

Ephesians

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Preacher: Broome, John Robert (1931-2013)

[0 : 00] I want to direct your attention this evening to the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and the last verse, the twenty-third verse.

First chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and the twenty-third verse, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. The context of this verse is with the twenty-second verse, the truth reading here, And he hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to behead over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The apostle speaks much in his writings of the body of Christ, as the scriptures speak, the edifying of the body of Christ.

And it is a great wonder that, and you might consider this the utter wonder, that the Lord Jesus Christ, second person in the Trinity, should condescend to be the head of such a body.

The church is comprised of fallen and ruined sinners. This is the body of Christ.

[1 : 43] And here he is described in all his glory. In this term, the broken-hearted believers, this is what they are, are described here as his fullness.

They are equated with the eternal God, the fullness.

As though he needed anything, it makes it abundantly clear that he needs nothing. He is entire in and of himself.

And if he had no church, and if he had no body, he would be utterly entire. But there is a glory and a majesty about these words.

The body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

[2 : 53] We spoke this morning of the relationship of Christ and his church in the adoption of children. The whole family on earth, whose father fills the throne.

This blessed doctrine of adoption, they're his and his forever. In that blessed word of truth, we always think of dear Martha Brayton, who died at the age of 101, in the Royal United Hospital a year or so back.

Dear Godly Saint. But she had that word given to her. All is yours. And here Christ's, and Christ is God's. It won't do to have a smattering of truth.

It won't do to have a connection with the truth. To reach heaven, we must be a member of his body. We must be one of his dear children.

We must be adopted in his heavenly family. We must be flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. He must have been wounded for us.

[4 : 23] We must be a member of his body. And when we come, dear friends, to consider this, in the natural figure which is used here in the scripture.

In the scriptures, in the 12th of the 1st of Corinthians, there is a very blessed description of the body. Of Christ. By one spirit, we are all baptized into one body.

This figure is used throughout the pages of scripture. And when we think of our own body, and how it is one composite whole.

And wherever our body is injured, we are injured. Now, if we think of the body of Christ in this way.

He feels each tempted member's pains for our afflictions here. One member suffers, all suffer.

[5 : 29] Says the scripture. And so it is with the natural body. One member suffers pain, the whole body suffers pain. And it brings it home to us.

Your dread crimes. Are you a member of his body? Then it must be true of you. Your dread crimes once pierced his heart. Sang his soul in awful smile.

Then it gives us a different light on that truth. He was wounded. He was wounded. Why yes. Because he is the head of the body.

His church. And he, as he sees the members of his body. In sin and in iniquity.

So, he suffers. As he sees the members of his body. Walking in suffering.

[6 : 38] The flesh being crucified. So, he is touched. With the feeling. Of their infirmities. But here we have. Tonight.

Before us. A. Different figure. The father. And the children. We spoke of this morning. In the blessed.

Spirit of adoption. For this evening. It is as it were. Comes closer. Christ is likened. As the apostle does. In this epistle to the Ephesians.

He is likened. To the head of the body. Speaking the truth. He says in love. We may grow up into him. In all things. Which is the head. Even Christ.

From whom. The whole body. Fitly joined together. And compacted. By that. Which every joint. Supplier. According to the effectual working. In the measure of every part. Make it increase of the body.

[7 : 34] Unto it. Unto the edifying of itself. In love. The church of God. Is one body.

One. Blessed people. Are we. In that body. What a. Pertinent question it is. Are we.

A member. Of that body. Do we move. With that body of Christ. Are we outside of it.

It must stand true. Tonight. That at this moment. In time. We are either inside.

That body. Part of it. Or we are not part of it. If we have a hope. That we are a part of that body. Of Christ.

[8 : 43] His church. We must have. An evidence of it. We must have an evidence of it.

There will be. There will be. There will be. There will be. Activity. There will be movement.

There will be life. I was going to say. There will be power. There will be. the apostle in his epistle to the Corinthians likens the body of the church in this way the body is not one member but many if the foot shall say because I am not the hand I am not of the body it is therefore not of the body and if the ear shall say and so on if the whole body were an eye where were the hearing but now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it has pleased him and if they were all of one where was the body but now are they many members yet one body dear friends I suggest to you that there is a relationship in the body of Christ for there is indeed but all that body carries some sacred and gracious hormones it does indeed when we come to look at the body of Christ and the members of that body his church there are some evidences of the body and one of the greatest of those evidences is love in that chapter in Corinthians the apostle in speaking of the body he speaks of the various members of the body now are ye the body of Christ and members in particular he says members of his body what are these hallmarks?

these hallmarks are very sacred but they are very vital they are very essential let me name to you some of these hallmarks one Lord here it is do you know the government of God in your heart and life and soul?

gee I fear today that there are so many who don't know that government they obviously manifest by their lives they don't know the government of God there is no obedience there is no separation there is a mingling there is a mixing by their fruit shall you know them?

