

## One Church: One Hope

### **Ephesians 4:1 through Ephesians 4:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup>with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

### **Series Introduction:**

What does God have in store for Greater Friendship? What does God want to accomplish through Greater Friendship?

I cannot tell you that I have a vision for us just yet. Right now, I do know is this: we won't get anywhere divided.

So this seven week series is designed to draw all of us in. We want to cross barriers. We want our hearts on one accord. We want to create singleness of purpose and unity of spirit. We must become One Church in Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 4 Paul tells the believers about seven things that are unique in the church. We will examine each one in hopes that they will turn all of our heads in the same direction and cause our eyes to all behold the same glory of God.

In the first week we began with One Church: One Body. In that message, we were encouraged to acknowledge the head. We were also encouraged to accept one another. Lastly, we were told to find our place in the body. Last week, we talked about One Church: One Spirit. In that message we learned some critical truths about the Holy Spirit. We talked about his purpose, his presence, and his power. This week, we will talk about One Church: One Hope.

### **Introduction**

Why are we here? Think about it. Why are we at church? Why did we ever come here in the first place? What are we supposed to get out of this? When we go to a movie or to a ball game, we have some idea of what we are going to get out of it. There is a benefit we receive from those activities. Perhaps we get some type of social benefit or entertainment value from participating in those events.

What do we expect to get out of this faith in Jesus? What is it about Christianity that keeps us coming back? What is it that's so important about church or Christianity that God would take my life from me, and the lives of millions of other men, and employ us in his service?

Obviously, there is a point to this thing we do. There is some ultimate realization that God has for us. It's our goal. It's our ultimate purpose. It's our expectation. It's the reason we were all called here. Paul calls it our "hope". We are going to talk a little today to help us better understand our hope in God and conclude for the day.

*Lysol Example:*

*How many of you know what this is? (A can of Lysol) Down through the years, Lysol or some form of Lysol has been used for many things. It has been combined with other products to give it more capabilities like cleaning, and soap scum removal. It has been used as a feminine hygiene product. It has been used to help deliver babies. From 1930 to 1960 it was the leading contraceptive in the United States. Some forms of Lysol have been banned in various countries because alcoholics could convert it for consumption.*

*How many of you have ever used Lysol as an air freshener? A few years ago, there was an ad campaign by the company that makes Oust air freshener that attacked Lysol. They showed women spraying their houses with Lysol and had a voice tell them that stuff isn't for air freshening. They went on to say their product was an odor eliminator that kills air bourn bacteria and that Lysol doesn't.*

*A few weeks later, Lysol aired a commercial that highlighted its new odor eliminating abilities. But it also, highlighted its main purpose. Regardless of what you do with Lysol, it was created to disinfect and kill germs. On every bottle and every commercial, they will tell you that Lysol kills 99.9% of germs.*

Why did I share this with you? Well, it's because I believe Christianity is suffering today from a Lysol complex.

There is something our faith was created to do, but we have become distracted by the smaller benefits. Christianity serves a specific function and has a specific hope, but we have found it so useful in so many ways, that we have forgotten the primary function. There is one hope of this call, but some people are hoping for substitute blessings.

At the beginning of this message, I asked the question, "Why are we here?" The truth is, in our minds there may be ten reasons for every person. All of them are true and

valid. Think about it: we can use Christianity for all kinds of stuff. If would just take a handful of Bible and apply it liberally to our situations, it can fix just about any problem.

If we take a handful of faith and apply it to Marriage it can make things work out. You have to apply it to both spouses and it won't work if you complain about the smell. What I mean is there are some conditions that the word will create that we might not like. When it says husbands sacrifice for your wives, we don't always want to hear that. When it says wives submit to your husbands, we don't want to hear that. If we want our marriages to work and be blessed the way God intended, we have to apply all of the word.

If we take in some of the word and spray it out of our mouths liberally at our jobs, our work conditions can change. But we can't spray this and also spray insubordination. We can't spray this and also spray half hearted effort. We can't spray scripture and still show up late every day. The Bible says when we work we should do our jobs as if we are doing them for the Lord and not to man.

