

# Ephesians 1:13 - 2:10

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Date: 03 November 2019

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you very much. Good evening. I got one.

I wasn't expecting any, so that's like 100% beyond my expectations. It is so good to be with you. My family, well, we became a family here.

My wife and I moved over here in 2006. Then we had our first daughter in 2008. And Ryan, who became a member today as a little two-year-old, taught my little daughter everything mischievous to do in the creche.

So it was really good to see him up here today. Obviously, God's been doing the work in his life. And we've had an amazing time learning what God has been doing in many of your lives, both at a distance as we keep up with you a bit and also now being here, getting to talk with you.

It was delightful to have this timing work out that I'm able to be at communion with you and be part of the communion weekend. This is the final part of a communion weekend, a Thanksgiving service.

[ 1 : 17 ] And so I want to briefly draw attention to the connection between the table that we ate at this morning, the sacrifice of Christ, blood and his broken body, the connection between that and what will be our focus tonight, which has something to do with the nations.

So to do that, I'm going to read a passage that we won't be looking at together, but it's a profound connection, a passage in Revelation, which you may have actually preached on recently.

Revelation chapter 5. You can turn there if you wish or just listen. This is God's word. You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals because you were slain.

And with your blood, that is the blood that we've celebrated this weekend, with your blood, you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we obviously focus on his actual sacrifice, his broken body and poured out blood for us, for our sins and in our place.

[ 3 : 14 ] We also, as David helped us see, we also are pointed forward because we celebrate his body and blood until he returns. We proclaim his death for us until he comes back.

So there's a sense in the celebration where we're looking forward to the very end and his return. But something like this shows that maybe we should also think of the Lord's table in a way that connects us with each other.

So it's not just me and Christ as he died for me and my sins. True. True. It's not just me looking forward to the end when he comes back. True. But it's also a community gathered together.

And that's us. But not just this little community. But a community that extends beyond the borders of this church to other believers in Aberdeen, in Scotland.

And in fact, everybody in the entire world who has been purchased by the blood that we're celebrating. Christ's broken body for people from every tribe, tongue and people and nation.

[ 4 : 17 ] So when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we thank God for Jesus. We thank God for his return. We thank God for each other. And we thank God that there are others around the entire globe that are celebrating the same feast or foretaste of a feast.

So tonight, as I guide our attention through a passage in Ephesians and through some of the work that we're doing around the world, I think it is connected to what we've been celebrating this entire weekend.

And I wanted to draw our attention from the table to the globe. And it's to that that we turn our attention now. And if you would, to do that, turn to Ephesians.

Ephesians chapter 1. It would be helpful if the preacher could find Ephesians.

Ephesians chapter 1 is on page 1173 in your seat Bibles. Can't call them pew Bibles anymore, right? Or turn on your Bibles, if you're using that way.

[ 5 : 29 ] Turn on your Bibles to Ephesians 1. I'm going to read this piece by piece. So I'm not going to read the whole passage now. I'm going to start it, and then we're going to dwell on something.

And then we'll read a bit more, dwell on something more. And we'll kind of work our way through the passage in that way. Before I read the first part of the passage, I want to mention what's on the screens around.

There's a map. Hopefully you've recognized it's a map of the world. If you don't, talk to your parents after the service, and they can give you a tutorial. There are dots all over that map.

I'll get to that in a moment. I want to tell you something sobering first. In the UK, in fact in Europe and in North America, those two places, there is a trained pastor.

So someone who has actually studied scripture, been trained in it. educated to know how to minister and how to preach and understand God's word.

[ 6 : 36 ] One trained pastor for about every 250 Christians, give or take. If you go outside of the West, so outside of North America and Europe, there is one trained pastor for every 450,000 Christians.

So if we look at this congregation, and maybe if it's totally full, you might have probably actually more than one trained pastor in some ways, because some of you have had theological training for I don't know how many people.

This is relatively average. But if you picture a stadium, the biggest stadium in the United States holds about 104,000 people.

Picture four of those filled to the brim with Christians and one person who has studied God's word and is equipped to preach, teach, pastor.

So one tremendous need around the world is to take the pastors who are there. It's not that there aren't pastors. To take those leaders who are there and help them understand God's word.

[ 7 : 51 ] Help them preach it, teach it, pastor people according to God's word. And so this picture shows one little part of God's mission that is focused on that.

