus'. Was not Martin Luther an extremist: 'Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God'. And John Bunyan: 'I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience'. And Abraham Lincoln: 'This nation cannot survive half slave and half free'. The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love?'. Then he delivered a powerful call to the church which rings as true today as it did 40-odd years ago. He says: 'There was a time when the church was very powerful - in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century'.

On August 28th 1963, King stood before the Lincoln Memorial and gave his most memorable speech: 'I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character'. He had a great dream, didn't he? Whether you agree with the ecumenical movement or not, its dream is a sincere one: they want to unite a divided humanity. You mightn't agree with John Lennon, 'Imagine there's no heaven' in one of his verses, but he had a great dream of uniting a hating world. The tragedy is, nobody seems to know how to do it. But the greater tragedy is: we do, and we aren't.

I have a dream, that the church will not be defined by Protestant or Catholic or any other denominational label, but only by Christ Jesus the Lord. I have a dream that we will rise above our petty differences and allegiances and agree on the centrality of Christ crucified, risen, exalted, and faith in Him alone as our only hope of salvation. I have a dream of a church purged and purified of all defilements, compromise, idolatry and paganism. A dream of a pure, spotless, chaste Bride ready for her Bridegroom's return. I have a dream of a church not besmirched by the political spirit of the world, a church free to love all mankind, a church that is salt and light in the earth. I have a dream of a church that moves in Kingdom power and authority, doing miracles, signs and wonders to the glory of God alone. I have a dream of a church which does not build an empire for its own name, but extends the Kingdom of God and His Christ. I

have a dream of a church who cares not about reputation, or personal acclaim, but performs for the approval of an audience of One: Jesus Christ. I have a dream of a church known for its love as well as its truth. A church who loves not their lives unto death, but lays down their lives for others. I have a dream of such a church in Ireland, and that such a church in Ireland will become again a land of true saints; known for its faith rather than fear, light rather than darkness, love rather than hatred, forgiveness rather than war. That's my dream - and though it's my dream, I believe it's God's dream, because God had a dream.

Look at chapter 1 and verse 10 as we bring things to a close, chapter 1 and verse 10: 'that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times'- in God's time, in other words, 'He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him'. That's God's dream, and we are meant to be living it! Are you living the dream of a new humanity? Listen: if the church in our land could get hold of this, things would change overnight! I'm serious!

Let me share this with you before I finish: last Saturday I was preparing for these meetings, and I have been for some time, and all my life - I'm not going to give you the whole story, but I have lived for to see God move, and really longed to see renewal and revival and awakening in our land. The Lord said to me - and this wasn't easy, by the way, alright? He said to me: 'Do you want to be the person to bring revival to Ireland? There is only one man who will bring revival to Ireland, and that's God's new man - Ephesians 4:15-16 - the reconciled body of Christ, where the wall of separation comes down'. Whoa - boy, did that hit me! Do you want to be the man to bring revival to Ireland? There's only one man, God's new man, where the wall of separation has come down, and there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, Protestant or Catholic, Unionist, Nationalist, Republican, Loyalist - but all one in Christ. Then He said something else to me: 'So your job is not to be God's man' - oh? Right. 'Or to look for God's man; your job is to strive to bring reconciliation to God's man, the body of Christ' - and then God's dream will be a reality, and people will see that God sent Jesus into the world.

Let's pray. Now I know there are people here tonight with all sorts of situations and scenarios. There might be people here who aren't Christians, and I'm going to come to that in a moment. There may be people who need healing, need prayer, need help - and there's going to be a prayer team here for some time afterwards, and you can avail of that help. But I want to address Christians here tonight first of all, because the great conviction of my heart, and of many people who are organising these meetings each night is that many who profess to know Jesus are not living the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus. The incalculable blessings we talked about last night, we're not experiencing them. It's just lip service, it's a superficial thing, we're not really filled with the power of God in the way that we ought to be. I have a book back there I wrote on 'Barriers to Blessing'. I can't give you that all now standing here, but there are often obstacles that are preventing us breaking through into this fullness. One of the greatest strongholds in this land of ours is sectarianism and the political spirit. I'm not saying you can't believe what you believe, I'm not saying that, I'm saying that it's our attitude to others who are different - but it's not just our attitude, some people have been elbow deep, and even up to their neck in violence, unrest, bloodshed, whilst maintaining a so-called Christian profession. I don't care what you think of me tonight, but I want to say to you: it stinks in God's nostrils. We need to repent as a church, we do. He's so full of grace and love and mercy, but we need to

repent. We need to repent of how we have taken His name and sullied it, and how we have associated the Gospel with particular political persuasions - that is just downright sinful, and God is not happy! He is merciful, long-suffering, but He needs us to say: 'That was wrong' - and we need to do it differently, we need to step into our new identity. We need to repent, we need to not just love our neighbour - guess what? Jesus said it 2000 years ago: 'Love your enemy, love your enemy'.

So I'm going to call upon Christians tonight in this place, people who feel that you are born-again and you know Jesus, and you're pretty sure about that - but you know, and I know, I have had plenty of it in me, a sectarian spirit; you know that there is something there that's not right, and it's a blockage to you breaking through. Now I want heads to bow and eyes to close this evening. I don't care whether you're a Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Dissenter, or none of the above - it's the attitude in your heart towards others that are different than you. All roads don't lead to God, everybody isn't the same in the sense of what they believe, we know all that, that's not what we're talking about - we're talking about our hearts toward others. Do you, tonight, need to repent - nothing about ramifications, you work that out with God, it's not for me to tell you what to do - but you may need to do a cleaning up job after this, a few loose ends that need to be seen to, that's OK. But are you prepared, under God's presence tonight, under the word of God, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to stand to your feet and say: 'There has been something wrong in this area, and I can't be part of this new move of God until I step into the true identity of this one man without any labels other than Jesus Christ and Him alone'? Who's going to stand? Stand now.

Father, I thank You tonight for those who have stood. I ask, Lord Jesus, by the power of Your precious blood, and by the authority in the Kingdom, that You will bind the spirits of sectarianism, hatred, and bigotry, the partisan spirits, the religious spirits, the legalistic spirits - You will bind them even in this company tonight - that are preventing people from moving out, and stepping into their true identity and nature in You. I bless those people that have stood to their feet.

Now, you repent of what you need to repent, and you talk to God and step into your new identity. The Lord forgives you, if you truly repent and confess.

Lord, I pray that You will just fill them new life, with hope, with peace, with the fullness of Yourself - that You will give them the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, self-control. May they be ministers of reconciliation, ministers of the cross in their situation, in their family, and in their land.

I'm going to give you one more opportunity, because I'll let you into a wee secret: I don't think all of you are sorted on this. I'm just letting you in on that, all you folk that are sitting down. I don't think you've all got this sorted, so I'm giving you one more opportunity to be a man, to be a woman of God and stand to your feet - not for show, don't be looking, just do this for God. Not for me, I don't want you to do it for me to make me feel better, do it for God, do it for Ireland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, wherever. You do it, do it even for these islands, but say: 'I'll be done with everything that does not submit to the name of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone'. God bless. Is there anybody else? You just pray and deal with the Lord as you're standing to your feet. God bless you.

Lord, I pray that You will just unleash Your grace and Your power. Holy Spirit, I thank You that You're brooding over this gathering.

I know that there is a spiritual battle going on here, I'm just asking the intercessors who are seated around this place to enter in with me in prayer.

Lord, I pray that You will pull down the strongholds that have exalted themselves against the knowledge of God in this nation for too long. I pray, Lord, that You will break down the altars of the falsehoods and the vanities that have risen across this island, that have blinded the minds of people, hardened their hearts to truth and righteousness, grace, peace, and love. Lord, I pray that You will lift the name of Jesus high in this tent, and over Newcastle, and over this land. May the name of Jesus be lifted high, a banner that flies across this land that all men might see the truth and know He is the way to heaven. Lord, I thank You for Catholic people in this gathering tonight, I thank You for Protestant people here. I thank You for everybody, because You're not partial to anyone. I thank You for them all, and I bless them all, and I pray that all of them - wherever they're starting tonight - will find their way completely to You, and know the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You folk can sit down, and just stay in the attitude of prayer. Is there anybody here tonight, and you don't have the assurance that you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour? What I mean by that is: you've been brought up 'a Christian', in inverted commas, going to church, and in the Christian faith per se, but you don't have that true knowledge that God has taken away all your sins, that Jesus died for you - if you had been the only person alive, He would have done it for you on your own - and that you're on your way to heaven. That's not your possession right now, you're not sure; but you want to be sure, you want to give your life over to Jesus - would you raise your hand just where you're seated? Just where you're seated, raise your hand so that I can see, and I will lead you in a prayer. Is there anyone? Just where you're sitting, don't be afraid. Jesus wasn't afraid to die for you, He wasn't afraid to die for you - don't be afraid. Is there anyone? Just raise your hand where you are. God bless you. Is there anybody else? People have responded in prayer right now, and you just pray with me from your heart - you don't need to say it audibly, just from your heart, you pray this with me: 'God, I thank You that Jesus died for me. I confess that I have sinned, broken Your laws; but I turn from that now, I'm willing to leave that life if You give me the power, and turn to You for mercy and forgiveness. I thank You that You died for me, Lord Jesus, I ask You to save me, come into my life and make me Your child. I ask You to fill me with the Holy Spirit, that I may live a life that is pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, Amen'.

If you prayed that prayer, even if you didn't put your hand up, if you prayed that prayer tell someone. We've got literature for you, we can help you. People came to the front last night, they didn't stand up or show a hand, but they trusted Jesus here - so there is still time.

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www.preachtheword.com  
info@preachtheword.com

## New Life - Chapter 3

# "A Four-Dimensional Life"

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by David Legge

**I**t has been wonderful for me to be here with the New Life Team in this new venture, it has been a real privilege, and we give God glory for everything that has been happening. People have been trusting Christ, people's lives are being changed, touched, and transformed - and we give God glory for that. So if you have been with us both nights so far, I hope that you have felt that. Do spread the word as well for the remaining nights, we are on tomorrow night, Saturday night and Sunday night, and we would love to see you, and bring plenty of folk along.

I want you to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 3, and tonight we're looking at this 'New Life' is 'A Four-Dimensional Life'. We're going to read from verse 14 of chapter 3 just down to verse 21, the end of the chapter. Paul says: *"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever"* - and join with me - "Amen".

I have to confess to you tonight, I am nosy when it comes to people's Bibles. So just be aware, if you leave your Bible sitting about on your seat tonight, I'm likely to open it up and have a little look - especially if it's worn out, OK? It intrigues me. I don't know if you've ever heard the saying: 'A Bible falling apart usually belongs to a person who isn't'. I think it's true, it's an adage that if your Bible is falling apart, your life usually isn't because you're devouring and assimilating, digesting God's word - and it's shown by how much you're using your Bible. Now I'm not suggesting that if you've got a new one tonight, you're not a good Christian! But often our Bibles, and how we use them, is a kind of blueprint, or a snapshot of our devotional life - and that's what I'm talking about, I like to see other people's experiences with God.