If we take the Bible and stick your wallet and checkbook inside, your finances will turn around. Learn the principles of Biblical finance and immerse yourself in them. Let God show you how he can rebuke the devourer for your sake. You see some of us are in bondage to lenders. Our faith teaches us how to be free.

You can take this faith and apply it to sickness in your body. It can be applied to wayward children. It can heal a broken heart. It can provide some daily bread. And that's good. Just don't be criminal about it. People found ways to commit illegal acts with Lysol even though it was never intended for those purposes. People are doing the same with the church today.

We have some people who deliberately come to church to seek status. They want to be somebody and the church allows them the chance to be respected because of titles and positions. They are criminals because they are trying to steal God's glory.

We have some men who have decided to go to church to find them a good woman, but they don't want to find God. They sell themselves to the church on Sundays to get what they really want. Any man or woman who doesn't seek God and only comes to church to find a mate is a temple prostitute.

We have people who lie on God and enter the ministry because they can get paid to preach. They are swindlers. They lead people astray. We some parents who never get their children involved in the activities of the church but as soon as they hear about

some scholarship money or some other give away, they beat us here with their hands opened. They are robbers and thieves.

We have some people who are taking the word of God and searching it for scriptures to get them a new car or a new house. They may even ask you to pray for them. But they don't tithe. They won't honor God through obedience but expect God to open the windows of heaven. They are thieves and liars. They are robbing God and lying about their faith in God.

What happens is we start listening to all these preachers and reading all these books about how to be blessed and forget why we were called in the first place. We start focusing on ourselves and stop looking at God.

Instead of embracing one hope, we come seeking and hoping for lesser things. We hope we get a job. We hope we get a man. We hope we can find a wife. We hope we can get a raise. We hope we can stop being depressed. We start making **our** lives more important than the life he is giving to us. Over time, we bottle up God in an aerosol can and pull him out to spray on our circumstances.

You see, all these little problems we try to use God for are secondary. They don't even register in eternity. There is a problem all of mankind is facing. This problem is bigger than loneliness. This problem is bigger than foreclosure. This problem is bigger than sickness and disease. We have a global and eternal problem that is more devastating than hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, swine flu, aids, cancer, and nuclear holocaust combined. Those things pale in the site of our real problem.

The real problem is, everything; everything we see, everything we have ever heard of, everything we are hoping for, everything we are working for, will burn.

### **Revelation 20:11 through Revelation 20:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup>And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

*Eternity Exercise:*

*Close your eyes. Think about your life. Think about the things you enjoy, the places you've seen, and the things you would like to do before you die. Now imagine that God has just given you 50 more years complete with good health and a sound mind. What would you do? How would you live? Can you picture yourself 50 years from now?*

*Okay, the 50 years are up and now God is adding to you another 100 years complete with good health and a sound mind. What would you do with those 100 years? How would you live? What would you accomplish? Would you still go to church? Can you see yourself 150 years from now?*

*Now, the 150 years are over and God has granted you 500 more years. Now what? How would you handle those 500 years? How would you handle a thousand more years? How would you handle 10,000?*

*Open your eyes.*

Eternity is longer than that. Even if we lived to be 10,000 years old, our lives would still be a speck on the timeline of eternity because eternity doesn't end. Here is the good news: I promise you, we will all see eternity. We will all live forever. We are eternal beings who live in finite bodies. These bodies are going to die someday. On the other side of death is eternity.

But in eternity, there are two possible outcomes. The first outcome, the default outcome is an appointment in hell. What I mean by default is this: When you were born, you came with a predetermined number of fingers and toes. You may have your mother's eyes or your father's nose, but you also have a sin nature. We are born in it. We are shaped in it.

Sin is a one way, express ticket to hell. All it takes is one sin to punch your ticket. From the first lie we told or the first time we lusted, we were condemned. From the first time we stole something that wasn't ours or coveted things that belong to others, we were doomed.

