Unity Worth Protecting

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[0:00] How are we doing? I heard an awesome. Amen.

I hear an amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. There we go. Well, Hebrew. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the book of Ephesians, chapter 4.
A few weeks ago, we turned the page from chapter 3 to chapter 4 in Ephesians, and we know that in the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul gives forth to us the great blessings of God, the way that God has worked, all the things that God has done.
So the first three chapters are really about God, what he has done. And we turn to chapter 4, and there's a big therefore. Since God has done all these things, here is the life Paul is entreating us to live, to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called.
And he gives to us the characteristics of that walk. He gives to us the cause of that walk to protect the unity of the Spirit. And then, now, as we're going to come to today, verses 4, 5, and 6, is the particular unity or unities that we are to protect.
[1:29] Seven fundamental unities we are to protect. So we're going to break it up. We're just going to take the first three today. And now you're going, whew, not just doing one.

At least we're doing three. That's good. So these are great things for us to understand. In other words, these are the things that we draw a line about.
These are the things that we uphold and we protect and we don't give in to, we don't surrender. Okay? Though the walk that we walk is one that is humble, one that is meek, one that is forbearing, one that is patient, at the same time we protect this unity that the Spirit has given to us.
So, we want to read the text and then we'll ask the Lord to give to us the Spirit to understand. And then we'll dig in. So if you're able, please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word.
I'll start at chapter 4, verse 1. Verse 1. I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in or with the bond of peace.
[3:03] There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

So reads the Word of God. Let us pray. Father, open our eyes to see. Help us to make the connection, connect the dots between our walk and this unity that the Spirit has created.
Help us to understand, particularly today, what it means that there is just one body and one Spirit and one hope. Help us to grasp those things and how we protect them, how we guard them, how we hold on to them.
This we ask in Christ's name. Amen. Please, you see this? You ever heard of the Nicene Creed? Yeah? Heard of the Apostles' Creed? Yeah? Those are pretty old creeds. What's a creed? What's a creed?
[4:27] Huh? A statement? Statement? Yeah? Statement of faith? It is a summary. It is a summary of our faith and belief. So the Apostles' Creed.

Pretty early. Most historians, biblical historians, believe that the Apostles' Creed was put together in the first and second century. So very, very early.
Published in the form that we have it. We have it, actually, if you're curious, at the end of our hymnal, 7, 16, 7, 17, where the creeds are listed in our hymnal.
Apostles' Creed. So published around 300. Then the Nicene Creed was published in about 325 after the birth of Christ. 325.

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And then refined in 381, I believe. So when we talk about one, one. One, one, one, right? One body. One spirit.
[5:28] One hope. One Lord. One faith. One baptism. One God and Father. Seven ones.

Or seven unities. So that becomes summarized in the Nicene Creed. Listen, we're not going to read the whole thing, but see if you can pick up the unities that they write in this summary of faith.
So the Nicene Creed says, I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God. Begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
There's a lot in that. And then we come down, I'm going to skip down a little bit.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeded from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.
[6:43] And I believe in one Catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen. Summer. You notice the ones in there? I got about five of them. One God, one Lord, right? One Holy Spirit, one church. They call it a Catholic and an apostolic church. Don't let Catholic alarm you. Because Catholic back then didn't mean what it means today.
Back then, it just meant united. One, you know, one church, Catholic. Not Roman Catholic. So there you have.
So creeds are acknowledging that stuff. So why are creeds important? Why are these? So we, as a church, have a statement of faith, which we've refined over the years, which we've clarified when we think there are things that we need to clarify.
[7:48] It's particularly in the society in which we live today. We've updated that to address some of those issues that we might be clear about our truth. So creeds were written to correct heresy.

So in the early church, there was a lot of heresy coming out. What is the... The Trinity wasn't defined. So what is that? How is there one Father and one Lord and one Spirit?
Right? So they were seeking to clarify the truth. And why is truth important? Because truth clarifies what unites us. It is the faith.
So we can ask the question, well, what about all the denominations today? Do all the denominations believe this? Do all the denominations today believe in the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed?
No. No. Many, many do not. That tells us where they stand. Okay?
[8:51] So the creed becomes a divider. It's a drawing of a line. Saying this is what we believe. This is what we owe. This is what we are convicted of. This is what we will defend.

