

NHCO Vision 2021

ONE CHURCH

Jan 30-31

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Before you begin, by faith ask the Lord to remind you of what He's been teaching you so far. Summarize them here.

Hey everyone, welcome to WEEK 5 of our original series to start the New Year, entitled ONE. So tell the person next to you what we've been saying to each other throughout our series. That's right:

"I love you and there's nothing you can do about it."

How has this statement had an impact on you so far in our series?

Quick review of our study in Ephesians so far: Remember in Week 1 we learned that Jesus' vision for His Church is that we become ONE. Week 2 we learned that we can only become ONE when we are united with THE ONE, Jesus, who makes us ONE with the Father. If we follow any other VISION besides Jesus', then we have DI-VISION or DIVISION, not UNITY. Week 3 we learned that because Jesus makes us ONE with the Father, we have become a multi-ethnic, multi-racial fellowship with different backgrounds all united as ONE--THE ONE GENERATION. Week 4: This ONENESS we experience in Church is actually a preview of what God has planned for the future of our planet: ONE WORLD. So this leads us to a super important discussion. Welcome to Week 5. THE ONE CHURCH.

So if the Church is critical to God's plan to unite the world under Christ, how can this happen if the Church itself is not ONE? What are your initial thoughts about this before going any further?

This week let's ask the Holy Spirit to search us and evaluate our obedience to God's command to be ONE CHURCH.

So what is the Church?

A building? No. Army of God? Yes. Bride of Christ? Yes. But today we're going to focus on how Paul describes the Church in Ephesus--the BODY OF CHRIST. Let's read this together. Ready go:

¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT).

Underline the "body of Christ." What does it mean that the Church is the "body" of Jesus?

So Paul is comparing the Church to a human body. He is saying that Jesus chose us to carry or host His presence on the Earth. Jesus is the HEAD, and we are the different members of HIS body. If you're Pordagee, you like to talk, so you're the mouth. If you're Japani, you work quietly, making origami--you're the hands. If you're Filipino you like to dance--so you're the feet. Some of us are the appendix. We're not sure what you do, but you could flare up and kill us all! Everyone plays an important part. But we are ONE BODY, ONE CHURCH. But even though we are ONE, we have different, here it is, GIFTS. Ironically, one of the most divisive issues in the Church is Spiritual Gifts. We say, "Wow, the anointing on that prophet is powerful, but not as powerful as the anointing on that pastor over there. But what about the anointing on that evangelist!" We compare anointings. We covet anointings. We go from church to church chasing anointings. But listen carefully. **The Church does NOT have many anointings. There is only ONE ANOINTED ONE, and that's Jesus.** Amen?

Why do we say the Church does not have many anointings when there are so many different gifts in the body of Christ?

And each of us has received a unique way of expressing or demonstrating Jesus to others. One Spirit, unique expressions. One anointing from the Anointed One, many gifts. So it does absolutely no good to compare yourself to anyone else in the body of Christ. Let's work together in love and unity, and we will become the body of Christ. Today let's ask the Holy Spirit to take a blow torch and reignite in us God's vision for His Church as the BODY OF CHRIST on the Earth.

What was the center of Jewish religious life in the 1st century? How did Jesus change or "shift" their thinking about this?

Here's a quick primer on what God is up to. Remember, Paul is writing Ephesians from a Roman prison around 62 AD. For Jews at that time the presence of God on Earth was where? The Temple in Jerusalem. But then Jesus stood in that Temple and said these cryptic words: **"Destroy this TEMPLE, and in three days I will raise it up"** (John 2:19 NLT). Long story short Jesus REVEALED a MASSIVE paradigm shift in that moment that the Church not only understood, but

experienced first-hand in amazing signs, wonders, and supernatural, transformative power. The world has never been the same since. What was Jesus' massive revelation? Buckle your seatbelt, friends, because here it is: **GOD DOES NOT DWELL IN TEMPLES MADE BY HUMAN HANDS BUT IN TEMPLES MADE BY HIS.**

Where is God's dwelling place on the Earth--the Temple NOT made by human hands? What does this say about how significant you are?

When Jesus uttered those words in the Jerusalem Temple, the authorities mocked Him, "It took 46 years to build this Temple. You think you can rebuild it in 3 days?" Yes, it took man 46 years to build a stone Temple, but in an instant He can transform you into a carrier of His Presence through the Holy Spirit. Coming up in just 3 weeks we're going to do an entire series on this, so look for that. But for now, can you see that the Church is the HOST of the Presence of God on the Earth? Jesus is defining success for us as a Church.

How does Jesus define success for us as His Church? How can you tell if you are succeeding?

If we do not host or honor or worship His Presence here--EPIC FAIL. We get an "F" on our Church Report Card. On the other hand, if we welcome His Presence, embrace His Presence, crown Him King of our Church, we get an "A." And Principal Jesus puts you on the Honor Roll. Today's Church tends to gather around a preacher, but the Hebrews gathered around God's Presence. We drift from church to church saying, "I'm not getting fed, I'm not getting fed" as if Church was all about us. We have become consumers, connoisseurs of church rather than carriers of His Presence. The IVRI, the ancient Hebrews, on the other hand, wanted to be with God, sit in His Presence, and worship Him. How can you tell whether you are gathering around a preacher or God's Presence? This might sting a little, but listen. If you're gathering for His Presence, then you will not miss worship. **In fact, worship becomes the MAIN EVENT at Church for you.** But if you're gathering around preaching, then you skip the so-called "warm-up songs" at the beginning and jump to the message.