Another thing that intrigues me is people's personal prayer habits, when they pray. Some people get up at the scraek of dawn, I have a couple of friends get up at 4 o'clock in the morning - I can't do that, but they do it, and God uses them mightily. I try to get up early; some people, their habit is to stay up late, and some people stay up into the wee small hours praising and praying to God. It intrigues me also where some people pray. Some people like to go into a closet, as Jesus said, a secret, quiet place. Other people like to go out and walk around the countryside, or go to the top of a mountain. Then there is the 'how' of people praying, and there are many methods and ways to pray - and we have that borne out within Scripture. I believe variety is the spice of life, but it's also the case with the spiritual walk with God - it's always good to vary things. Sometimes when you're getting tired and worn and jaded in your secret

time with God, it's good to change something.

It inspires me when I look at other people's walk with God, how they use God's word and pray to Him, and it helps me as well to know how I should pray. Of course, it was our Lord's personal prayer habit that provoked the disciples. They saw Him going to pray, and they asked: 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples to pray'. They saw how He was doing it. Now, just imagine for a moment rummaging around in the house where Paul was under house arrest, where he wrote the epistle to the Ephesians from. He is arrested by Rome, and all of a sudden - as you're hoking and poking around, nosy like me - you stumble upon his prayer list, his prayer diary, or parchment probably wouldn't it have been? He may not have had one, but if he did, you find it - what do you think were Paul's prayer priorities, the things that he prayed for?

By the way, just as an aside - and this will help you in your prayer life - pray God's word. We're going to be looking at these verses tonight, and it's God's word showing us Paul's prayer priorities. So, if you want to know what God's will is, start praying God's word. We already know something of his prayer pointers from chapter 1, if you look at chapter 1 quickly, we were on it on Wednesday night - verses 16 through to 19: 'I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places'. Every time you read that, it only gets better, doesn't it? This is what he was praying for: that our inner eyes would be opened, that our spiritual senses would be enlightened so that we would understand the love of God, and the greatness of the power of God that is meant to be living in us - that very same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

Now in chapter 3, as we're hoking in his house, we find that his prayer priorities are exactly the same in chapter 3 as they were in chapter 1. He is praying for these Ephesian believers that they would have love and power. Do any of you know that song, I think it's Michael W. Smith sings it: 'More love, more power, more of You in my life'? That's really what Paul is saying here. Who here tonight wants a greater revelation of God's love? Who wants more of an experience of God's supernatural power? Can I just say, before I go on any further, you need to receive that in the place of prayer, the place of intimacy with God - that's where you get it. You can run to all the meetings you like - and I'm not suggesting God won't touch you in amazing, miraculous ways when you come to events like this, He does! But if you truly want to go into the depths of what it is to know the love of God as He intends for us to know, and His power, that resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead, it's in a daily day-by-day walk of intimacy and prayer with Him that you will find it.

So let's take a magnifying glass tonight to Paul's prayer points, and see what we can learn from them. I want you to look at verses 14 to 15, verses 14 to 15 that we read together, of chapter 3: 'For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named'. First of all I want you to see that, before we look at his prayer points, he was praying prayer to the

Father. The NIV translates that 'the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name'. Up on the screen you will see the Greek word for 'family' is 'patrea', and it's actually derived from another Greek word for 'father', 'pater'. So it's indicating that, just as the word 'family' in Greek, 'patrea', finds its source in the word 'father', 'pater', every family in the whole universe finds its source in God as their Father. I want to say to you, that's why I believe that the enemy, Satan, attacks the family, why he attacks fatherhood. The Passion Translation translates this: 'God is the perfect Father of every father and child in heaven and on earth'.

Paul is just about to pray that these Ephesian believers would know incredible revelation of the exceptional love and power of God, but I want you to understand that the place where he starts is the Father heart of God. I believe that a revelation must proceed a revelation of the love and power of God; it's the revelation of the Father heart of God. If you don't really have that, you'll not move on as you ought to into this depth of knowing God's love and power the way He intends. In fact, that's what Jesus taught us to pray, isn't it? 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name'. So, as He teaches His disciples to pray as He prayed, He is teaching them that the basis of all fellowship and intimacy is understanding the Fatherhood and the Father heart of God. If you don't understand His Father heart, you'll never truly appreciate the love of God in Christ - because it is the Father who sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, 1 John 4:14 - it all started with Him! So, when we are born-again, we receive the Spirit of adoption, and the Spirit of God's Son rises up within our hearts and we cry: 'Abba, Father' - and 'Abba' is the Aramaic word for 'Daddy'. You can do all you like to try and get round that, but that's what it means!

So, you've got to break through - and some of you tonight need healing because of the earthly fathers you've had, and they have warped your view of fatherhood in general. Whether they have been abusive, cruel, harsh, taskmasters, absentee fathers, or completely deserted you - you need the good, good Father that is in heaven, that is revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son. You need to know the Father heart of God. You might need to forgive your earthly father, or a guardian, or a mother - but you need, if you want to know God's love, to meet the Father in Jesus Christ, the Son. Has that ever happened to you? You know, for many years as a Christian, when I read the word 'Father' in the Bible, do you know what I saw? I just saw 'God', that's all I saw. It didn't register with me, when I was reading the word, that God wanted to be my 'Abba', wanted to be my 'Heavenly Daddy'. I just saw 'God', it was just another name for God. But now, when I see 'Father', I see my 'Abba'.

There is a threefold prayer that Paul now prays, first of all verse 16: 'that He would grant you', Ephesians, 'according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit'. First of all, the first prayer point is related to the Spirit of God, he prays that the Spirit will strengthen their inner beings, that they will be strengthened with might in their inner person. Who needs strength here this evening? What do you need strength for? In fact, what do you need in any capacity? Paul is praying that the Holy Spirit of God - and remember that Jesus taught us in John 14-16 that the Holy Spirit would be another of the same kind as Him, who would come in His absence as a Comforter, that's an old English word that means 'with strength', He would come to strengthen us, He would give us a veritable spiritual blood transfusion that we need. Another word for that is an 'Advocate', one who would stand on our behalf and plead our cause. So if you're here tonight, and you're weak, and you're broken, and you're burnt out, and you don't know what to do, and you've no more

strength left: the Holy Spirit can meet you, and He can help you.

'Parakletos' is the word that is used for 'Holy Spirit', which just means 'comes alongside and lifts you up'. Who needs that in the gathering tonight? This is what Paul prays, and he says God is able to do this, the Holy Spirit, at a rate of - look at the verse - 'according to the riches of His glory'. Do you know how rich God is? I'm just saying - I'll give you a clue: He owns everything. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and the people who dwell there. Here we have unsearchable - that's what it says here - unsearchable riches. You cannot bankrupt God! The strength that He is able to give you by the Holy Spirit for your weakness, or whatever your particular need is, He gives at a rate according to His riches in glory - so it can't run out! It's inexhaustible! We said on Wednesday night, these blessings are incalculable! So this is Paul's prayer, and that means it's God's will for you to be strengthened inside by the Holy Spirit to the extent of how rich God is. Is that not incredible?

The first prayer point is related to the Spirit, the second is related to the Son. Look at verse 17: 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love'. He prays that Christ might be more and more at home in these believers' hearts. Is Christ at home in your heart? Do you know how He dwells in our hearts? He dwells in our hearts by faith. What does that mean? Faith in what? Well, Colossians 3:16 - Ephesians and Colossians, by the way, mirror one another, and the corresponding verse to this one in Colossians is 3:16, which says: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly'. So Christ dwelling in us is when His word abides in us - in other words, we believe what God has said. One of the things that God says is: when you are born-again, God comes to live within you by His Holy Spirit. Do you believe that? Do you believe that God is alive in you? Do you believe that the power that raised Christ from the dead is alive in you? I'm not asking how you feel, I'm not asking what your circumstances are, I'm asking what you believe is true. Do you believe that Christ has cleansed your heart by His blood? Do you believe that He has taken out a stony heart and given you a new heart of flesh that is beating for His glory with His own life? You see, that's how Christ dwells in our heart - by faith. What do you believe? What are you believing? The truth, or lies?

This is what Paul prays, first of all he prays that the Holy Spirit would strengthen their inner person, and then he prays that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith. Then the third thing is related to the love of God, that they would be rooted and grounded in love - verses 18 through to 21. He talks about this four-dimensional love that we need to be rooted and grounded in - but can I say this before we move on to that four-dimensional aspect: you've got to be rooted and grounded in love. It doesn't say rooted and grounded in truth - now we need the truth. It doesn't say rooted and grounded in grace - though we need grace to be saved. It doesn't even say rooted and grounded in faith - we need faith, as we have just seen. It says we need to be rooted and grounded in love, because it's not our love, it's something outside of us - it's unconditional. The love of the Father, revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son.

Jude, in his little epistle, says (I love this): 'Keep yourselves in the love of God'. Do you do that? Keep yourselves in the love of God? Some of you keep yourselves in the law of God, the do's and the don'ts - that's not what it says. Keep yourself in the love of God. Paul prays that they may be able to grasp the full dimensions of God's four-dimensional love. Now look at verse 18, because this is where we're going to spend the

rest of our time: 'that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'. Who knows that we live in a three-dimensional world and universe? These are the three dimensions: one dimension is the linear dimension, if you like; two-dimensional is length and height, but there is no shape or volume with two dimensions, no depth; and the third dimension is length, depth and height - so three dimensions has depth and form, it's fleshed out. Do you understand the differences?

When you go into the world of dramatics and literature, you find that this language is also used. For instance, a one-dimensional character is seen to be a superficial character. A review of some play might say, or of a film, 'The supporting roles are alarmingly one-dimensional creations, linear'. Two dimensions, the character also is lacking depth, not as much as one-dimensional, but it still lacks the depth of characterisation. You see, a drama should never be anything less than three-dimensional in its characters - that means full characterisation and representation of the events to make them believable; that's what it's all about, to make you believe what you're reading on the page or seeing on the stage.

That's dramatics, theatre - but I want to ask you tonight: what kind of Christian are you? Are you a one-dimensional Christian? There are a lot of one-dimensional Christians in Ireland, and Northern Ireland in particular. What I mean by that is, linear Christians. They are really only interested in getting from here, this point, to that point over there called 'heaven' - 'How do I do that? How do I get my sins forgiven and make sure I'm going from here to here?'. That's not a wrong thing to want, but there is much more to Christianity than that. They have a linear relationship, but not a vertical one with God - they're not focused on that dimension of knowing Him as Father. Then there are those who are two-dimensional, and they've got some kind of height or stature in the knowledge of God, but there is no real depth - do you understand? Then there are three-dimensional Christians. They've got substance, form, they are more mature. They're not just acting out some role. Maybe that's you tonight, you've got character, you've been on the road for many years, and you generally represent Jesus well - but there is still something missing from your life. You have to admit that. You're still on a spatial, material level, rather than a spiritual one.