We will not surrender. But over the history of the church, many have surrendered. This one and then that one. For whatever. And they lose unity.
So, so these truths, they define our unity. How we know we're united to the same belief. So in our membership, we sign a statement of faith.
Right? We all sign, if we agree with all of it, then we sign it. Saying, yes, I'm on board with this. I'm on the same page with these, the members of this church.
This is what we know. And so as members, we know that the other members believe what we believe. They've drawn that same line. They've come to the same conclusions. Okay?
[9:51] We hold to the same fundamental truths. So what we have here in chapter four of Ephesians, verse four, five, and six, is a very early creed by Paul.

One body. One spirit. One hope. One Lord. One, what do we have? One faith. One baptism. One God and Father. So we're going to walk through these.
We have seen the distinctives that Paul gave us in the first three verses. Right? He entreats us to walk in a manner worthy. He talks about walking.
So we're talking about a forward movement. Right? Going in a direction of a pattern of relationships. He gives us the attributes of what worthy walk looks like.
Those four distinctives in verse two. Humility or lowliness of mind. Meekness or gentleness. Patience. What does that one mean again, by the way?
[10:52] What's the actual translation from the Greek? Long suffering. Long tempered instead of short tempered. Long. So that's why you don't like patience.

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It's long. Suffering. It's prolonged. And then forbearance. Right? Bearing with one another in love. And these are relational. So walking worthy primarily has to do with our relationship to one another. How we treat one another. How we regard one another. We regard one another with a lowliness of mind. Putting others above ourselves as more important than ourselves.
Right? Meekness. We don't fight. Patience. And then forbearance. When our fellow brother, sister fail us or hurt us, we let it go.
We let it go. If it's not disrupting the whole body, if it's just toward me, I let it go. If it persists, I might want to address it at some point. But for the most part, we let a lot of stuff go.
[12:00] We don't share it with others. We don't grumble about it. We don't gossip about it. We don't have a critical spirit for others in the church. That's all counter to walking worthy.

Now, those are natural things to do. It's very natural when we come across somebody that we don't agree with or we don't like how they do things, we can be critical.
That's natural. To walk worthy is to resist that and to be gentle. Let it go. It's not serious.
It's not disrupting the body. It's not hurting somebody else. Let it go. That's walking worthy. And he says, the cause for that is verse 3, that we might be diligent to preserve or protect, guard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
We protect the unity of the Spirit. So it's a specific unity of the Spirit, in other words, the Holy Spirit, to protect and guard the unity of the Spirit. How? In the bond of peace.
[13:01] If I do it peacefully, we go, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with everyone. We pursue things peacefully, not aggressively. That's what we do.

Now he's going to define these fundamental unities. So what kind of unity are we protecting? When he says in verse 3, to protect the unity of the Spirit.
What's the unity of the Spirit? Well, he's going to give seven fundamentals that that is. So we have to dig a little bit.
And I want you to notice that these first three in verse 4 are connected. So we have one body and one Spirit. So it's connecting body and Spirit.
Just as, also, you were called in one hope of your calling. So notice, they're all three. They're not just one body, one spirit, one hope. It is one body and one spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.
[14:00] So they're all three connected. So we're going to look at them together. So body, Spirit, hope. That's what we're going to look at. So instead of, this is different for folks.

If you're used to my teaching and preaching, usually we have two points. Watch out now, we have three. Because we're just following the text. So instead of having one main point and dividing it, what I usually do, we are looking at these three subjects.
So, okay. So let's look at these. What is one body? Well, let's put it this way. Our first unity is every believer in Christ has been united together in one body.
Okay? That's how I'm going to summarize that. Every believer in Christ has been united together in one body.
So all Christians are united together in one body. not many different bodies. Not different, but one body. One big, universal body of Christ.
[15:07] Which is present, past, future. Right? It's encompassing everyone. One body. So what is it referring to?