[11 : 57] it is one of the things that is most outstanding today the solemn awful intermingling for the day he is going to declare who is of the body of Christ who is a member in particular is God directing?

have we heard the voice of God? do we know his voice? one faith the world is full of faiths only one faith I tell you this dear friends a strict Baptist faith won't get you to heaven and I trust I say that rightly one faith don't take me to mean that the strict Baptist faith is wrong what I mean is this what dear old Mr. Oxlade said many years ago if heaven were people only by a strict Baptist it wouldn't be that number which no man can number Edward Carr the pastor of Bath had a solemn dream when he was pastor and his dream was this that he saw his congregation and he was viewing them in heaven but he was surprised solemnly surprised at who was there among them because there were some there who he never thought would be there and there were some absent who he felt certain would be there oh how solemn how solemn and searching these truths are it is not to have a form that form is a very solemn thing we need to be separated from a form one faith one law one faith one baptism we want to come to look at it we say here tonight that it is a baptism it is speaking of the Lord's baptism but one baptism there's only one right way of going into that Paul it's as led by the Spirit of God under divine command there are many who have been baptized who will never reach heaven the Apostle Peter tells us it's not the putting away of the filth of the flesh no it doesn't signify that nor does it mean that there's no putting away of the filth of the flesh it's the answer of good conscience it's obedience it's leaving this world and everything behind buried with Christ in baptism raised with him to nearness of life not the putting away of the filth of the flesh that is done through the blood of Christ one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father of all all we need to be brought to that only way which is right to know him whom to know is life eternal we need to hear his voice and its divine authority its divine commandment we need to be led into the truth and there's only one truth many quote this text abysmally wrong there's a vast distinction between what is often quoted the truth as it is in Jesus you think of this let me attempt to put it clearly before you crystal clear the truth as it is in Jesus leaves the doors wide open to this that there may be a truth in Jesus and as is taught in our schools today a truth in Mohammed

and a truth in every other religion all blending in one the truth as it is in Jesus is not what the scriptures say the scriptures say something identically opposite and that's this as the truth is in Jesus it's nowhere else the truth as it is in Jesus is not what the scriptures say as the truth is in Jesus it is nowhere else the door is shut on everything else I am the way he said Christ the truth and the life but if we're members of his body let us be certain of this that our eyes have been opened by the work of the Holy Spirit that we have been wrought upon taught and brought God has done it all that we are born again of his Holy Spirit and you know if we're members of his body we must carry the hallmarks that the scripture gives to those members the scriptures are abundantly clear that we should be known by our fruits and those fruits will be these that we should be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ though we shall now let me name the footsteps of the flock

I name them in no particular order but I name the steps of Christ the great hallmarks that are to be found in his dear children and one is this there is to be a humbling there is to be a humility he brings proud nature down it's got to be done and as I see it only one way is works only one way and that's this the furnace of affliction and perhaps you understand that God will bring proud nature down there is going to be humility a woman who had an infirmity tried all remedies but when she was finally brought down to nothing then she came to Christ to touch the hem of his garment you know before the king of kings and lord of lords there must be humility

I speak not of a natural humility I speak not of some monkish humility some apostate humility there must be a bringing down and that bringing down will be in the battlefield of affliction we must be brought down if we are to be members of his body we must come as beggars and he can do it in a moment oh he can do it in a moment he is able to bring proud nature down one word and he can do it and he can bring us to his footstool of mercy there to listen to his voice it's a very blessed thing when he dies he is to be manifest to others in the body a haughty spirit a bold contentious spirit is not the spirit of Christ except he becomes little children essentially

[20 : 44] Christ is speaking of humility pride has to be the moon I remember years ago in dealing with young people and often when there was conflict the older members of staff would find them most difficult to handle and the younger ones found them easier because the younger ones were more likely to give way but I always remember one of the older members of staff saying to me make use of your youth you'll find as you get older you'll get proud you won't give way so easily when you're older and it's true but the scriptures the hymn says he brings proud nature down and God will bring proud nature down and they will enter into our lives that word that is the work of Christ forbearing one another long suffering the fruits of the spirit patience what is patience oh how patient