Paul talks and prays that the Ephesians would know the fourth dimension. There is another dimension beyond the third dimension, what is this fourth dimension? Well, some scientists of string theory - if you've ever heard of that - they posit that there could be 10, 11, or even 26 different spatial dimensions in our universe, depending on their particular scientific bent. I don't know whether you can see that Stephen Hawking quote, it's quite funny: 'The idea of ten dimensions may sound exciting, but they would cause real problems if you forget where you parked your car'. Now, I know that there is a fourth dimension in science, but that's not what Paul is speaking of here. Surely what he's talking about when he speaks - look at it again, verse 18 - 'the width, the length, the depth, and height' of God's love; he's talking about a supernatural dimension. He's talking about a spiritual sphere, a heavenly realm.

This really interests me, how this idea of a multi-dimensional universe may actually fit with our spiritual understanding. Have you ever heard how the ancient Celtic Christians talked about there being 'a thin place' between here and heaven? A bit like C.S. Lewis' 'The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe' - the wardrobe was a thin space through

which they could move from one realm of reality to another that was unknown. I think that's what Paul is talking about here in the fourth dimension, it's otherworldly. It could be that rather than heaven, as we've often conceptualised, being far far away beyond the distant galaxies, it's more like the case that heaven is actually an extra dimension to this present reality. You see, this is how the spiritual realm can be present with us in time, here and now. It's an extra dimension, it's the God-dimension, it's the God-space that actually transacts our space.

The context of this fourth dimension, as Paul presents it to us, is the dimension of God's love. That's why verse 19 describes it as 'surpassing knowledge'. The love of God in Christ is beyond our understanding. So I want to ask you: what kind of Christian are you? Are you a one-dimensional Christian, 'Get me from here to heaven, and that will do me fine'? Are you two-dimensional, and you lack depth? Or do you have that rounded maturity, and yet you know there is something missing, there is a fourth dimension, there is a spiritual dynamic, there is a Holy Ghost power that you are absent of?

In 1884, Edwin Abbott wrote a satirical novella called 'Flatland'. In 2007 it was made into an animation. What it really does is, Edwin Abbott brings alive points, lines, plain shapes; and so what you've got is, these shapes interact with one another as personalities. So Flatland, basically, is a world of two-dimensional shapes - so there are squares, triangles, other polygons. But all of a sudden in the plot of the story, a square, a two-dimensional flat square is visited by a sphere, a three-dimensional sphere from Spaceland! This sphere appears, seemingly out of nowhere, as a rapidly growing circle, and it actually introduces itself as 'Many circles in one' - that's what a sphere is, isn't it? So there is this world of two-dimensional shapes that are ignorant of any three-dimensional existence; but all of a sudden this 3-D sphere comes into their world. Actually the sphere says at one point: 'I am in Space, and look down upon the inside of things which you only see the outside of'. The sphere explains: 'A slight upward or downward motion would enable you to see all that I can see', and with that, the sphere lifts up the square to view his world from the strange place above.

We live in the third-dimensional world, but there is a fourth dimension. Most people live ignorantly of it. Maybe you're here tonight, and you just live as if all there is, is to eat, drink, and be merry - because tomorrow you die. As far as you're concerned, nobody has ever come back from the dead to tell you that there is a heaven or there is a hell - and you live for the 3-D existence. But God's word says, and Paul prays even for these Christians, that they would not allow the world to push them into its three-dimensional mould of time and sense; but that they would realise that there is a fourth dimension, there is a spiritual place. If we would just lift up our eyes, we would be able to see from God's vantage point - but it's going to take more than mathematics, more than reason, imagination, it's going to take the Holy Spirit.

The fourth dimension is real. I need to ask you, particularly Christians here tonight, are you living in Flatland? Are you living in an existence that is less than Christ died for you, less than He intended you to enjoy? What if you could move a new direction? What if you could move along a new dimension? You see, that's what the Gospel is all about: that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came from heaven, the eternal realm, and He stepped through that thin place and came into the womb of a virgin. He was born as a baby boy, and He grew to be a man to live in our three-dimensional existence. He walked our life, He lived our life for us. He went to the cross, and He died our death for

us. The Bible says He took our sin for us, He bore our hell for us. He was buried, and on the third day He rose again so that He could live life for us. But it doesn't stop there, the Gospel account is that He ascended to heaven as a man, to take us - who live in a three-dimensional world - into the fourth dimension, into another realm. We can go there now because He has gone before us, He has appeared in three dimensions but now He transcends it. This is why all of us here tonight, through the Gospel of Jesus, need the Holy Spirit to supernaturally reveal to us the extent of God's love. We need a revelation! When you know the love of Christ in this way, you're on the way to be - look at verse 19 - 'filled with all the fullness of God'. That's incredible!

I'm going to talk tomorrow night on the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I'm not entering into this right now, but how can anybody be filled with the fullness of God? Chapter 1 and verse 23, if you look at it, at the end says 'the fullness of Him who fills all in all'. God fills the universe, He's even bigger than that you know - it's the universe dwells in God! God is greater than the universe, in Him we live and move and have our being. All three dimensions exist in God. In fact, all existence is in Him! Yet we as Christians, when we enter into the full extent of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we can be filled with all the fullness of God. I don't understand that, except when you put a bucket in the ocean, the bucket gets filled with the ocean, but not all of the ocean goes into the bucket. It's the only way I can understand this: it's full of the ocean, but not all of the ocean is in the bucket. You see, when you understand that the love of God in Jesus Christ for you, to send Him to bleed and die, and rise again and go to heaven as your Forerunner; when you understand that, you enter a fourth dimension of love that fills you with God Himself.

I hope you're getting this. The Spirit fills you with God's love and God's power. Will this make a difference to you? We started talking about our prayer life tonight, didn't we? Well, the fourth dimension of God's love and God's power opens up a supernatural dimension to prayer that is utterly mind blowing. Look at verse 20: 'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen'. What a difference it makes to your prayer life! Listen to that verse in the Passion translation: 'Never doubt God's mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve' - watch this - 'infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for His miraculous power constantly energizes you' - just like we read in chapter 1:19-20. The power that raised Christ from the dead is alive in you!

Is your prayer life in Flatland? Is it? Is it the sinner's prayer, the one-dimensional one to get you to heaven? Is it two-dimensional, where there is no depth or relationship? Maybe it's 3-D, but you need a fourth-dimensional prayer life that will get you what you are asking, but beyond it! Please note, it doesn't say, as is often quoted in Christian prayer meetings that 'He does exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think', it doesn't say 'can ask or think', it says 'does ask or think' - you've got to do the asking! We need a baptism of a revelation of the love and power of Jesus. Look at the power that is working in us, the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

I said it on Wednesday night, and I'm going to ask you again as I bring this to a close: do you truly believe that the power that raised Jesus from the dead, never to die again, is alive in you? Will you pray Paul's prayer for you, that you, by the Holy Spirit,

may be strengthened in your inner man; that you may have Christ dwelling in your heart by faith; that you might be rooted and grounded in love, so that you might know the fourth dimension of the supernatural realm of the indescribable, surpassing knowledge, love of Jesus Christ; and that your prayers should become extraordinary. Will you pray that tonight? Will some of you step through the thin space from Flatland into Spaceland, into God's space, God's dimension?

Some of you need to do that tonight, and you need to actually come to the front for prayer - by coming to the front, you're stepping out in faith, and you're saying 'I'm going to step through the thin space, and I'm going to believe God for a miracle'. It might be in your body, it might be in your mind, it might be in your heart and your emotions, it might be in your soul. Some of you might, for the first time ever this evening, receive the invitation to believe in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and your Lord; and you're going to step out to say: 'Tonight, I turn from my sin, I turn from myself, and I come to Jesus Christ for forgiveness'. Some of you might be on the road for years, and you've got a full-bodied depth to your Christianity, but there is something missing, and you want to say: 'Holy Spirit, whatever I haven't got, and whatever I need, I'm coming to ask You for it' - and that's you stepping through this thin space; but you've got to step into it. If it was automatic, Paul wouldn't have needed to pray for it for these believers. It was theirs in Christ, but they needed to step in. Who will take that step tonight? Will you?

Let's pray. Let's just take a moment in the presence of God. I want to first of all invite Christians to respond, by inviting anyone who feels that they have been living a 1-D, 2-D, or even a 3-D existence as a Christian - but you know little or nothing of the fourth dimension, and you want, tonight, to move into that area. You want to know more of God's love and more of God's power, you want your prayers to take on another level - and you know that this is what God wants for you, it's in God's word, so it's God's will. Paul prayed for it, you can pray for it tonight, and you want that this evening. Would you be willing, just as heads are bowed and eyes are closed, to raise your hand and say: 'This is the four-dimensional life that I want'? Just where you are. God bless you, praise God, praise God. Thank You, Lord. You can put your hand down once you respond. Thank You, Jesus. Will you just ask Him? There are people still putting their hands up. God bless you. You just ask Him where you are, just say: 'Lord, I thank You for this love of Christ displayed on the cross of Calvary. I ask You now to open the eyes of my heart, I ask You to broaden my capacity to receive and experience this fourth-dimension'.

Maybe there are folk here tonight, and you need the comfort of the Holy Spirit. You need Him to strengthen your inner man. Is there anybody broken tonight, anybody weak, drained, burnt out? Just put your hand up to receive. God bless you. Will you ask Him? Ask Him, say: 'Holy Spirit, come to me and strengthen me in my inner man, my inner person'. Is there anybody who knows that Christ is not at home in your heart? He can't be, because you're not abiding in God's word, and His word is not abiding in you. In other words, you're out of sync with what His word says. Now, none of us is perfect, but we need to continually confess our sins and bring our life into line with Him and His Lordship. You've got to admit tonight, 'Christ couldn't be at home in my heart, because there are certain things in my heart that He would find it very difficult living around' - and He's very gracious and merciful. None of us is perfect, but you know there is wilful stuff there, there are idols there, there are habits that you need to get rid of - would you be willing to say tonight: 'I'm going to repent of those

things, I'm going to forsake them with the help of God, and I want Christ to dwell in my heart and be at home there'? Would you raise your hand? Is there anybody who would admit that tonight? God bless. You repent of those things, confess them to the Lord, and ask the Lord Jesus to come and be at home in your heart.