Well, he's already referred to this body back in chapter 122 when he says he put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet and gave him as head over all things to the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
So at the end of chapter one, he brings up the church. He's been talking about Christ and now he says Christ is the head of the church which is his body.
So when we're talking about one body, we're talking about one church. One body, one church. Body is the picture of the church, the metaphor of the church because then we can understand how does the body work together.
Well, it's got lots of different members, right? The body has different members that do different things but it's all one body. So that's why I think Christ has chosen that term. So the church means the whole church.
[16:15] One body. All who have been saved by grace, past, present, future, earthly, and heavenly. One church. All. Okay? So there's not a church of the first century and then a church of

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the 20th century and, you know, there's not a church, you know, that's, well, there's Little Oak Church and then there's, you know, Calvary Church and then there's, I don't know what else we have but the Methodist Church and those are just local expressions of the one church.

we're all united with those churches that have those same unities that we believe in. Right? So, so there's many expressions of the one body.
Many local congregations but only one body. So, how do we get into the church? Well, gosh, Bill, that's easy. You open the door and you walk in, you know.
No, I mean, how do you become part of this church? This eternal, universal, Catholic church? By faith, yeah.
And, in chapter 2, Paul described this, right? 2.12, he says, remember that at one time you were separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
[17:41] That's where we used to be. But now in Christ Jesus, you, who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Christ established this church.

Christ brought us and reconciled us by his blood. For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.
Remember the wall that did not let us come draw near to God, the wall, the veil, right? All that. In the temple, we could not go there. And so Christ broke it down.
He broke it down. He removed it so that we all now through him can come all the way into the presence of God. All the way into the presence of God.
And so he did that by abolishing in his flesh the enmity. Do you remember what the enmity is? What's the enmity that keeps us away from God? It's the law.
[18:38] It's the law. And the law, the law is not a natural enemy. The law is just the law. It's just holy, righteous, and good. But what the law says is our enemy because that law accuses us.

That law reveals who we are. We are breakers of that law. All right? So in that sense, it becomes our enemy. It's our obstacle. I have broken the law so I can't, however can I get?
And so that's how God sends Jesus to make the two one, to establish peace by removing the law, by removing our sins that he might reconcile us to God.
So, one, body. So in Romans, Paul teaches us about the unity of the body. How it applies.
So, listen to these words. Romans 12, 3 to 5. For by the, Paul says, for by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.
[19:42] That sounds like Ephesians 4 too. Right? That humility, right? But, how should I think? So to think with sober judgment, you know, live in reality, with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

For, as in one body we have many members and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.
So he's talking about this picture of the body. We have many members. We've got fingers and toes and arms and legs and we've got all kinds of different parts of the body. Ears, eyes, mouth.
We have these different parts of the body. So they're all one body, but they all don't do the same thing. The eyes don't do what the hand does. Right? The leg doesn't do what the foot does.
Oh, it's connected. You get that idea. It's a picture. So we, as the body of Christ, we are many different members.
[20:49] We don't all function the same way. We don't all have the same gifts. We have differing gifts to serve the body in different ways. Some are speaking gifts. Some are serving gifts.

Some are encouraging gifts or spoken gifts, right, that the Spirit uses to teach, to encourage, to absorb, right, to lift up, to show mercy. Some are serving gifts.
We're kind of working behind the scenes, just kind of, you know, encouraging in different ways. So that's the body. Right? And then, so we tend to think of it as just this local thing because that's easier for us to think of that way.
But imagine now, put that in the big picture. What is the body of Christ like when you add together all these other local congregations that serve the same Lord, believe in the same faith, right?
Imagine that expression all over the world. Imagine what God is doing. You know, we just see what He's doing here. We see sometimes what He's doing in other places, but imagine.
[21:57] His body. His body is not a collection of separate parts, right, of independent parts. They might be, they function differently, but they're not independent. They're interdependent.