I work with Training Leaders International. Many of you know that. Some of you don't. All of those dots represent places where we go and train pastors and other leaders in Christian communities in how to understand God's word and minister to their congregations, their flocks.

Those are very different people represented by all those dots. And you are partners in this because you've joined me in this work. So here in Aberdeen, you have a hand affecting the people in those dots around the globe.

I'm going to read now Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13 through 16. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the good news of your salvation.

When you believed, you were marked in Christ with a seal. The promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

[ 9 : 27 ] For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord, Jesus, and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

So when we hear about our brothers and sisters around the world, in all of the places in that map and beyond, who have put their faith in Jesus, and who are showing love for the saints, I think it would be wonderful if we could just thank God, be filled with thanksgiving in the sense that Paul is when he thinks about the Ephesians, and he hears about their faith for the Lord, and their love for each other.

It's been multiplied for us. We now know people in so many other parts of the world who are truly our brothers and sisters. So I would love to give thanks with you for that.

At the end of the sermon, I'll actually give thanks. But I want to tune our hearts to thank God for them. I'm going to show you one of them. Well, ten of them actually, but I'll focus on one.

These men that you see, there are eight of them, they're pictured, I think, are eight of the ten pastors in Pakistan who we train. Now, we can't go to Pakistan, not where they are.

[ 10 : 51 ] It wouldn't be safe for them. We would be fine. Nobody would bother us, probably. But the moment we would leave, we would have painted a target on them. And they already have a target on them. So what we do is we fly them to a different country, train them somewhere else, and they go back and minister.

Each one of these pastors oversees about ten villages. Sorry, about 15 villages. So the ten pastors represented in this oversee 150 villages in Pakistan.

And it's intense for them. One of them, kind of the leader of that group who organizes from their side with us, he wrote a letter.

Ooh, I can't see that. That one, okay, thanks. This is a portion of the letter. Dear brother, greetings in the most precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Good news. In this session, so let me stop there, after we train them for a week in some course in the Bible, they go back, and for four months, they minister.

[ 12 : 04 ] And then they come again for a week for another course. Well, in that four-month period, one of their tasks is to teach others what they've just learned. And we give them training material in their language so that they can do that.

These guys take it so seriously. They go and they just gather groups of people and teach them what they've just learned. And so he's talking about that here, a seminar. In this seminar, 27 participants presented themselves to be disciples of Christ.

And they made a promise to give more time to learn the word of God and share it with others. Amen. Just tremendous, what God is doing. Let me show you a picture of it.

Now, these are very sensitive, so I don't send these in newsletters. But in person, I can show you, this is the seminar he was just talking about. And there are three of the pastors who gather together to co-teach it, and you can see one of them up front.

Pakistan, they have men on one side, women on the other side. People focused on listening to the glory of Christ and knowing his word better. And 27 of these people right here profess faith in Christ because of this.

[ 13 : 19 ] This is, why does Paul give thanks whenever he remembers the Ephesians? It's because of things like this. Every time I think about these Pakistanis, I give thanks to God, and I want you to as well because you're a part of what's happening in this site right here.

Now, it's not all fun and games. The leader of this group, has been taken in for questioning numerous times, threatened, and he told us in the last training, he said with tears, he said, every time they would call me in for more questioning, I did not know if that was my last day on earth.

My wife is sick, I've got little kids, and I didn't know if I would see them again, if I'd be able to care for them. It's quieted down now, but it's still kind of hanging over them.

And we asked them, well, do you want to continue coming and getting trained? Because that's what's kind of flagging with the authorities, is you constantly bringing these guys to another country.

And he said, absolutely. We wouldn't stop this. I'll read you a portion of, the next portion of his letter here. He said, brother, we've been trying our best to serve God and reach out remote areas here as much as we can with our limited knowledge of the word of God.

[ 14 : 41 ] But now we have a good Bible study to win more souls for the Lord. Brother, please share our special thanks to the people and the churches supporting you and us who are the real part of this soul winning work in Pakistan.

We are always praying for you. And he said elsewhere that they're praying for you. And I thought that was amazing. These are the brothers who are being threatened, who might not live as long as the training.

I mean, not all ten might make it to the end. And he says that they are praying for you. So when I think about you, Bonacord, I think of you with such warmth.

And I remember you in my prayers. And I thank my God for you, for how faith has grown in you as a community and in you as individuals and how your love for each other practically transforms people.