Are there those here tonight, and you have been rooted and grounded in law, in legalism, in religion, in duty and performance, or tradition that we were talking about last night - Protestantism, Catholicism, or something else - but you're not you're not rooted and grounded in the love of Christ primarily. But you want to go to that foundation now, and draw everything out of His love and His love alone. Is there anybody who would respond on that vein, and say 'It's got to be His love'? God bless you. It hasn't been His love, but it's got to be His love. Praise God, people responding. There is a breakthrough tonight.

Is there anybody that knows that there is a dimension of the Holy Spirit's ministry that you do not know, and you want to know Him in all His fullness? Whatever it's called - and we'll talk about this tomorrow night - whatever it's called, you want Him, and you want to embrace Him with everything that He has for you. Would you raise your hand? Praise God, praise God. Well, ask Him, just ask Him, 'Give me everything, Lord, that Jesus died for me to have through Your Holy Spirit. I want everything in the fourth-dimension of Your love and Your power'.

One last question: is there anybody here tonight, and you have never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? You've never prayed, repenting and confessing your sins, and asking Him to come into your life, cleanse you, and make you His child - but you want to do that tonight, you want to take that first step through that thin space into the new dimension of eternal life. You want to live with God forever one day, but you want to know Him now, and you can. Would you raise your hand just where you're seated, if that's you? God bless you! Is there anybody else? Just raise your hand long enough for me to see. You've never become a Christian before, never taken that step of salvation. Is there anybody else will follow the one that has responded so far?

Now listen, the last two nights, people have not responded during the appeal, but they have come to the front afterwards and received Jesus as Lord. You can do that tonight. I have literature to help people as well, and we will talk and pray with you. The prayer team is going to make their way up now, and as we are worshipping in the closing moments of the meeting - people are free to go, by the way, if you have to go, but we would encourage you to stay as long as you can - come and get prayer, don't be reluctant, don't be self-conscious, or conscious of other people. The Lord is here tonight, and He can touch you, and He can change you, and He can help you. But just in case there are those who want to become Christians tonight, you're sitting in the gathering, pray this prayer with me from your heart just now, and God will hear you if you mean it sincerely: 'Oh God, I come to You in the name of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I confess I am a sinner, and I turn from those sins and turn to You for mercy and forgiveness. I thank You that Jesus died on the cross for me. I ask You to save me, and forgive me, and make me Your child. I confess Jesus Christ as Lord, I renounce Satan and all his works, and I ask You, Holy Spirit, to come into my life and fill me that I may live a life that is pleasing to You. I believe You have heard me now, and I thank You in Jesus' name, Amen'.

If you've prayed that prayer, tell someone - but don't leave tonight, whatever your

situation is, Christian or not; don't leave tonight without encountering God in more of His fullness, the fullness of His love, and the fullness of His power - the fourth-dimension. Come and experience it tonight, to the glory of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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Transcribed by Andrew Watkins, Preach The Word - September 2018  
[www.preachtheword.com](http://www.preachtheword.com)  
[info@preachtheword.com](mailto:info@preachtheword.com)

## New Life - Chapter 4

# "A Life Of The Spirit's Fullness"

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**T**onight we are coming to Ephesians chapter 4, I want you to turn with me there please, Ephesians chapter 4. Let's pray before we come to God's word: Father, we come to You in the name of our Lord Jesus. We've been singing tonight about the Name that is over all, the Name that is above every name. We read the other evening from this epistle that You have given Jesus a Name that is high above all principalities and powers, might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also that which is to come. We uplift, tonight, the name of Jesus, the Lord and Christ. We pray that His Lordship will be evident in this place, in this moment, in this atmosphere, in this space and time - but that we would, as we thought about last evening, step into the fourth dimension of that God-space, that there would be that transaction of eternity upon our temporal existence now, and that we would know that God is here by His Spirit, and You would take a dealing with us tonight. We pray with the apostles, we believe that Acts 4 and 5 have been prophetic words to this conference for various reasons - and, Lord, I just take an excerpt of it now and bring it to You: "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus". And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness'. Would You do that tonight, Lord? Would You shake this place, shake our lives, fill us with the Holy Spirit that we may speak Your word boldly. In Jesus' Name we ask it, Amen.

OK, verses 1 through to 6 first of all of chapter 4, then we're skipping down to verse 17, and I'll keep you right after that. Verse 1 of chapter 4: *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body"* - isn't that interesting? Just pause there. 'There is one body', what's he talking about? The church, the new humanity we focused on on Thursday evening - one body. In another place 'one church', that's interesting, isn't it? I used to pastor a church on a road called 'Templemore Avenue', and the name of the road was typical of the way it was - because there were little temples, little churches all the way down it, I can't remember, but there were about seven churches on the Avenue, and off the Avenue there were various other churches. So what does it mean, that there is 'one body, one church'? Well, what it means is that God is nondenominational, did you know that? Jesus Christ came to found one church. It doesn't really matter whether you say 'Oh, I'm of the Catholic Church', or 'I'm of the Protestant Church', or 'I'm of the Presbyterian Church', or the Church of Ireland or whatever - there is one church, and that is made up of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who believe in Him alone having died for our sins according to the Scriptures, being buried, and rose again according to the Scriptures. If you agree with that, I agree with you, and you're my brother and you're my sister - and I don't care where you come from. I could go on

on a rant, but I'll not.

Let's read on: *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were 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"*. Do you not love the word of God? Mighty, isn't it? Down to verse 17, please: *"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk"* - there's that word again, we saw it in verse 1, 'walk worthy' - *"no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour', for we are members of one another. 'Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you"*.

Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 5: *"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And"* - that word again - *"walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma"*. Now down to verse 8, please, of chapter 5: *"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light'. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God"*.

The first three chapters of the book to the Ephesians outlines for us what we are meant to believe, and we saw that so often our belief is on paper - but we are required by God to unwrap the gifts, the incalculable gifts that He has given us; to draw down from the bank account that is in Christ, where all the credit has been deposited to us by grace, through faith we are to draw down from that and live in the good of those blessings as possessions. Remember we asked the question on night one: do we have the will, or are we in the wealth? Are we enjoying what God has given to us in Christ?

So, what is exhorted of these Ephesians is to walk worthy of the calling with which they have been called. Paul is emphasising: 'Listen, your beliefs affect your behaviour'. The first slide on the screen shows us that, that our walk is affected by what we worship, by what is worthwhile and worthy to us. We've seen already from reading, haven't we, the prevalence of the word 'walk', but also in connection with the Spirit - so often, if you look at it at home at your leisure, you'll see that they are connected. First of all, verse 1 of chapter 4: 'Walk worthy of your calling'. Also, 'No longer walk as Gentiles walk', verse 17. Don't walk the way you used to walk in darkness. Verse 1 of chapter 5: 'Walk in love'. Verse 8 of chapter 5: 'Walk as children of light', don't walk in the darkness. Verse 15: 'Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise'. Your belief will affect your behaviour - walk circumspectly.

I was born and brought up in East Belfast, and I had a number of relatives who lived right in the inner-city, and they had what you call 'yards' - do you know what a 'yard' is? It's instead of a toilet! The yard was the place you went to go to the toilet, not upstairs but out in the yard. I remember my great aunt's and having to go out to the yard, but she had a yard wall, and the yard wall was covered in broken glass that was cemented. I remember many-a-time looking out her living room window and watching cats negotiate the glass on the yard wall, maybe you've seen that. That is what walking circumspectly is, walking carefully - one translation puts it: 'Pay careful attention to how you walk'.

Tonight we are looking at 'New Life' is 'A Life Of The Spirit's Fullness' - and before we get into all the wham, bam, and the boom of what it is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, walking in the power of His gifts and all the rest, we need to be biblically balanced and understand that God calls upon His church to walk wisely. We saw last night that there are a lot of one-dimensional Christians about, linear, and all they are really interested in is: 'How can I get from here on earth to over here in heaven?'. They have no vertical relationship with the Lord. There are 2-D Christians, they have no third dimension of depth, and area, and form as well. We are looking for the fourth dimension, of course, but 1-D and 2-D Christians, they often talk the talk rather than walk the talk. I wonder are you walking the talk, are you walking, paying attention to how you walk? You could be a Christian by name or by religious practice, you've got the right language - as Jesus put it, quoting from Isaiah: 'They honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me'. There are even people who are born-again and believe everything the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, but they engage in an awful lot of talk with not much walk. Big claims, and little substance. To be even more serious and tragic about it: there are people who take the name of Christ, and even are involved in Christian service, but then it's discovered - because there is a great exposure - that they are living in flagrant sin all the while, they're ministering but they're living a double life. How is that? Did you ever think about that?

Well, if I can help you, and maybe there is someone here tonight and that has actually turned you off Christianity - because you've seen that type of behaviour, maybe even in the church. Romans chapter 11 verse 29 says: 'The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable'. Do you know what that means? The New Living Translation puts it like this: 'God's gifts and His call can never be withdrawn'. That means that when God calls you, and saves you, and gives you certain gifts; He doesn't necessarily take those away when you start living wrong - so that's why people can be a wonderful evangelist and see many people won for Jesus, but can be living in sin at the same time; because

God hasn't taken His gifts away. He's maybe not pleased with how the person is living, but He hasn't taken the gifts away. That might confuse you, just get into the word of God and see it for yourself. I've seen it several times, where a person's gifting can take them farther than their character has gone. Do I need to repeat that? Your gifting can take you farther than your character has gone - that's why the fruit of the Spirit must grow in conjunction with the gifts of the Spirit.

I hear some people say: 'Well, the fruit of the Spirit is more important than the gifts of the Spirit' - nonsense, that's wrong. But the gifts of the Spirit are not more important than the fruit of the Spirit, they are equally as important as each other. When you think of the attributes of God, who would dream of saying that it's more important having a God of love than a God of power? That would be ridiculous, because if you had a God who loved everybody - the way we were talking about 'Oh, how He loves us' - but He had no power to do anything, to change our circumstances, what good would His love be? What good would His power be, if it wasn't a loving power that was compassionate? He would probably have wiped us all out by now! In the same way, the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit are equally important, because they give the full-rounded character of the Holy Spirit Himself. That's why, by the way, 1 Corinthians 13, the great love passage, is sandwiched in between the two passages to do with the gifts of the Spirit - chapters 12 and 14.

So what am I saying? I'm saying this: some people have an obsession with the power, and the gifts, and the work of the Holy Spirit; but we need some balance to understand that the Holy Spirit is given not just for a buzz, but so that we will walk holy lives. Sometimes - and I have to say, I believe in the gift of tongues, Paul said 'I speak in tongues more than you all put together', and he was talking to the Corinthians and they were crazy on tongues, so he must have spoke an awful lot in them. But some people are so obsessed with supernatural tongues, but unable to control the one natural tongue that God has given them. Talk is cheap, isn't it? Actions are priceless. Some people make great claims, but they are not backed up in their personal life. Then there are others, and they no longer talk about their faith - I've noticed this - Christians in the workplace and in everyday life, they don't talk about Jesus, why? I've got a hunch that it's because they feel like hypocrites because they aren't walking it out themselves. That's why churches, that's why sometimes preachers don't address certain subjects that are topical in our day and age, because they can't do it authentically because they are caught up in those things themselves.