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There's a diversity in unity, not uniformity. They're radically different parts that function for different reasons and different purposes. All the members work together for the same purpose.
We're all working to serve Christ. We're all working to serve the Father. We're working to serve one another, to care and edify and build up one another. We're not called to work separately.
We're called to work as part of the church. In fact, all of our effectiveness is only when we're engaged with the church. If I go off separately to go do something on my own, I'm not part of the body then.
How can I be affected? See, that doesn't make any sense in Jesus and Paul's analogy here. Our existence as a body only has meaning together.
[23:03] Together. Functioning as one body. Now, parts of our body might reach out in different ways, yes, but we don't act independently. We go out to serve in our community or something that the rest of the body knows about that, right?

Praying for that. We're involved in that, supporting that, encouraging that. Not independent. Does that make sense? So, one body.
So, it's interesting, I find, that Paul puts that first. You know, he's listing, you'd think, like the creed, you know, they put the Father first and then the Son and the Spirit and then the body, you know, but here's Paul saying, protecting the unity of the Spirit, number one, one body.
Why does he do that, you think? Why is the body so fundamentally important? Well, folks, I know, we have to kind of think it through.
I'm not saying you should have that already because it requires a little bit of thought, right? Like, okay, wait a minute, what's the connection here? Thinking of what he just said in the first three verses, what's the focus?
[24:25] Walking worthy with one another. How we treat one another is crucial. It's, that, that, how we treat one another is tied to our mission.

Right? What does the world see in us? How do they know that we are Jesus's? How do they know that we belong to Jesus? How do they, how does the world, how does the outside folks know that we belong to Jesus and we serve him?
How we treat each other. How we treat each other. Right? Right? Jesus said, by your love for one another. By your love for one another. Not, not your love that's outreach, but your love for one another.
That's the distinguishing mark. And Jesus prayed in John 17, he prayed for the unity of the church that the world would be affected.
So it starts in here. That seems, that's not how we would do it, is it? We would say, hey, we got an outreach. We got to get, let's get some things going and do that. And that's all fine, good.
[25:29] But that's not where Paul starts. He starts with the body. Let's love one another. Let's love one another. Jesus said, follow me and I will what? I'll make you fishers of men.

That's his part. Our part is to follow Jesus and as we follow Jesus, he will make us fishers of men. How is he going to do that? I don't know. He's going to do a different one with all of us. But it has to be body connected.
Body must be connected. And God will, God will flow that out. We've seen that over the years, different ways. You know, how did the ministry across the street start?
Started years ago, just, you know, God working through this body. Hey, let's see if we can reach out. It's organic, not, not, um, organized. Holy Spirit, so something, oh, I've got to give you the second one here.
True unity is created and coordinated by one spirit. So the second unity is one spirit. And, and it's the, it's the unity of the spirit we saw in verse three.
[26:37] So, so it's true unity is created and coordinated by one spirit. So the spirit is the one creating us, bringing us together and coordinating us in one purpose.

So spirit, since he said one body, one spirit, um, some think that by spirit he means mindset, right? Some think the idea is to have the same mindset, the same attitude, same purpose, you know, being of one mind, one spirit.
Um, I don't think that's the idea at all when we look at the context because in verse three it's unity of the spirit. So we know he's already got the Holy Spirit in mind. And then later in verse five he talks about one Lord, Jesus, and then verse six, one God and Father.

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So it makes sense we're talking about the Trinity, spirit, Lord, Father. So the Holy Spirit, what have we learned about the Holy Spirit in Ephesians already?
Quiz, pop quiz. Well, that was so long ago, Bill. Um, so back in chapter 113, one of the blessings, one of these heavenly blessings is that we've been sealed by the Holy Spirit for an eternal, uh, future.
[27:55] He seals the believer. He's the one, right, when we're converted, he's the one that seals us or protects us or engages with us, uh, comes into us.

Uh, in 218, as we read, he's the one who brings us to the Father. It's by the Spirit that he reconciles us and brings us right through the veil, right? The veil's been torn.
Now, it's the Holy Spirit who brings us to the Father. That's his work. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work differently. The Holy Spirit brings us. the Holy Spirit makes us into chapter 2, 22.
At the end of chapter 2, he makes us into a holy temple. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. So we're a body, we're also called the temple, right, because that's where the Holy Spirit dwells in, in all of us together.
Uh, go to chapter 3, he's the one revealing that mystery. Chapter 3, 16, he's the one empowering us, right, that prayer for power, that we would be strengthened with power in the inner man by the Holy Spirit.
[29:01] He's the one that brings the power into our life to do and to bear food. Um, he, in chapter 4, we haven't got to this yet, but he's the one we can grieve.