Christ was consider him we're told that endure such contradiction of sinners against himself here is the body of Christ the church here is the work of grace in our heart here are the children of God being conformed to the image of Christ or how the spirit works to teach again it is the furnace of affliction the apostle Paul in the fifth of Romans lays it down absolutely clearly tribulation and nothing else will do it work with patience it's the yoke the cross the thorn in the flange it may not have come your way yet the scriptures say he weakened my strength in the way it is God's work there is going to be what we describe as a mellowing amongst the people of God but you know that mellowing is a conformity a conforming to the image of Christ all the blessed work of grace in the soul is going to produce its fruits and its evidences and they're going to be manifest and seen and known and felt let me come to one of the great central points of the church the golden chain that lies as the hymn writer puts it lower for what a bond like the very sinews of the body this is we speak not of natural affection we speak of the love of

Christ to his church beloved me and gave himself for me says the apostle love and this love what an exalted love it is it is the love of the people of God one to another I shall never forget and perhaps it's apposite to mention it today but I shall never forget the first meeting relative to the study Bethesda home held in this chapel in all my 25 or more years now in Wiltshire I never felt more strongly the bond that binds the people of God together in our little churches than I felt it that day at that first meeting there was something peculiarly striking about that

I was only speaking about it to one of the Lord's servants yesterday the bond in that meeting the love the friends gathered with a set purpose to care for the members of the body of Christ with a set purpose to deliver them from the world that lies in wickedness in their latter days with love and union in the body of Christ love and love is manifest in activity it's manifested in actions it's not just words love is clearly manifested in actions and that day there was a great spirit of love and there was a bond of union whatever I were to leave

Wiltshire it would be one of the things that would remain in my memory the bond that unites little churches together and it is a vital bond I have a peculiar affinity to Wiltshire as I was caught by grace in this county and have known many of the godly saints in these churches and that bond goes beyond into eternity as I come to preach in this sanctuary of God unfailingly I think of that seat I think of dear Percy Cook dear Mr.

[27 : 08] Hanks and many as you do of those who have gone before the church is one the church militant and the church triumphant and in my heart there is a following generation in my heart I'm looking to the future constantly my desire is that another generation taught as they were the same truth the same faith the same spirit and they went back to dear Mr.

James and his ministry and the days that went before them the fathers to the children in each generation and we watch prayerfully and wait to see this blessed work of the spirit in building the body of Christ for it is a glorious body one day this body will be united in heaven those we have loved have but gone as it were out of sight not out of love we loved them as dearly as when they were here and we have a sacred bond which we know I preached back last September just after my late dear father died in the fullest sweetness of the words blessed are the day which die in the

Lord in the fullest hope that one day I will follow him to that eternal kingdom in the most sacred assurance that he was there and you have that hope all this centers in the head the body they will be there because they were members of his body here in this earth because they had been this work of the same spirit of truth they had known what I preached on last Sabbath night the same reconciliation the same precious work of redemption was theirs their sins were literally washed away in the blood of Christ and they knew the peace of God which parted understanding we must know redeeming blood I do emphasize it here tonight that it is futile to know about it it's futile to know the name of Jesus if we do not know the person of Jesus in vast eternity he chose a people for his own we must know his grace we must know his power we must know his love

Lord said Peter thou knowest that I love thee we must be brought to love him we know that we have passed from death unto life here is one as it were of the what we might describe as ground level truth that relates to this earth and yet it is a heavenly truth we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren do you know that do you know the love of the brethren secret inward deep affection to God's dear son have you felt a sweet love to his dear servant who wouldn't be politic to name the servants of God to whom I have felt a union yet the truth remains that there are some of the Lord's dear servant who I have caused to love the Lord has made them the means of blessing teaching in my soul

I have felt a union of heart to them long before I could ever speak a word to them but oh the blessed nature of that freedom of which we read in the prophecy of Malachi then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another there was communion here is the fruits of love when the lips are open and there is union and communion in the body how strange it would be around the tables of our families if there was dead silence how strange it would be if in our families we did not share some of the deepest concerns with each other how strange it would be if we'd never spoken to our dear ones especially children to parents I had one of the most blessed periods of union with my late dear father was the last years of his life and you may think it perhaps you won't think it strange perhaps you'll understand but I was thankful that his life was spared because over the years

[32 : 52] I had frequently conflicted with him not agreed with his judgment at all often had a mind of my own and sometimes in that pathway of my own cussedness I'd hurt him and I've been too proud to say so and in the last few years of his life as the Lord dealt with me and I will name one of the things that hurt him and this was in the church when I was a member at St Hampton there was a certain member whose name was raised to be a deacon and my father didn't think he should be a deacon he proposed the matter be left alone but I raised the matter and said if the matter was raised we should discuss it and I proposed him and he was elected and the whole church did it and my father sat alone in the chair and I was absolutely unconcerned but there came a time when in my own church