Our walk is so important. You see, we're not just to be in the Spirit, we are to walk in the Spirit. This is how we walk wisely, we walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called - especially in a world as wicked as this! It's the Spirit-filled life, and only that life is going to cut it! In Galatians 5:16, Paul said: 'I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh'. Verse 27 of chapter 4 of Ephesians says 'don't give place to the devil' - if you walk in the flesh, you will give an advantage to the evil one, you will give a loophole, a foothold in your life that will become a stronghold. Verse 36: 'If you're walking in the flesh' - and he gives some descriptions of what that might look like - 'you will grieve the Holy Spirit'. The Greek word for 'grieve' there is the word that describes 'sorrow' or 'bereavement' - that the Holy Spirit can become vexed with us when we're walking in the flesh.

We've seen already that when we are born-again, in this epistle, we are sealed with the Spirit. But isn't it interesting that you can be born again, sealed with the Spirit, and

still grieve the Holy Spirit? That's news to some people, because they are just saved and stuck - and as far as they're concerned, they've got everything that they need, and they have arrived, and they're just waiting for the rapture, or for heaven when they die - and nothing else is going on. But you can grieve the Holy Spirit - so it's not enough to be called, saved and sealed; we need more, we need to walk in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit, we must be filled with the Spirit.

So what does this life of spiritual fullness look like, and how can we walk in it? Let me share three things with you tonight: first of all, you need to put on a new mind. To walk in the fullness of the Spirit, you need to put on a new mind. Look at verse 17 of chapter 4, Paul says that we should no longer walk in the 'futility of the mind of the Gentiles', the way we used to think. We ought not to think that way any longer. In verse 18 he says that they have 'their understanding darkened', that there is ignorance in them because of the blindness of their heart. Verse 20: 'But you have not so learned Christ'. Verse 23: 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind'. What Paul is saying here is: 'If you're going to walk in the fullness of God's Spirit power, you're going to have to put on a new mind, you're going to have to think differently'. You don't often hear that, do you? It's all very ethereal and mysterious, and spiritually airy-fairy - but Paul comes in here and says: 'Change your mind'.

The word for 'repentance' in Greek is 'metanoia', and it means literally 'to change your mind'. But it means more than that, it means 'a new mind altogether' - not your mind, but the mind of Christ. If you're going to live differently, if you're going to walk differently, and behave differently, you're going to have to think differently, Paul says. Proverbs 23:7: 'As a man thinks in his heart, so is he'. Change your mind, and change your life, Paul is saying! This is not merely the power of positive thinking - some people, when I go on like this, say: 'Oh, that's Norman Vincent Peale', no, it's not! It's supernaturally receiving the mind of Christ spoken of here in chapter 4 verses 23 and 24: 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness'. This is something that God has created through the death and resurrection of Jesus! He wants to give you this new mind. It's not just positive thoughts, but it's thoughts in alignment with God's thoughts, God's truth.

Some people, when it comes to the Holy Spirit, want God to zap them, want God to sort out all their problems - but they're not prepared to change anything, let alone their thinking. It doesn't work like that. Jesus said in John 8:32: 'You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free'. If you want the Spirit to work long-term in your life, you're going to have to submit to the Holy Spirit changing your mind. Romans 12:2: 'Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind'. Do not underestimate the supernatural power of a renewed mind. Some of you are here tonight, and you've new hearts, you are born-again, but you've got an old head. Are you with me? Your thinking has not been redeemed.

What attitude do you have, for instance, toward yourself? Analyse for a moment - not too long, I don't want to lose any of you - your self-talk, the way you speak to yourself and about yourself to yourself, or about yourself to others. Often our attitude is exhibited in our words, and even in relation to sin, the things we struggle with - and there has been a whole sin list, a litany of transgressions that we have seen in our reading tonight - but when we are struggling and striving with temptation, we may speak words like: 'I can't defeat this, I can't overcome that, I will never be able to...'.  
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That's our attitude toward sin, which is actually out of sync with the thinking of God. What about our attitude towards God Himself? Some of us see God and perceive Him to be a harsh taskmaster, a legalistic type of schoolmaster, policeman, judge, despot, a cruel overlord. We saw last night that breaking through into the four-dimensional love of God comes firstly with the revelation of the Father heart of God, that He is our Abba Father. What is your attitude to God like?

You see, some of us need to repent. We need to repent of how we're thinking about ourselves, what we're saying about ourselves, how we're relating to sin and how we're relating to God. We need to change our mind. Let me ask you a question: when was the last time you changed your mind about God? People in Northern Ireland, a lot of them, never change their mind about God - do you know why? Because they're right! They know everything about God there is to know! If you don't know what they know about God, guess what? You're wrong! You need to change your mind to be like them! But they're not going to change - why would they change their mind? They're right! I've got news for you: it was God who said, 'I am the Lord, I change not'. He is the only one who doesn't change, and if you're not changing you're either God - I'm pretty sure you're not - or you've missed something. You've missed the renewal of your mind.

You see, you should be changing your mind about God. If you're getting fresh revelation about who He is, and you're learning more and more about Him, you ought to be changing your mind. You ought to be changing your mind about His ways when you learn how He relates to you in grace, etc. You're not growing unless you're changing your mind to some extent. Paul says to these Ephesians: 'What you believe affects the way you behave'.

Can I just go on another rant about a hobbyhorse that I have? There is a song, an old gospel song that goes like this: 'I'm only a sinner saved by grace'. I want to say this - and it's a nice tune, and there are some nice words in it, but that is wrong - period. If you're a child of God, you're not only a sinner saved by grace. You see, if you believe you're only a sinner saved by grace - guess what you're going to do? Because what you believe affects the way you behave - if you believe you're only a sinner saved by grace, you're going to sin by faith, because that's what you believe you are. So if you believe you're just a sinner that's saved by grace, you're getting to heaven, but you're a sinner - that's your identity, that's who you are - you're going to live out of your identity, you're going to walk in it.

You've heard of fake news, haven't you? We're not getting into that one tonight, but there's a lot of fake news that floats around in the spiritual dimension - things that we hear, and we believe, and we receive in our hearts. How about, rather than designating yourself as a constant, wicked, wretched sinner, see yourself as a saint who sometimes sins? That could change things, because that's what the Bible says you are: you're now a saint. You may have a sin habit, but you should not be identifying with the sin nature, because the sin nature is not you. As we will see in a moment, the sin nature has been put to death with Jesus on the cross. So some of you here tonight have sought the filling of the Spirit for a long many-a-year, and you don't know why it has eluded you, or at least the witness of that fact - and for some of you, it's a change up here that needs to happen, a change of mind. You need to put on the new mind, you need to start thinking differently, you need to start seeing yourself as who God sees you, you need to start speaking over yourself what God says, you need to stop

listening to the lies of the devil, the accuser of the brothers - stop listening to his fake news, and start tuning into what God says! Do you know what God says? That His thoughts toward us are more than can be numbered, they are more than the stars of the sky, the sand of the seashore. If you could just tune into His station - it's like that song we sang - you would be overwhelmed by His jealousy for you, His love for you, what He thinks and feels for you. 'Oh, but I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy'. You're not worthy! Get over it! He is worthy of you, He is worthy of you.

Secondly, to walk in the Spirit put on the new mind, but also put on the new man. We've touched a little bit on this a moment or two ago. Look at verse 22 of chapter 4: 'Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind', verse 24, 'put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness'. Right, remember the way we speak about our sin, the things we say, 'I can't'. When you say 'I can't overcome this temptation, I can't overcome pornography' - it went very quiet there! That's a real problem in this tent - I don't know anything about you, but, you know, the statistics bear it out, it's a problem. There are various problems, but when we say 'I can't', I'm going to ask you the question: who is the 'I' who can't? Oh, this is really deep, isn't it? I'm confusing you. Who is the 'I' that can't? What I mean is: is it the old you you're talking about, or is it the new you?

The problem with some of us says: we are trying to live the Christian life out of the old man, rather than the new man. Some people say: 'Oh, I hate myself' - well, which self are you listening to? Are you listening to your old nature or your new nature? Well, I've got news for you: your old nature died when Jesus died on the cross. Turn with me to Romans chapter 6, keeping a marker in there at Ephesians, quickly, Romans chapter 6, turn to it - or scroll down! Romans 6 verse 6: 'Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin' - somebody say 'Amen!' 'For he who has died has been freed from sin'. You're free from sin if you died when Jesus died. 'Now if we died with Christ', verse 8, 'we believe that we shall also live with Him'. Look at verse 11: 'Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace'.

This is God's truth! You either believe it or you don't! If you believe that when Jesus died, you died, that will revolutionise your Christian experience. Graham Cooke puts it like this: 'When Jesus died on the cross, He didn't just die for me, He died as me'. Wow. Jesus has literally killed us with kindness. So, are you trying to live your Christian life out of the old nature? A lot of Christians are: sweat of the brow, pull your socks up, try better. Some of you are totally dejected because the old man is not behaving the way he should. I have a revelation for you tonight, Psalm 103 verse 10: 'He does not deal with us', God does not deal with us, 'according to our sins' - that means He doesn't deal with the old man, He deals with the new man in Jesus. He doesn't even recognise the old man's existence, because that old man died with Christ. So, 'Why then', you say, 'if that's the case, if he's dead and buried with Jesus, and God does not relate with him or deal with him - why does he cause me so many problems?'. Because you believe he's still alive, you're effectively giving him CPR,

you're a gravedigger, dragging up this dead body and slapping him on the back, breathing new life into him. Because you believe he's still alive, and well, and powerful, and strong, you resuscitate him. But what you need to do is what Romans 6 says: 'Reckon your old self to be dead to sin', and then that means anything that resembles that old nature and behaviour, crucify it! Put it to death!

Do you know something? I think, tonight, as I stand before you, and I've been a Christian many years, I have a greater appreciation of the cross than ever - because the cross didn't just take away my sin, the cross has killed the power of sin. Is that the cross you believe in? That's the cross Jesus died on, but some of us are carrying around a dead body with us, this deadweight of a dead nature, when we need to leave it in the grave where Jesus left it. It dawned on me in February of this year that my emphasis in Romans 6:11: 'Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin', has always been on the reckoning of the dead to sin - you know? The equal emphasis of the verse is to reckon yourselves alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord! You see, half the power is reckoning yourself dead, half the power of sin and victory over it is reckoning that you are alive in Jesus, believing that His life is in you! Haven't we been here these nights: that the very resurrection power of Jesus lives in us, that the very fullness of God who fills all in all this universe, in whom we live and move and have our being, is alive in me - and as we believe that, we receive it, and His life comes to us through His Spirit!