Lindsay and I and my girls are transformed because of our time with you for six years. So I thank God for you when I think of you. But I'm not the only one praying for you. These brothers in Pakistan are praying for you because they see what you do in this commitment to them through me.

[ 16 : 01 ] as being a key part in people coming to the Lord Jesus in a hostile place. So I wanted to pass on just like from Paul's words here that every time they think of you, every time I think of you, we give thanks for you, for your faith and the love that you share for the brothers and sisters.

What exactly does Paul pray though? He says he gives thanks, but he actually tells us more of what he prays for the Ephesians. And I find this very instructive when I'm thinking about praying for you or praying for the people that we're training or thinking about praying for my girls.

So maybe you can kind of take to heart how might you incorporate some of what we're about to read for your kids or for your friends, brothers, sisters. So let's read verse 17.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Why? Why does he ask God to give the spirit of wisdom and revelation to them? Well, he tells us, so that you may know him better. This prayer with the focus on receiving the spirit to give us wisdom and understanding of revelation of who God is so that we can know God better.

[ 17 : 36 ] That is the goal. That reminds me of some brothers and sisters in Mongolia where I was just recently. Many of you were following this. In fact, I mentioned the trip to Mongolia as a special project and many of you stepped up and sent me to Mongolia.

And so I thank you for that, for your creativity and engagement with me. Let me tell you about a few of these people and with a focus on receiving the spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God better because that was a focus for a number of them.

One of the, one of the men, does this work? Oh yeah. Let's see. Let me tell you about this man here and this lady here.

It's a husband and wife. Sana is the man's name and, whoops, let's go back. Sana is this man and Unkwa is his wife with a little baby in her belly which is why her hand's there.

They, he's from Mongolia, she is from inner Mongolia. They use the same language but Russia was in charge of Mongolia during its communist era. China was in charge of inner Mongolia so there's some tension there but they're married and they, he's a church planter in China and he says it's getting hard.

[ 19 : 02 ] He, there are certain rules in the Chinese government that are becoming harder for Christians and where he is, it's to the place where they're not allowed to gather more than four people in a place if they're Christians and the police will come and if there are more than four people they'll break it up.

So a lot of people will, will try to meet as a group kind of underground and they'll do that for a while and then the police come and break it up and they find another place and they meet there for a while and the police come and break it up and Sana said this is really hard.

I mean, how do you pastor when you can't have more than four of your congregants together at any one time and they keep breaking it up? But then he said something really, I thought, encouraging.

He said, I don't know what God's doing but God knows what he's doing and so I'm taking this time when I can't minister the way I want to and I now am using the time I have to study God's word which I've never done before.

So he's using his time to come up to our training and he is just an outstanding pastor who is eating up God's word and his wife is tremendous as well.

[ 20 : 15 ] If you want later I can share one of her songs that she wrote which was very meaningful. So that's Sana and Unkwa. His delight in a time of persecution because it's giving him the ability to receive wisdom and understanding to know God better so that he can then effectively pastor better.

The very thing that Paul is praying for he's experiencing because of persecution. This man back here let me show you a better picture of him.

His name is Mohno. He's a pastor to the Kazakh people which is a long way away in Mongolia still but a long way away from where we were.

In fact he travels 1100 miles for this training. because he needs as he says it he needs to know how to understand God's word so he can know God better.

The very thing Paul's praying for. And let me tell you lastly about this lady right here Sakna. I mentioned her in a newsletter once but some of you wouldn't have gotten that.

[ 21 : 33 ] Sakna is a counselor. she works with the neglected and abused wives and children of alcoholic men. 80% of men in Mongolia are alcoholic.

She's a tremendous counselor. She gets invited to places like North Korea mainland China as a counselor. She also is a Christian and so she gets asked to give talks.

On Thursday of this training week we were looking at Genesis and Exodus and we're focused on Exodus at this point and she stopped to the translator and said through the translator to me, can I say something?

I have seen this week how rich God's word is. We were really digging into a passage in Exodus and she said over the past two days now I've been convicted that I need to stop accepting some teaching engagements for a time.

Because when they invite me I'll go with no preparation and just pick a random verse and say whatever is off the top of my head and I'm now seeing how I know God better when I understand his word better and I've not been doing that.

[ 22 : 50 ] So I need to pause my speaking until I understand God better and then I can start teaching more effectively. I thought that was so humble. She doesn't want to damage people's understanding of God and she sees the value of receiving the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that she can know God better and therefore make him better known.