I was chairing a church meeting and over another matter I sat alone in the chair the whole church voted against me I knew I was right I was I don't say that with any pride but oh my him and then I saw it all that very same night I got on the telephone to him said do you remember he was still alive to be able to speak to him you see there's union in the body of Christ there's confession there's a bearing one another's burden there's love and the Lord brings it about that it should be such a sacred union in this body there are going to be those restrictions for we are but poor fallen human flesh but you know there's love blessed bond of this body of Christ the church the Lord is working to conform her to his image and he must ever be a coming down we are not fallen human nature we are anything else but spiritual children and so as we grow physically older towards eternity so the people of

God grow backwards to childhood they become as little children and there is the way to heaven and what a deep mystery it is and it's the work of the spirit and this body will be back to the family and isn't it sweet to see the little ones as they grow up showing love I mean often there are frictions in the family but when there's affliction or when there's sorrow they're bound together and of late standing beside the open grave we've seen the children's arms around each other in affliction and sorrow we do not say that sentimentally but the children of God's arms around each other in affliction of sorrow as the body is bound together in their sufferings and bound together in union and communion one with the other and bound together as they carry their separate and individual burdens crosses and thorns in the flesh the Lord is working to bring the body together and you know let us come to the kingpin of it all they're bound together with

Christ who has suffered for them is not the family bound around the father there should be love and compassion there should be union communion together what a strange family if there was silence and yet in the church of God it does appear so often that there is silence so often that there is not that speaking often one to another and they that fear the Lord speak often one to another here is the sign as it is in the birth of life there's a cry there's an utterance there's a learning of the language of Zion it's not a form of words it's an experience of the heart as taught by the same spirit one Lord one faith they commune in common ground and they find union one to the other and they know where the work of

God has been begun they know they couldn't speak dear Bunyan in his early days as the Lord was dealing with him at Bedford and he knew not all that was happening to him yet the Lord had begun in his heart the dear man stood on the crowd the company of the godly women as they were talking and listened and he found that he was one with them they spoke the language of Zion he could understand have you stood on the fringe of the company of God's dear children and though silent realised that yes you understood I remember in my early days when I travelled with my father quite a lot when I was seven eight nine and ten I used to go with him travelling on a Sunday he used to love to do it and I remember going to

[38 : 53] Dane to the little chapel here in Wiltshire clothes now long clothes but in that village there's a sacred spot in the cemetery to me dear godly saint Jim Woodford never joined gave out the hymns but I love that dear man my first answer to prayer was relative to him never think of Dane without thinking of that sacred spot that dear man had a sad life married to a godless partner and his son went off into high Anglicanism and he had no comfort in his own heart but he was a godly man I knew him but I was never able to communicate with him I never could tell him never speak to him and yet there was a union I remember when I was a student and training to be a teacher I went to Worthing and I always remember there was a dear deacon there who was silent he never said a thing he never said hardly two words but dear friends I don't say this sentimentally

I loved him I could tell by his handshake what a godly man he was I felt a real union to dear Mr. Carlton of Worthing he was a nurseryman he was a godly man we spent one night together and that was all he invited me to his house just before I left I was in Worthing for ten weeks but that is eternal that love I love that dear man where have you this bond in the living family of God to whom have you known this sacred union God gives it we know that we have passed death unto life because we love the brethren all the fruits of the spirit manifesting the members of the body as they blend together in love and sacred harmony members of his body Christ their living head the head of the church walking in union and as they commune together as they speak often one to another they have fellowship it's an abused word many use it and have no concept of what it means the only right use of that word is among the family of

God it's not a social fellowship it's not a gathering under some particular ministry or some particular man how often we see this that people gather together to a particular church or a particular minister and he dies and they'll go away again there's no fellowship I would name it in one church let me name it you may understand this I don't speak about any one church in particular but you know at the lead chapel Brighton in the days of Mr.

J.K. Popper there was a blessed ministry there of great savour and power I never knew him he died when I was about four I think but I've preached in that pulpit since then and I still feel the savour of his ministry in that little sanctuary of God it's still relative to that place there is not a social fellowship and I trust it is the same here a blessed union and communion over the generations around the same truth the same Lord Jesus Christ a oneness in union of harm over the years the church which is his body the fullness I still see a wonder in this word however could a multitude of poor sinners be described as the fullness of the eternal

God and yet they are it is his joy his treasure it is his glory that in heaven they should worship him there and that the anthem of the body of Christ should be unto him amen amen him thank you him Thank you.

[44 : 10] 1-184, June 8, 15. The fullness resides in Jesus our hand, never abides the time of me.

The Father's good pleasure has laid up his door and planted full treasure to give to the poor. Hymn 1-8-4, June 8, 15. Cócete nš■ic Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[47 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.