When we act contrary to the Lord, when we disobey the Lord or disregard the Lord or walk away from the Lord, uh, uh, rebel in some way, we grieve the Holy Spirit.
That's a fascinating thing. The Holy Spirit does not get mad at us. He's not disappointed. By, by the way, um, said this before, it's impossible to disappoint God.
Right? Why, why is that? He knows. He already knows. Did Peter's fall disappoint Jesus? No, he already knew. He does. And I say, we can't do that.
But we do grieve him. The Holy Spirit is a person. Right? Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit are persons of the Godhead that are affected by us.
[30:09] That's, wow. He loves us that much. He's that much engaged with us that we can grieve him. And then in chapter 5, Paul will talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit.

So, uh, there's a lot of theology of the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? How does he work? A lot of it in Ephesians. Um, we go over to, to 1 Corinthians 12. We hear about one spirit again.
Uh, he's, he's going to connect it to the body, right? One body, one spirit. For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.
Four, in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. There he is. He's connecting one body and one spirit together. But it's the spirit who, who creates this.
In one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. The one spirit is the Holy Spirit. In one Holy Spirit, we're all brought into, baptized, immersed, right?
[31:13] Engaged into one body. Jew or Greek, slave or free. No matter where you're at. And all were made to drink of one spirit.

So not only, not only does the Holy Spirit create our unity and bring us into one body, we're made to drink of one spirit, which means we are, we are in fellowship with him.
We are engaged with him. We taste, right? We, we, we partake of the Holy Spirit, which is another metaphor way of saying, he comes into our lives and we walk with him.
We walk with the spirit. He internally empowers us and, and, and confronts us, convicts us, and, and, and moves us.
So, um, how do we protect this unity? One body, one spirit.
[32:10] Well, I think how, how we protect the, in connect to the spirit, how do we protect the unity? Well, how about we walk with the spirit? Amen. Keep in step with the spirit, right?

Um, which means that's an intentional thing, right? We're, as we seek the Lord in prayer, we're saying, okay, Lord, I want to follow your spirit. I want to know where to go.
So guide me step by step today. Guide me conversation by conversation. All right? Help me stay in, and, and then we have those periodic prayers. We should, shoot up the arrows before that conversation we have to have, right?

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Or, or, or before that decision we're going to make, or that interview we're going to do. Okay, Lord, we talked about this this morning. Um, direct me, my thoughts, give me wisdom in this conversation, et cetera.
Set our mind on the things of the spirit, be filled with this. There's lots of things. Um, Galatians talks about how we walk with the spirit. Okay, so one body, and one spirit.
[33:11] Just as, you were called in one, hope of your calling. So one hope. That is connected to spirit and body.

One body and one spirit, just as, you were called in one hope of your, come. So let's summarize it this way. Believers are united, in sharing, the one hope.
You know, we're united, we're, we're united into one body. We're created and coordinated by one spirit. And now we're, we're, we're united to share a greater hope.
The one hope, the same hope. We have the one, we all have that same one hope. So it's a specific, specific kind of hope. And that hope is connected to the Holy Spirit and it's connected to the body. Okay, Paul's connecting these things. So what's hope? Are we talking about hope? What hope? Hope?
[34:17] Looking forward to something. Yes. Looking forward to something. Yes, we're looking forward. We're hoping. Right? Now, earthly sense, we might hope, you know, I can hope that this pain will go away.

Oh, please let it go away. Right? Hoping that, but I don't know if that's going to come about. I don't know how long it's going to go. How long the Lord wants to humble me.
That's how I take it. We, we hope for some resolution in a relationship. We hope, you know, our children turn this way or that, you know, we have hopes.
That's not what this is, is it? Whatever this hope is, it's what we all share. It's the same. We have one hope. Just one. So it's not these general hopes, earthly hopes.
Those are things we can talk to the father about. This is one hope that's set. It's one hope that came with our calling. Right? It's one hope that came with our calling when the Holy Spirit called us, when the Holy Spirit converted us and then joined us into a body.
[35:26] He gave us that all. He gave all of us that same hope. What's that hope? That's connected to Jesus. Huh?