Verse 18 Paul continues, I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened. Why?

why does he pray that? In order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Whew! There's a lot there that I think should transform me more than it does. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know the hope to which he's called you.

Hope. How much does that affect, does that come into your life? Hope. And what exactly is he talking about? Hope in what? Well he says, hope.

[ 24 : 16 ] The riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Hope.

The idea that God didn't just save us from our sins, from a life of death, from a life of addiction, from all sorts of things, he did that through Christ, but he didn't only do that, he saved us for something.

And you could say a lot of things, he saved us for joy, for healed relationships, for lots of things now, but he also saved us for an inheritance. Glorious inheritance in fact, which we will receive when the Lord Jesus comes back, resurrects our bodies, and we get to live with him in the new earth forever.

That is the inheritance that we were saved for. That is our hope. That's what Paul puts in front of our eyes, as hope. And he prays that the eyes of their hearts may be enlightened so that they may know that, not just know God personally, though that's chief, but also have rich hope for what he has prepared for us.

It is a regal resurrection hope. Why do you think I call it that? A regal resurrection hope, or royal resurrection hope?

[ 25 : 59 ] We'll look at the next verse, or the next part of verse 19. He's talking about power. You may know his incomparably great power for us who believe that power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead, resurrection power, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, royal, regal power.

God is the hope. This kind of royal resurrection hope is something that a man in Liberia named Diona exhibits tremendously.

He is one of our national partners. He's in charge of a training group in Liberia. You can see the picture on the left. Diona is standing over charred remains of something.

that area, cleared out area with that burnt thing, was the site for generations, the site of satanic worship and human sacrifice.

And once that cult had moved away, no one wanted to touch that property. There was too much taboo connected to it, and also there was so much demonic activity that people just stayed away.

[ 27 : 24 ] For years it was vacant and nobody would touch it. Well, Diona has a vision of Christ that is bigger than the powers of Satan, which we're going to read a little bit more about.

So Diona said, hey, I'll buy that. I'll buy the land. So this tree, the remains of a tree, that was the tree where they would kill the human sacrifices. He burns it to the ground, he raises the place, they build a church and a training site, which you can see with the bamboo type wall, not bamboo, the grass walls.

So they're training 100 pastors from the area in this location, and God is richly blessing them. And it is mainly because Diona has an understanding of the immense power of Christ above anything else, which we read about.

Now, God raised Jesus and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, look at verse 21, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in the present age, but also in the age to come.

And God has placed all things under Christ's feet, and appointed him to be the head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

[ 28 : 57 ] Is that your vision of Christ? Not just intellectually, though that's crucial, but how does it affect you and what you actually do with your hands and your relationships?

The idea that, the fact that Jesus is not just above all rule, but far above all, did you notice the all language? All rule and authority, power and dominion, every name that's named, not only in the present, also in the future, God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.

Diona in Liberia has captured that, and no satanic power that has been devastating the community can stand up to the power of Jesus for the church.

Diona burns down this place of satanic sacrifice, builds a church, and is training 100 pastors, with another 150 on the waiting list to go through a second round of training.

We'll use people from the first round of training to help us co-teach that second group so that we can help establish pastors, teaching pastors in the indigenous place, faith, because this man has a vision of who Christ really is and how he relates to very dark powers.

[ 30 : 25 ] Have you seen what Paul's done so far? He has begun to lift the eyes of the Ephesians and our eyes up higher and higher and higher to the very highest possible point you could go.

So he's lifted our eyes to the highest place where Jesus is and now he's about to plummet our eyes to the very deepest depths. Look at what he says in chapter 2 verse 1.

As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

We're dead apart from Christ. This is all of us dead in our sins under the ruler of this present evil age.

[ 31 : 36 ] Objects of wrath wrath. Can you see how we've gone from the glorious heights focused on Christ to now can you really get lower than what our experience really is even if we don't always understand that?

This man in North India understands it very well. This is a group in Lucknow, India. I've been there to train some of these men. If you see the man in the green, right here, he used to be a Hindu radical hitman who would kill Christians.

That was his job. He was known as one of the most effective of the Hindu radicals in this particular area. He's murdered countless Christians. He understands when Paul describes, as for you, you were dead in your trespasses, in the sins in which you used to live, following the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

You were by nature an object of wrath. God got a hold of him and has, well, let's say, conversion, I think is the best word for it, has made him alive, converting him 180 degrees, and he is now one of the most effective evangelists of any of these men.