If you want to walk in the power of the fullness of the Spirit - do you? You need to change your mind, put on the new mind; you need to put on the new man, put off the old one once and for all - it's dead, you've got a corpse on your back! Paul said: 'Who shall deliver me from this body of death?'. Thanks be to God, we have the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thirdly and finally, you need to be filled with the Spirit. Put on the new mind, put on the new man, and be filled with the Spirit. Chapter 5 verse 18: 'Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit'. Now we receive the Holy Spirit at new birth - when you are born-again, OK, you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Another language for that might be, chapter 4:30, you are sealed with the Spirit. But obviously there is something different being spoken of here.

Now, let's just pause for a moment, there is a difference of opinion around the teaching on the Holy Spirit. Now I'm not going to delve into that tonight, but I just want agreement from you all on this point: that what Paul is talking about here is an experience, and it's different than salvation, initially being born again - because he speaking to people who he has already told were sealed with the Spirit, but now he is commanding them to be filled with the Spirit. This is in the imperative mood, it's not an option, it's a command that you will ignore at your peril. It's also an ongoing experience, it's in the present continuous tense - which literally means 'Be continually filled with the Spirit'. People say: 'Oh, David Legge, he preaches second blessing' - I don't preach second blessing, I preach third blessing, fourth blessing, fifth blessing, tenth, hundredth, thousandth, millionth, incalculable blessings. Why? Because we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Christian life is a life of ongoing blessings, and the filling of the Spirit is not a once-and-for-all experience. It is not. It's an ongoing experience, it's constant - not just on special occasions, though it can happen on special occasions for various reasons - and it's also in the plural, which means it applies to all Christians, it's not just for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and missionaries. It's not for the select few, it's for everyone - 'Be continually being filled, all of you, with the Holy Spirit'. It's in the

verb, in the passive voice - that means this: we do not fill ourselves, we get filled, we get to a place where the Spirit fills us. So it could be translated like this: 'Let the Spirit fill you'.

Will you do that tonight? This is the paradox of the Christian experience: let the Spirit fill you. Like many things in the Christian life, it's ultimately God that does it - but you have to do something about it. The Christian life was not meant to be static, and it was not meant to be lived in a vacuum. There is meant to be this constant flow from the Throne of God, of God's Spirit filling us. Isn't that what Jesus said 'On that great day of the feast, He with a loud voice cried, 'If anyone believes in Me, out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water''. It's not the Dead Sea in here, it's a living river flowing constantly.

There are two commands in this verse: don't get drunk - I hope you all agree on that one - but be filled with the Spirit. Do you notice that being drunk affects your walk? Have you noticed that? Just the way being filled with the Spirit affects your walk. This is not an analogy or an illustration I would have used, because I knew I would get in trouble if I did that, but the Holy Spirit through Paul uses this comparison, or let's say 'contrast'. The way the alcoholic spirit affects a man or woman in the negative, the Holy Spirit affects in the positive. Alcohol dominates the personality and determines the behaviour, so does the Holy Spirit. He affects our character and our walk. If you want to walk wisely, pay attention to how you walk. You need to walk in the Spirit by being filled with the Spirit.

Alcohol doesn't just affect your walk, it affects your talk. Jesus said: 'Out of the abundance of a person's heart, their mouth speaks'. It's very interesting, in the Acts of the Apostles, when there was that original baptism of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and subsequent outpourings of the Spirit, people spoke in tongues. It affected their speech, something happened to their mouth. Then we find occasions when Peter and Paul were going to stand boldly to preach, and it says 'and filled with the Holy Spirit', and Stephen 'filled with the Holy Spirit', spoke boldly. It affects their mouths. Here in chapter 5 of Ephesians verse 19, it says 'speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord'. If you're filled with the Holy Spirit it will affect how you talk to people, and it will affect how you talk about people.

Alcohol affects our walk, our talk, and also our smell. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2 that we, as Christians, are meant to have a fragrance of Christ about us in every place that we go. Have you ever sat beside a drunk man on the bus? Imagine if we walked past people, and brushed their shoulder, and they went 'sniff, sniff', 'There's something different about that person, what is it?'. They are filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's a lot of argumentation goes on about the Holy Spirit, isn't there? I have my views, I'm sure you have yours - I'm not going to fall out with you tonight, but I agree with what Billy Graham said when he said: 'I don't care what you call it, just get it'. Be filled with the Spirit! There is a story told of a school fire in Texas, when 263 were meant to be killed - I haven't had this verified, some have cast doubt on it - but it was meant to be after the War, a new school was built. It was advertised as having the finest sprinkler system in the area. This was after the fire, I'm talking about, after the great tragedy. The mastery of technology had allowed them to install this, and after seven years of post-war boom they decided to expand the school again. So they were

doing a bit of building work, and they found that this state-of-the-art sprinkling system had never been connected - they weren't hooked to the source.

Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Well, you need to change your mind, and you need to put on the new man that is in Christ, and do you know what you need to do? You need to come in simple faith and ask Him. It's repentant faith, you might need to repent of known sin in your life that is a blockage to blessing - but, do you know something? I don't believe that, with the fullness of the Spirit, you have to almost be perfect before you get it. Some people believe this, you know: just empty yourself of everything, and get so holy that all of a sudden God will come. If you could do that, you wouldn't need the Holy Spirit. You need the Holy Spirit in order to do this. But you do need to be willing to repent, and say if there are things that are out of line and out of sync, if you are grieving the Holy Spirit. You need to surrender to Him, and you need to ask in faith.

It's not about feelings. Now, the Holy Spirit can give some wonderful feelings - but that's not what this is about. When people come to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour, we don't say: 'Do you feel saved yet?'. We, in fact, encourage them not to look to their feelings but look to their faith. The feelings may come, but the important thing is: what does God say? 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; whoever comes to Me, I will never cast out'. So Jesus said in Luke chapter 11:13: 'If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask?'. He goes on to talk about a child who asks for bread, and his father gives him a stone - who would do that? Even the most wicked person may not do that to a child - but your Heavenly Father, He is the good, abundant God of heaven. If you come asking for what you need, will He not give it? Then there are some children, and they are asking a fish - would any father give the child a scorpion or a serpent? Who would do the like of that? But some of you have been scared off the Holy Spirit by preachers and teachers who have told you: 'Oh, don't go seeking an experience with God's Holy Spirit, or you'll get a demon! Don't let anybody lay hands on you! You'll get a demon!'. I'm sorry, that's not what the Bible says. I'm not saying there are not some weird and wonderful things going on in Christian meetings, there are - and I'm not saying you just let any Tom, Dick or Harry lay hands on you and pray anything over you. I'm not saying that. But I am saying this: only the devil wants you to be afraid of the Holy Spirit.

So, who here tonight will come? As the Passion Translation translates Luke 11:13: 'If imperfect parents know how to lovingly take care of their children and give them what they need, how much more will the perfect heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit's fullness when his children ask Him'. This new life is a life of the Spirit's fullness, this is what make the dynamic of Christianity different from every other conceivable faith - not just that there is the promise of sins forgiven, and assurance of salvation, but there is the very life of God! Our God comes to live in us! A man who experienced and taught the infilling of the Holy Spirit was asked by clergyman: 'Are you telling us that you have the truth, and we do not?'. The man said, 'No, I do not say that'. He thought about the way of explaining the difference between individuals and churches who are operating in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit, and those who are not. Suddenly he found himself thinking about an electronic appliance that he and his wife had bought when they moved to their home in Dallas, Texas. He said to the clergyman: 'We both have the truth. You know, when my wife and I moved to America, we bought a marvellous device called a deep-freeze. There we keep some

rather rare fine Texas beef. Now, my wife could take one of those steaks out, and lay it frozen solid on the table. It's a steak alright, no question of that. You and I could sit around and analyse it, we can discuss its lineage, its age, what part of the steer it is from. We can weigh it, list its nutritive values - but if my wife puts that steak on the fire, something different begins to happen. We can weigh it and list it, but my little boy smells it way out in the yard, and comes shouting 'Wow, Mum, that smells good, I want some!'. 'Gentlemen', this preacher said, 'that's the difference between our ways of handling the same truth: you have yours on ice, we have ours on fire'.

Now listen: my intention tonight is not to divide this group into haves and have-nots. God doesn't do that, because all of you are haves if you are in Jesus Christ, because all of you have every blessing in Christ. Every one of you has what Peter says: precious promises, so that you can be partakers of the divine nature and have everything for life and godliness. So you've got this, what you need to do is unwrap it, and draw it down from your heavenly account, and live in the experience of it; and start changing your mind, putting on the new man, and just come and by faith say like a little child: 'Lord, You said I need this, You said I can have this, and I want this' - and here's the next step 'I believe that You have heard me, and that You have given me this now'.

Now, God does give subjective witness that the Holy Spirit has come - and you let Him do that as He sees fit, and you look for it, and you seek it; but do it from the vantage point of faith, believing He has heard you. Who longs to be filled with the Holy Spirit? God bless you.

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Transcribed by Andrew Watkins, Preach The Word - September 2018  
www.preachtheword.com  
info@preachtheword.com

## New Life - Chapter 5

# "A Life Of Spiritual Conflict"

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**I** want you to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians 6, and we're going to read from verse 10 through to verse 20. Paul says: *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles",* or the schemes, tactics, of the evil one, *"the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints; and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak".*

We've been looking at the book of Ephesians this week, considering 'New Life'. Tonight we want to look at the fact that this new life in Jesus Christ is 'A Life Of Spiritual Conflict'. The twentieth century has been called 'an age of conflict', military conflict has taken place during every year of the twentieth century. There were only short periods of time that the world was free of war. The total number of deaths that were caused by war during the twentieth century has been estimated at roundabout 187 million - staggering when you think about it - and, in fact, it's likely that it's more than that. So the twentieth century has been an age of literal conflict. However, in the twenty-first century, we have discovered a cultural war - that is, a conflict between, we might say, 'traditional or conservative values' and those considered liberal or more progressive, so-called. Now, it has been more pronounced in the USA, but it's all over the Western world - and it originated last century, twentieth century, but it has accelerated exponentially in this century.

Essentially, the culture wars are a fight for the soul of a nation. You do understand that that is what is going on? The battle for the heart of the people. It was seen in the Republic of Ireland, in the recent abortion referendum, and now the subsequent pressure that the North is under to follow suit - and some of us saw those placards being held up by politicians and various other campaigners, 'The North is next'. There is a cultural war that we are engaged in. Effectively it is a moral war. Isaiah put it well when he said: 'Evil is called good, good is evil; darkness light, and light for darkness; bitter called sweet and sweet for bitter'. The 'S' word - you know what that is? 'Sin' is entirely absent from public debate. The concept is archaic, to say the least. So we live in this moral topsy-turvy world where no one knows what is right any more.