Going home to him. Going home to him. Yeah. And every day I look forward to that more. Every new pain. Yeah. Yeah.
So, so in one chapter one, 11, he brings up the hope, right? So it's, it's, this is something Paul's already talked about. He talks about in, in one 11, we also have obtained an inheritance, having the predestined, according to his purpose, who works all things after the council of this, of after the council of his will.
So in other words, God does everything his own way to the end that we, who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of his glory. So we all, our hope is in Christ, that our hope can, is connected to an inheritance, which is future.
So our hope is in Christ who has promised us an inheritance. And that's our hope, a future inheritance. Um, uh, in one 18, he called it the hope, you know, he prays that we come to understand what is the hope of his calling, right?
[36:49] What's the hope of his calling? Same thing. What is that future hope? What is the hope that really, really matters? When all things are said and done, what hope really matters? You know, not our security here, right?

Not our health here, not our, not our prolonged, whatever here, our, our, you know, our, our 403B fund, you know, to stay stable, you know, not, not those kind of things.
Yeah. Cause those can fade, those can go. Um, so invest in gold, right? Cause I, no, seen that commercial lately. Okay.
Yeah. Okay. Whatever. Um, yeah, those are earthly things. This hope is, is beyond this hope of his calling. Uh, in 212, it talks about before, before we came into this body, we had no hope, right? We had no hope. We had no God. We had nothing. We didn't have any connection to anybody. We're just, we're just Gentiles. We're just out there until we've been brought near. Now we have hope because we're in Christ and in Christ, that hostility has been removed, right?
[37:58] We have hope because he's already done things for us. He doesn't just promise us a future. He, he promises a now, right? He promises a forgiveness and a presence of his Holy Spirit.

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He promises no shame, no guilt. And when we fail him, he does not hound us with guilt or shame. That's not how we were. That's the enemy. That's the enemy. And that's your own past baggage too, probably. But he, he, he, he calls us gently, doesn't we have the conviction of the Holy Spirit? What is that? He calls us to recognize what we've done and he gently draws us back to him. So conviction leads us back to the father. Guilt leads us where? Away.
And shame and guilt. That's what the enemy wants us to go away. Holy Spirit wants to, wants to draw us in. And so he's very gentle. Every Westside has got to get a two by four out.
[39:00] But generally, generally, he's very gentle. He's a, he's a gentleman. He's meek and kind.

So hope in Ephesians is not just, is not about individual private future.
It's something bigger than that. It's not just my security in heaven, not my hope of, yes, I'm going to be in heaven with my Lord. But it's bigger.
It's something that, that I share with all of you. It's something that we all share together. That hope of being joined together again in heaven.
We share the same heavenly future. We're not going to different heavens. You know, Lord, I'd like to go to the, you know, I want to go to the heaven that's out by the seashore.
[40:01] And, you know, it's not, it's one heaven. And Revelation describes it, you know, as just, you know, bigger than anything.

You know, just gorgeous, beautiful, more than you can imagine. How much of that is literal and how much of that is pictured, it doesn't matter to me.
It's going to be, it's going to be something special. All right. More than we can ever imagine here. So we suffer now, we have the glory later.
That's our hope. Same expectation of an inheritance. So it's, it's not just that we have a place, but we have an inheritance. We're given something.
So, one hope. We're united in one hope. One body. One spirit. One hope. All connected together.
[41:02] So let's get a little personal. So what kind of hope do you have? How are you doing with your hope? You know, it's easy for us to struggle with, you know, when we get trouble and issues and pain and reversals and whatever things happen to us through, through this life, it's easy to focus on short-term hope.