And he came to be trained in God's word so he could be even more effective. And I think one of the reasons he might be so effective is because he truly grasps the depths to which, in which he was.

[ 33 : 20 ] But Paul doesn't just say it about murderers of Christians, like Paul's self was. He says this about all of us. That's our description out of Christ. So I wonder how we would be effective if we, if I, if you, further grapple with just how far down we are without Christ.

How far down we were before Christ got a hold of us. But he doesn't stop there.

Paul doesn't. He's taken us to the highest heights. He's plummeted us down into the depths. But then he explains how Christ came down into those depths for us.

Look at the next verse, verse 4. But God, God, but because of God's great love for us, isn't that interesting?

How we could be the objects of wrath, God's wrath, at the same time he has such great love for us that he sends his son.

[ 34 : 35 ] How does that work? That he can be wrathful and great, greatly loving at the same time? I wonder how our society would actually be transformed if Christians took that on and had a true holy type of wrath and self-sacrificial love at the exact same time.

That's worth wrestling with. But we're talking about God here. Because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.

It is by grace you have been saved. So you see how Christ came into our depths because he has great love for us.

He's rich in mercy. And even while we were dead in our sins, that's when Christ did what he did for us to make us alive. This picture up on the screen is in the Philippines.

It's one of our sites. These are mostly missionaries, Filipino missionaries to other Filipino tribes up in the jungle mountains of the Luzon Island.

[ 35 : 57 ] they're doing tremendous work and they're delighted that they can understand God and his word better through our training. One of the pastors was shocked at this idea of God, that he could, let me stop with that train of thought, let me rephrase that.

In a class in the Philippines there, by the way, did you know I was so tall? In a class in the Philippines, and this is the class I was teaching, this man in the green shirt is who I was about to tell you about, but I got ahead of myself, we were looking at the gospel of Mark and we were seeing the authority that Christ has, which Paul pictures here in different terms.

He's seated on the throne high above everything and in Mark, it's in Jesus' earthly ministry, but he still has all authority. He has authority to cast out demons, authority to teach, authority over the Sabbath, authority over more demons, authority over the storm, authority to forgive sin, all that is packed into the first half of Mark, which we've pictured here.

This is Mark, the first half is Jesus' kingly authority, and then at chapter nine it switches, and the question becomes, okay, this Jesus, king over everything, what is he here to do with his authority?

And he says, I am here to suffer and to die, but be raised from the dead, and if you're going to follow me, you need to pick up your own cross and follow me.

[ 37 : 43 ] You need to serve others. I am here to serve. So we had just been looking at how much authority Jesus has, and then we get to this statement that I am here to serve you, and you be like me, if you're going to follow me, and this pastor right here, who's been pastoring for years, said, wait a second, why, why would Jesus, who has this kind of authority, why would he suffer and die for people?

That doesn't make any sense. He was grappling with the very heart of the gospel. This is why this training is so important. He's pastoring people, and the very heart of the gospel, the very character of God and of his son Jesus, that he would have all authority and use it to serve people by dying for them and call his disciples to do likewise.

This pastor was just shocked, but it created an amazing moment for us to explore that as a class, and he was seeing the glory of Christ in a way he had never seen before.

This kingly Jesus who has descended into our depths in order to raise us with him. Keep reading, though, verse six.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. You remember the statement?

[ 39 : 16 ] Regal, what was it? Regal resurrection, I can't remember the phrase that I used. Do you remember? Regal resurrection hope, right?

Or royal resurrection hope. Actually, I did remember, but you took the bait. Thank you for that. Royal resurrection hope, regal resurrection hope, because God raised Jesus and seated him on the throne.

But this is what it says he did for us, too. So, Paul puts us up in the heavens to see Jesus. He puts us down in the depths to see ourselves. He shows that Jesus has come down into the depths to raise us up, and then he says he raises us and seats us with him in the heavenly places.

It is still this royal resurrection hope that he's already started in our lives. So exciting. It should transform my life more than it does.

And that's my prayer for you. Why does he do this? Why does he raise us up with Christ and seat us with him in the heavenly realms?

[ 40 : 19 ] Well, fortunately, he tells us. Look at verse 7. In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

It's by grace you've been saved through faith. It's often that last line that we grab out of this passage, and maybe it's the only part that we actually know from this passage.