Then we have also an identity war - how we designate oneself. It's no longer just a little box, tick 'M' or 'F', 'male' or 'female' - and it's not even 'gay' or 'straight', there is a whole spectrum of possibilities regarding sexuality, the options are almost endless as you can see from that slide. Sexuality is now subjective, subjective to your thoughts, 'What do you think you are? What way are you inclined?'. It's subjective to your feelings and emotions, rather than objective biological fact. Do you remember when you were a kid, and the little puppy ran into the room, and you said 'Is that a boy or a girl?' - what would happen next? Do you remember? Someone lifts it, turns it up, and looks, and goes 'Ohh!'. It used to be biologically objective fact, whether you were male or female - if you had the bits, you were, if you didn't, you weren't - sorry to be so crude! But those are the facts, but not any longer. There is even now - this is staggering when you think about it - a conflict within the ranks of LGBT+, between transgender folk and lesbians. Bizarrely, at London Pride recently, this year, 2018, the parade was disrupted and stalled by a protest from lesbians against the inclusion of transgender people in the parade. One protester expressed their grievance by saying this: 'Only women can be lesbians. A man who has surgery can never be a lesbian'. Staggering, isn't it? So there is a whole conflict now within those ranks all to do with identity - how you designate yourself.

Then there are the truth wars. We live in a post-truth society that appeals to the emotions rather than facts. We talked last night about fake news, and it is everywhere. It's hard to know who to believe anymore, isn't it? There is this concept of 'relative truth'. I don't know whether you saw Oprah Winfrey's acceptance speech at the Golden Globes not that long ago, but it was fascinating when she said 'Your truth', it's 'Stand by your truth'. Whatever your story is, relative to your experience, we've all got to stand by it. It's no longer an absolute truth for everyone. One commentator said: 'There is no such thing as 'your truth', there is either 'the truth' or 'your opinion' - interesting, isn't it? But now people have the concept that 'You can have your truth, and I can have mine, and they can both totally conflict like black and white, and yet I can be right and you can be right as well'.

So, I hope you agree with me that we live in a time of utter confusion. I mean if it's 'your truth', how can we discuss what is right or wrong? How do we know what is true or a lie? We can't. One philosopher illustrated it like this: it's as if we are on the same playing field together, but all of us are playing different sports according to different rules. So there can be no reasonable debate at all, and that's why preachers have this dilemma and churches have a crisis; because when they stand in the public square now and declare 'This is truth', nobody hears them because people are blinded now to this concept of truth. For us, as Christians, if we're honest, this is totally and utterly disorientating. We are even getting confounded in our values and our understanding and worldview.

The response, sadly, of many Christians, is to bury their head in the sand. The attitude is: 'Well, as long as my life and my family is OK, I'm not going to get involved'. A sort of 'live and let live' mentality - but the problem is that this war is now coming to our doorsteps, our workplaces, and our churches. The so-called 'liberal agenda' is now displaying its true colours, and it's really a fascist 'conform or comply' intolerance. What has been prevalent now for the last decade or so in the big picture of society is being reflected in the pressure that many individuals, including Christians, feel in their own personal lives - to compromise in their views, attitudes, beliefs. Many who profess to be Christian believers feel not only marginalised in society, but on the back foot

personally.

I have felt, at times, a bit like King Jehoshaphat - do you know that story? Where he says: 'A great multitude is coming against us and we don't know what to do!'. Do you ever look out at the world and think 'I'm overwhelmed'? How do you face this? How do you answer this? How do you operate in such a quagmire of confusion? How do we make sense of it all? Well, can I tell you tonight, it makes perfect sense to me. Indeed, it is, in fact, perhaps, more real than the religious illusion that many of us have been living in this country for years - because the Bible teaches that we are at war. There is a spiritual war, and this new life that we've been called into - and we have spent much of this week talking about the incalculable blessings that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ in heavenly places in Christ, they're inexhaustible; and how we have a four-dimensional reality in the spiritual realm, and we can know this four-dimensional supernatural love. So it's all wonderful, but there's this other side where we actually come against all that is in this world system on a spiritual level. What can we do about it?

Let me share with you tonight how we face this spiritual conflict. First of all, one: we recognise that we are in a battle, we are at war. That means that you have to reject denial and passivity, and any blissful ignorance that you have, and realise that we are in a bloody war. The devourer of our souls wants our flesh and the flesh of our children - it's as serious as that. As chapter 5:14 says: we need to awake out of sleep! Arise from the dead! Christ will give us life, but we need to quicken ourselves to this reality: that there is a war on. This means war! If you're for Christ, if you believe the first three chapters of this epistle, and that belief affects the way you behave as we saw last night - that we're walking in light, and we're walking according to the calling wherewith we are called, and we're walking purposefully and with intention, and we're walking in the power of the Spirit, with renewed minds, with the old man put off and the new man put on - we will have everything in the spiritual realm that's not of God coming against us. Are you aware of that in your life?

But we need to recognise that this is primarily a spiritual war. Look at that verse, verse 12: 'We do not wrestle' - some people could just stop there - 'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places'. You see conflict may exhibit itself in military warfare, bloodshed - and we've known about that in this land. By the way, I believe that the bloodshed in this land for hundreds of years (not just in the Troubles), for hundreds of years, has brought a curse upon our people. I believe the bloodshed of certain covenants on both sides of the divide has brought curse upon our nation, so we've got to take bloodshed seriously. Warfare is exhibited in military conflict, also political debate, the culture wars that we have mentioned, politically correct society and the pressure that comes from it, the sexual revolution around us, spiritual confusion in false belief systems - but these are only symptoms, manifestations of a deeper dynamic that is going on, more hidden machinations; because at the core of all these conflicts that we have witnessed around is a spiritual battle.

Politics is not wrong, and some people are called to politics - but politics is not the answer, because it's not a political battle we're in, it's a spiritual battle. The legal system must, at times, be utilised to defend rights and freedoms and against the advance of evil - but it's not the answer, because this is not a legal battle we're in, it's

a spiritual battle. Apologetics and reason have their place, but that's not where the battle is fought and won, because this is not an intellectual battle - and, by the way, no one was ever argued into the Kingdom of God, I'm just saying. It's a spiritual battle for the souls of humankind! So that means you must fight fire with fire, yes?

Well, first of all, you need to turn up. You need to recognise that we are in a war. Now, I know how overwhelming this can be, believe me. Sometimes I feel, 'Groan'. Certain radio shows and current affairs programmes, I can't listen to any more - honestly, I can't! Because I get so frustrated, and I'm usually made even worse by the 'Christians' who ring in and argue for 'truth' in such a cringeworthy way - and that's an understatement. But what do we do then? What do we do about this when we recognise that there is a spiritual conflict? Where do you take it from there?

Well, here's the second thing: start fighting the real enemy. We're not wrestling with people, Paul says in verse 2, we're not wrestling with governments, but with principles, and principalities, rulers not only in a sense of earthly rulers who are passing laws, but it's more than that, it's beyond that: it's the heavenly realms, the powers in the second heaven that are pulling their strings and influencing them. That's why, as the church, we ought not to make this battle that we are in personal to people, to individuals or people groups, whoever they are. Can I say: this is where we have been losing the battle. People have perceived us as angry. Rather than 'the church militant', we have become 'the church belligerent'. People have felt our hate, we have made them feel rejected, judged - and we need to repent.

I'm going to talk in a few moments, of course, about the armour of God - we'll not have much time, but I'm going to mention it. You would expect that, wouldn't you? But can I tell you what the greatest spiritual weapon we have, as believers, is, in this spiritual conflict? Do you know what it is? Love. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love disarms people. In fact Colossians, in chapter 2 verse 15, says that at the cross Jesus spoiled principalities and powers, He disarmed them, making a show over them, triumphing over them in His cross. So what that's saying is: the greatest act of love ever disarmed principalities and powers. How about we start loving people and stop judging them? Stop telling them where they're going wrong, and start pointing them in the right direction. Oh, I could go on.

Love disarms the greatest foes - I guess that was why Jesus said, in the first place, 'Love your enemies'. Do you remember that one? We are called to love, we are actually called to bless those who curse. Some people come to me and say: 'Oh, I have had a gypsy curse me. Oh, what do I do when somebody curses me?'. I just say: 'Bless them, and it bounces off you!' - that's true. 'Bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Blessed are you when people say all manner of evil against you falsely' - it's counterintuitive, I know.

Now this is not saying that we don't tell the truth - but Ephesians 4:15, we didn't look at it in any detail these nights, but it says: 'Speak the truth in love'. We have to stand for the truth, but can I say: I reserve my hatred, every ounce of it, for one - the enemy of souls, the enemy of God, he gets all my hatred, nobody else. I hope they get love. So we need to start fighting the real enemy, how about that? When we waken up to the battle, realise it's not about people, it's not about politicians, it's not about movements, it's not about churches, it's not about cults, it's not about false teachers -

it's about a war with spiritual realms that are in the unseen! Therefore, we need to start using the right tactics.

That's the third thing: recognise we are in a battle, start fighting the real enemy, and use the right tactics. Now, before we consider the strength that God has given us to fight, and the weapons - as I said - this armour; we need to realise the plane on which this battle will be lost or won, it is a spiritual dimension. I spoke about it the other evening: there are linear Christians, 1-D Christians, their journey is from earth to heaven, hopefully escaping hell - OK. That's all they are interested in. Then there are 2-D Christians, and they have some kind of a vertical relationship with God, but there's no real depth to them. Then there are three-dimensional Christians, a bit more form and area and substance to them, but there is still something missing. Paul talked about that four-dimensional love of Christ which is a supernatural dimension where we are in another realm altogether - well, this spiritual conflict happens there. You might be going through stresses in your marriage, in your workplace, in your walk with God, certain temptations and all the rest - and there might even be people that embody and personify those struggles, but you've got to understand: there is something more than flesh and blood going on. There is a fourth dimension.

So, as I said, you've got to fight fire with fire. So it's not politics, it's not law, it's not apologetics - they all have their place, but you've got to fight this spiritual battle on the spiritual plane, and some of us don't know how to do that. Another aspect of this is fighting on the right level. Now there are ground troops, ground warfare, there is a Navy, and then there is the Air Force in most conflicts - and all of them are necessary. But often, I have discovered, that battles have been won from the air. I'm not suggesting we don't do ground warfare, that's what we do when we preach the Gospel to every creature, that's what we do when we spread the news of the Kingdom, that's what we do when we do acts of power in Jesus' name - but we must beware of the fact that this battle is won from the air; not even struggling with second heavenly level demons and principalities (be careful of all that), but going into the third level of heaven, the Throne room of God, and knowing where we are and seeing God's vantage point from the air, just like that photograph. If you've ever been at the maze there in Castlewellan, and got lost like I have several times, what you need is somebody up there on the bridge saying: 'Go this way', because they can see it from the vantage point of being above.