You know, hope to get out of this. Hope to, hope that we can turn reversal back around. Hope that we can, we can, we can repair that relationship. Hope that, whatever, whatever, my health can improve and I get more strength.
That I can advance from the, the weakest, stretch bands, faith, to the big bands like faith's using now. I hope someday to get as strong as faith because right now, you, you use the least band.
I'm like, thanks a lot. Make me feel good because you're weak. So, you know, and then it's like, oh yeah, okay, that's the only one I can do. So, so, so it's, it's not that hope.
But it is a specific hope. Peter talks about it. First Peter one, he says, blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who, according to his great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope.
[42:29] We are born again to a living hope, a hope that's alive, a hope that keeps living and burning.

It's through, how does that come? It comes through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Okay, we only have a hope because Jesus died and rose again. That's why we have that hope because he, by rising from the dead and conquering sin, he gives us all hope.
Okay, wow. We have a true savior who, when he promises, he delivers. Born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
What is this living hope? To an inheritance, to born again to a living hope to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.
See, those three terms describe what the hopes of earth. They perish, they become defiled, and they fade away. But this heavenly one is kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed.
[43:44] When? In the last time. In the last time, it's future. We already have salvation in part, right? We're saved from sin, the penalty of sin. We're not yet saved from the presence of sin.

We still have to deal with sin. We are saved. We are delivered. We are set free. But we still have to fight. And so there is a salvation.

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There is the completion of our salvation. One day, right, when we go up, when he takes us up, when he takes us home, however you want to describe it, whether you call it a rapture, whether you call it a resurrection, whether you call it, you know, emancipation, I don't know, whatever you call it, there's one day when that comes in the last time.
That's the unity. That's the hope that we look forward to. So this is unity worth protecting, what Paul tells us. One body in Christ that is diverse but interdependent.
One spirit we believe in and defend and draw the line and hold on to this truth of one spirit, one Holy Spirit that works in all of us.
[44:57] Not different spirits. One spirit. And however he works in all of us, it is united. It's not contrary. The Holy Spirit is not going to reveal to one person one thing and something totally contrary to somebody else in the body and we have a division over it.

Somebody doesn't have the spirit then. Okay? Because there are other spirits that are not the spirit. Right? We are in a spiritual battle.
And so how do I know if I'm listening to the Holy Spirit? Well, am I walking with him? Is whatever the Holy Spirit guiding me and teaching me to do is that in line with this? Not something new, not something different, not something that's individualistic but is it in line with this?
Just like Jesus said, he's the cornerstone, right? The apostles and prophets of the foundation and we keep building this wall that is directly plumb line in line with the apostles and the cornerstone of Christ.
Because if we're out of line with that, then yeah, it's not a pretty building then. It's not that that's a pretty building. Oh, I like the brick. I like that.
[46:10] That's us, right? That's our temple. It's a picture of our temple being different stones being put together but it's all plumb lined with Christ the cornerstone.

So this unity we're protecting, this one body that God, Christ has given his life for and the Holy Spirit has created and brings together.
One spirit who leads us and guides us and directs us, who empowers us and enables us and walks with us and grieves with us and enjoys things with us.
And one hope, one hope that is a certain hope, not a hope that, oh, I just really hope that works out, but a certain hope, a living hope. And it's certain because Christ purchased this, purchased this, purchased it and guarantees that inheritance, that future inheritance.
Remember how Ephesians 1 talked about how God, how did God guarantee our inheritance? He guarantees our inheritance.
[47:27] How did he do that? Connected to the Holy Spirit. He gave us the Holy Spirit who seals us. The Holy Spirit is our engagement ring, so to speak.

The Holy Spirit is the seal. He's the one that comes into us, anoints us, and ensures us that that future is for sure. So this is the unity that we're given.
It's only in the one body of Christ created by one spirit as we look forward to the one hope. There we are. Let's pray.
Father, we thank you for Paul. We thank you for what you have revealed to him. We thank you, Lord, that he begins to stretch us and cause us to think, just like Jesus used to do.
He wants us to think how these ones, these unities work together. And then as we understand what those are, those are the things that we protect.
[48:38] Those are the things that we hang on to. Those are the things that we don't surrender. Those are the things that matter most. And so help us, Father, to engage that into our mind, how the body, how the one body is something we protect, the one spirit, the one Holy Spirit, and the one future hope that we have.

That those are the things that we guard, that we defend. Help that, meticulate that into our life and faith.
We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

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