In John 3, Jesus explains to Nicodemus that people who do not believe are condemned already. It's automatic. The people we see on TV who don't know Jesus as Lord of their lives are automatically condemned. The people we work with who don't know Jesus are already condemned. Our classmates who don't know Jesus are doomed. If a person dies and does not have Jesus as Lord of their lives, they will be delivered by death to hell. But that's not all.

John says in Revelation that death, hell, and the people in them are going to stand before the white throne of judgment. Once they have been judged, they will be cast into the lake of eternal fire. I'm not talking about match striking fire. This is an all consuming fire that cannot be quenched and will not be extinguished.

This fire is so powerful that death, the very thing that destroys our bodies will die in the second death. The lake of fire is also worse than hell. This fire is so strong that hell will be destroyed in this fire. Think about everything you've ever heard about hell and how bad it is. Now realize God is going to send hell to its own hell.

**Death is going to die and Hell is going to hell.** So if you are on your way to hell, you have no hope. There is nothing you can do in your own strength to avoid spending eternity in the lake of fire. That is why we cannot afford to have a misplaced hope. Most of the time, we are petitioning God and seeking him for things that are already given to us.

#### **Romans 8:24 through Romans 8:25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup>For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

#### **Romans 8:24 through Romans 8:25 (TLB)**

<sup>24</sup>We are saved by trusting. And trusting means looking forward to getting something we don't yet have—for a man who already has something doesn't need to hope and trust that he will get it. <sup>25</sup>But if we must keep trusting God for something that hasn't happened yet, it teaches us to wait patiently and confidently.

Paul basically says our hope should be in what we cannot attain. God is going to do something for us that is so powerful and so wonderful that it out shines every other thing we could ask for. The things of this life are already given to us as believers.

Ephesians 1:3 says ...

#### **Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup>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,

#### **2 Peter 1:3 through 2 Peter 1:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup>as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, <sup>4</sup>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.

The covenants and promises and blessings are already ours. We just have to learn how to access them. The challenge is to live a life where the blessings don't become the object of our hope. We can hope for things that are temporary and miss the eternal. Yes, God will bless us and yes he will keep his promises, and yes he will honor his covenants, but those things are not the object of our faith.

Jesus didn't come down and die on the cross to pay our mortgages. He didn't suffer and die so we could have a spouse. He didn't get betrayed by others so we could have status. We were not called out of darkness and into marvelous light for the benefits. We were called for the hope of glory.

**Let me tell you something: I don't care what you use it for, Lysol is a disinfectant and it kills 99.9% of germs.**

**Regardless of what you may be trying to use Christianity for, its primary function is to deliver 100% of sinners condemned to die, from eternal death to eternal life.**

Let's look at some scriptures to help us with our hope.

**Ephesians 1:15 through Ephesians 1:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup>Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup>do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup>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, <sup>18</sup>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, <sup>19</sup>and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup>which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup>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.

**Colossians 1:19 through Colossians 1:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup>For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup>and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

<sup>21</sup>And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup>in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—<sup>23</sup>if indeed you continue in the faith,

grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

### **1 John 3:1 through 1 John 3:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

<sup>2</sup>Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup>And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

### **Philippians 3:10 through Philippians 3:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup>if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

God has called us through the preaching of the gospel message, the good news. The call and the hope of our calling is the good news. The good news is that if we hear the call, God has provided a way for us to cancel our appointments with hell. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, death has no sting for us and the grave has no victory over us.

The good news is that our sins can be washed away. The good news is that we don't have to go to hell and then both us and hell get sent to the lake of fire. The good news is that we can have eternal life. The good news is that when we've been there 10,000 years bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

The hope of our calling is that God has power to raise us up from the dead just as he did for Jesus. The hope of our calling is that one day we will see him as he is. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name. On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand.

Conclusion:

As a church, we must all know that hope of eternal glory is our product. We sell Jesus. We sell the hope of salvation. We sell the hope of union with God. We don't sell programs. We don't sell entertainment. We sell the expectation that God will deliver us safely into his presence at the end of this life.