We have the highest vantage point in heaven to see our enemy's positioning and strategy. We've read it over and over again in Ephesians: 'in Christ, in Christ, in Christ'. It's time for us, as we said the other evening, to step into our position in the heavenly realms, far above all principalities and powers, might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come. That's where Jesus is, that's where we are in Christ - but so many of us have allowed the circumstances of our conflict here on earth to envelop us and swallow us up. We need to ascend - as Christ has risen, we are seated on high with Him - to our heavenly place, and see God's perspective.

So we need to recognise the battle, and we need to start fighting the real enemy, start using the right tactics. I want you to see also: we need to start drawing from the correct source. Look at verse 10: 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might'. 'It's not by might, nor by power, but by My' - what? - 'Spirit', says the Lord. Now we give lip-service to that, we can quote it and we can sing it, 'No,

not by might'. What we need, when we are in the thick of the battle, is a different thing now. When the heat is on, when the smoke is rising, to position ourselves in Christ and draw from His supernatural power. That's what Jehoshaphat did in that battle, when the multitude was coming against him and he didn't know what to do, he positioned himself before God and he waited on a word from God - and he got it through a prophet. This is what was said: 'Do not be afraid, nor dismayed, because of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's! You will not need to fight in this battle' - listen - 'Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation and deliverance of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you'.

It's His strength, it's His battle, it's not ours - oh, isn't that a relief, isn't it? 'Lord, it's over to You, You deal with it, it's Your battle'. It's funny this, because this passage is all about warfare and armour, and yet it says as we go down here - it doesn't say 'advance', it doesn't say 'run against the enemy', it just says 'stand'. 'Stand therefore', verse 14, 'having girded...', stand therefore - the verse before, 'that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand'. What Paul is saying by the inspiration of the Spirit is: 'If you're in the thick and the heat and the smoke of battle, and you don't know what's going on, and you're disorientated by noises and all sorts of gory sights - when the smoke of battle has descended, if you're still standing on the victory ground that Jesus has given you, that's a win' - that's a win! But you've got to be drawing from the correct source.

Some of you have been fighting, maybe even the enemy - maybe you've known it's not these people, that he is behind this, it's the spiritual dynamic behind them - but you've been fighting it in the flesh: 'I need to learn more Bible verses, I need to pray more milliseconds' (I was going to say 'hours' there, but...) 'I need to pray a few more minutes, I need to read more chapters of the Bible'. I'm not saying those things are bad, but sometimes - as we said last night - we're trying to live the Christian life out of the old man, the old nature, rather than the new man in the Spirit's power. Some of you here tonight weren't here last night, some of you were, but you need to get filled with the Holy Spirit. You need to put on the new mind, the new man, and get filled by Him. You have to draw from the correct power source.

But finally, I want you to see that you have to utilise the weapons that God has already given us. It's verses 14 through to 18. There is the power of God in you, remember we said it's the resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead, isn't that what Ephesians says? The power that raised Christ from the dead is alive in you, working in you! But it's working in you so that you can utilise what God has given you in these weapons, and it's not automatic - that's why Paul says: 'I want you to put on the whole armour of God'. It's just like the fullness of the Spirit, it's different than being born again as we said last night, it's different than being sealed with the Spirit - you get the Holy Spirit when you come to Jesus, but being filled by Him is a subsequent experience that is ongoing right throughout your Christian life, hopefully, over and over again - 'Be continually being filled by the Holy Spirit'. God has given it to you, but you need to receive it - everybody has it given to them, but you've got to receive it. In the same sense, Paul says: 'You've got to take these weapons up'. You're not automatically immune to the enemy when you go out in your daily life, you've got to put on the whole armour of God. Take it to yourself.

So you have it there: the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the

girdle of truth, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, feet shod in the preparation of the gospel of peace, and all prayer. We don't have time to look into these in any detail, just to say this: Jesus is the life, He is the way, and He is the truth - isn't that right? All of these items of weaponry are to do with the truth, and Jesus is the truth, isn't He? He is the life, He is the new life we've been talking about - it's a relationship with the Person. He is the way, but He is also the truth. So, when you put on the helmet of salvation, that's what we meant last night when we said: if you want to change things in your life, you need to change your thinking. You put on what God says about your deliverance and salvation, what He says about you in Christ. You put off the old man of negative thoughts and lies, and you put on the new of what the Gospel says your identity now is. It's repentance, changing your mind, being renewed in the Spirit. Put on the breastplate of righteousness - you're not walking in your good works, you're putting on Christ's goodness that He gives you because He died for you on the cross, and rose again that you might have life. Dead to sin, alive to God, through the resurrection - that's the truth!

The belt of truth, self-explanatory. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God - the truth, God's word written, spoken, and declared prophetically. Faith, the shield, faith in what? Faith in God's word, what God has said. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. Feet shod in the preparation of the gospel of peace, what does that mean? Well, it's the peace of God, but you're standing firm on the ground of the truth that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It's all about Him, it's all about truth. Do you know something? One of the most profound statements I've ever heard in relation to spiritual warfare was this: 'Spiritual warfare is not a battle for power, it's a battle for truth'. What's the truth? 'You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free'. George Orwell said - and we live in extremely Orwellian times - 'In a time of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act'.

Are we utilising the weapons? There is so much more we could say about this, but we need to take the truth of God to our lives and put off the old and put on the new, which is Jesus. This way of new life that sets us free is what we use against the enemy. These pieces of warfare are not things just to have on our prayer list to pray down in a superstitious way, these are things to actually put on as lifestyle characteristics, and then we will overcome the enemy - we will overcome in Jesus' name and bring light into the darkness. You see, the weapons of our warfare, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, are not carnal or fleshly, but are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, the casting down of arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. This is the war we're in, these are the weapons we've been given, let's take them and use them!

So, do you recognise that you're in a battle tonight? What is your personal battle? We talk about national, political, social, and moral issues - but you're sitting here tonight, and you're in a war. You're in a hot, hellish struggle. What is it? I want to tell you: Jesus has overcome. If it's sin: Jesus has overcome. We said last night: whoever has died is free from sin. So, if you're a Christian tonight, or you become a Christian, you have died with Jesus and the truth is - forget about fake news, and the devil telling you 'Oh, you'll never overcome, and you'll always struggle' - the truth is: whoever has died with Jesus is free from sin, sin does no longer have dominion over you. That's the truth! You're knee deep in it, up to your neck, maybe over your head, and the lie of the devil is: 'You're always going to struggle with this, always! It's always going to trip

you up! You never will overcome this, you just have to put up with it and hide it' - lies! Damned lies from hell. Believe the truth.

Maybe it's not sin, maybe it's the enemy himself, Satan. Maybe it is actually bondage that he has brought you into, a spiritual bondage where you feel that you cannot move forward because you're under something, and you need to be set free tonight. Well, come and get ministry tonight, but the truth will set you free, the truth that we overcome the enemy by Jesus' shed blood. He hates His blood, because His blood delivers us from all the bondage that he can bring into our lives. He can do good job at tying us all in knots, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, gives us victory!

Maybe it's circumstances, that's your battle - and you feel maybe not even at a crossroads, but at a dead end, you don't know how to get out. You know, the Lord can lift you up out of that to transcend, to see things the way He sees them, to give you a hope and a future, to give you a purpose. Maybe it's sickness, maybe it's sickness, and that's your battle, that's your conflict. There is healing power in Jesus Christ, in His blood and His cross, to heal minds, to heal emotions, hearts, to heal spirits, souls, and bodies too. The war is over! Jesus died and is Victor! Satan is defeated! You see, that's the truth that the devil wants Christians not to know. Thanks be to God, He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ - but as we said last evening: why is it, then, that I am struggling, that I am in the battle, that I feel overcome so often? It's all down to who you believe and what you believe.

Remember I said last night: if you believe you're only a sinner saved by grace, you will sin by faith, because that's what you believe. If you believe you're only a sinner saved by grace, you will sin by faith - because your behaviour will follow your belief. But if you believe you're more than conqueror through Jesus Christ, guess what's going to happen? You're going to conquer, you're going to overcome. So, what do you believe? You see, the war has been won at the cross, and what we are engaged in now is effectively only a clearing up exercise.

D-Day took place on June 6th 1944, and it was that day that the Allied forces invaded Europe by crossing the English Channel and landing on the beaches of Normandy. It was the largest amphibious assault in world history, as the air, land and sea forces sought to turn the tide of World War II by getting a foothold in Europe. By the end of the day 160,000 American, British and Canadian troops had landed along a 50 mile stretch of the French coastland. The fatality estimates range from 2,500 to 5,000 - it was a costly victory, but it was a victory nonetheless. In fact, it could be said that the war was won on D-Day, it was the decisive battle of the war. But it wasn't until May 8th 1945 that VE-Day came, Victory in Europe Day, that marked the unconditional surrender of the German Armed Forces and the end of the Third Reich. So, what are we saying? The war was won on D-Day, but the enemy's surrender and cessation of hostilities didn't come until VE-Day - and, for us as Christians, we live in between a kind of D-Day, where the battle was won at the cross of Jesus Christ, 'Tetelestai', it's all finished, paid in full; but the fighting goes on, but the outcome is certain. He wins, Christ is Victor.

As Christians, we live between D-Day and VE-Day, and there's a bit of mopping up needing to be done - but the outcome is secured. Satan hasn't surrendered yet, there has not been a cessation of hostilities, but it's coming - because Jesus won on the cross. So, whatever battle you're in tonight, I want to declare over you - and I don't

care what you're hearing, or what other people are saying - in this new life in Jesus Christ, there is victory in Jesus. I want to declare over the conflict in this nation that there is victory in Jesus; over this world, there is victory in Jesus; and one day - isn't it great that we know this, this is why we can work and walk in confidence - that the Prince of Peace will reign over this whole earth, the goodness and the glory of God will cover the earth as the ocean covers the sea, because Jesus wins!

Am I the only one getting excited here? Do you believe this? Well, if you believe it, right, and it's not all just talk that's cheap - will you believe it for your conflict? Maybe it's a marriage, maybe it's in a church situation - plenty of conflict there - maybe it's in your wider family circle, maybe it's in your community, maybe it's a conflict in your mind or your heart or your body, some people's bodies are attacking themselves - will you believe that Jesus is Victor for your battle? Will you come out tonight, take a step of faith, and embrace the fullness of the Gospel of the cross and the resurrection, that there is hope, there is life, there is peace, there is joy, there is purpose, there is destiny - that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Oh, there is a fight, but we win, because Jesus wins!

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Transcribed by Andrew Watkins, Preach The Word - September 2018  
www.preachtheword.com  
info@preachtheword.com



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[www.preachtheword.com](http://www.preachtheword.com)  
[info@preachtheword.com](mailto:info@preachtheword.com)