It's by grace you've been saved through faith. But what about everything that's come before it? The richness of Jesus pulling us up to the heavens for a reason, so that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us.

I don't understand this kindness of God. It transcends all of my categories. categories. It transcends these guys' categories too.

And it transcends them, and it shapes these men on screen in a way that I think is instructive for what Paul goes on to say next. These guys are from Ethiopia.

[ 41 : 44 ] Fakadu is the name of the one in pink. He's our national partner in one site, so he's in charge of all the other pastors. And I believe that the other man's name is Lemmy.

Let me read to you the very last part of this passage that we're going to look at, and then tell you how it's being acted out by these two men in Ethiopia, and give you a final challenge for your own life here in Aberdeen.

He says, For it's by grace you've been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves. It's a gift of God.

It's not by work, so no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are not saved by our works, but we are definitely saved for good works. He's very clear in this passage.

[ 42 : 48 ] You are not saved by what you do. It's by grace. But you are saved by grace to do a lot, to be active. In fact, God has already prepared things for you to do.

So you see, there are kind of two responses that we have to all of this highest heights, deepest depths, this vision of Christ over everything. There are two responses in this passage right here.

One of them is humility. This is not by you, by your works, that any of this has come about. This is by God's gift. So that should lead to a certain kind of humility, which Ficadu and Lemmy express in some very significant ways.

But not just humility, but also action. God has given you this tremendous gift to do good works. And again, Ficadu and Lemmy show this. One of the things, one of the ways that Paul shows them what to do with their good, with good works in the rest of Ephesians is for Jews and Gentiles who are kind of at odds with each other to work together to bless each other, be unified in Christ.

Christ. That's the majority of what he goes on to say. You are united in Christ. So serve each other. Equip each other with whatever God has gifted you with.

[ 44 : 11 ] Build each other up, even if you're that different and at odds with each other. You're in Christ. So this is your good works that you need to do. Build each other up. Ficadu is from the Amhara people in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia and Lemmy is of the Aromo people. There are many tribes in Ethiopia, but the Amhara and Aromo people are literally at war with each other right now.

Historically, they have been. It got calm for a while with some tension underground. And now the recent president has kind of flared it up intentionally. Right down the street from where these guys are studying, see if I have a picture of it.

Nope. I'll have to show you that another time. Right down the street from this, there are fights where Aromo people are killing Amharic people and Amharic people are killing Aromo people.

And we're training Amharic and Aromo people in the same site. And when these guys are wrapping up the week in order to go back to their homes and go back to minister, they know that their own people could very well attack this fellow brother.

[ 45 : 27 ] And likewise, so they take time to pray for each other before they go on their ways for protection. Because they are in Christ together, they are breaking all of the tribal bonds that are so powerful.

Praying against their own tribe in order that this other tribal person who's their brother in Christ would be safe. I think this is a tremendous way to act out the good works that God has prepared for us.

To find a fellow brother or sister in Christ with whom you may have some conflict or some struggle or some differences and figure out how can you creatively bless them.

With this vision of the enthroned Christ, the understanding that you are enthroned with him and in the end will reign with him on the earth, as we read in Revelation. And from that place, how can you do good works, especially with brothers and sisters with whom you might have tension or odds?

I think there's so much more that we need to think about. About Christ's glory, about who we are apart from him, and about who we are in him together, and about how he's doing great things around the world with our brothers and sisters.

[ 46 : 57 ] There's so much more we could talk about. Feel free to approach me and ask other questions. I would love to hear things that ways that you're enacting Christ's glory in your daily life.

Right now, I'm going to close with a prayer, and then we're going to sing a song about Christ's glory together. So let me close this in prayer first, and then we'll sing to finish the service.

Father in heaven, you have such rich love and mercy for us beyond all our comprehension.

What you have done in your son for us is unfathomable. Lord, we need your spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we can know you better.

And so that we can grasp the hope to which you've called us. This glorious inheritance that we all share together.

[ 48 : 11 ] Lord, we need your spirit of wisdom and glory. Lift our eyes to see your work in our neighborhood and among the nations.

Please lift our eyes so that we can bring praise to your name and thanksgiving to you more effectively, more passionately, and with more perseverance.

We need you to help us glorify you. And that's what we ask for in the name of our enthroned Savior and Lord Jesus.

Amen.