What are you coming to Church for? A preacher or His Presence? How can you tell by your choices and actions?

At the end of Jesus' life He stood again at the Temple and said, "You will not see Me here again until You learn to say, 'Baruch haba b'shem Adonai,' 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.'" Here at New Hope, we do not come for a preacher, some good music, or friendly people. That is not why we've come. We want Jesus! God Things not good things. We look to encounter Him, hear His voice, obey Him, and be transformed by Him. We welcome His

Presence. We say, “Baruch haba b’shem Adonai.” “Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.” New Hope Central Oahu is about “when God shows up.” He is speaking right now. Do you recognize His voice when He speaks? Keep listening. You will.

What is the Lord saying to you about your attitude toward Church? What change will you decide to make today?

So the CHURCH is where the Presence of God now dwells on the Earth. And as if to put a MASSIVE EXCLAMATION POINT to what Jesus and now Paul is saying, the Lord God then allowed the Romans to DESTROY the stone Temple in Jerusalem, just 8 years after Paul wrote Ephesians. In 70 AD the Temple was taken apart. When our Church went to Israel late 2019, we walked among the ruins of a decimated stone Temple. So why did God have them build the Temple in the first place? For a detailed answer to that question, pick up my book, *Lightning in a Bottle*. [Shameless plug] You can get it at the Hope Center or on Amazon. Or you can ask me on Open Mic.

So if I host the Presence of God within me and you host His Presence within you, what does it mean when we interact with each other?

Mike, are you saying it’s as if we are interacting with God Himself? Uh-huh. This is why Paul is so emphatic:

“Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg (BEG!) you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God” (Ephesians 4:1 NLT).

Underline “a life worthy of your calling.”

We are NOT first and foremost called to evangelism, to outreach, or missions. We are called to host the Holy Spirit on the Earth. We are His eyes, His hands, His feet, and His voice. So Paul is pleading with the saints, BEGGING the Ephesian Church, to choose a life worthy of their calling. What calling? To RE-PRESENT the image of God to the world. So REPRESENT! Tell the person next to you, “REPRESENT!”

What is Paul “begging” the Church to do? And what does that mean?

And what is God like? Gracious, compassionate, honest, truthful, loving. Sitting in our company should be like sitting with Jesus Himself, because if YOU are here, that means Jesus is here. When I look at you I MUST not just see you as a normal, regular person with all your issues,

flaws, and shortcomings, but as the Living Temple of God made by HIS hands to carry His Presence on the Earth. We are the only thing in Creation that bears this distinction. Mountains, trees, birds, and fish don't carry the image of God. We are the only ones designed to carry His Presence. So talking with you is like talking with Jesus Himself. Why do you think the greatest commandment is "Love God and love one another?" Because talking with you is LIKE talking with God!

What is the new "vantage point" or "scenic lookout" we receive seated with Jesus up in the Heavenly Realms? How does that compare with the "Pali Tunnel" vision? In other words, how should we see others now?

Since the beginning of this year, 2021, our Church has set up camp around the mountain of God that is Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. As we ascend Mount Ephesus we are immediately given a powerful revelation--our new "vantage point:" Because of Jesus' completed work on the cross, we are now seated with Christ in the Heavenly Realms who is seated at the right hand of the Father (1:20). This is not a prophetic look at our future. It is happening in real-time. Think of it as a "scenic lookout." You know how when you stand on the Pali Lookout you can see all of Kaneohe? That is a very different view, a different vantage point, than driving through Pali Tunnel. Know what I mean? *Some of us get "tunnel vision" when we see each other. We only see da bad kine stuffs.* We only remember the last time we fought or offended each other. But before you go into that dark tunnel, take the off ramp and go up to the lookout. Look at each other now from your new "scenic lookout," the Heavenly Realms. From there we will see each other the way God sees us, speak to each other as if we were addressing God Himself. And this will affect every relationship in your life, especially at home. Next week, when we talk about ONE FAMILY, we will talk more about how the way we treat each other reveals how we feel about God. So we pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." And we just learned that His Kingdom comes from Heaven to Earth through His hosts, His Church. Us!

What did you learn about Church from the "alignment" illustration?

So imagine Heaven is up here and Earth is down here. And the Church is in the middle. So here's Mike here. The Board is here. And the pastors are here. (This isn't an org chart, so just relax, ok?) You guys are here. Now what if Mike is here but the Board is way over here doing its own thing? And the pastors are over here doing their own thing? And you guys are over this way, doing whatever you want. Look what happens to the love and power of God: it's trying to squeeze through these choke points, and not much happens. Now listen. Let me go back to what I said earlier about consumer versus carrier. If you have a "consumer" attitude about Church, then it's all about you. Consumers are like customers. And what does Wal-Mart say? The customer is always right. As long as the preacher keeps you happy, makes you laugh, solves

your problems, you keep coming. But as soon as the Church does something you don't like, you bolt. God's Church is not here for your convenience, so you can't treat it like your convenience store. If instead we see each other as the "carrier" of God's Presence on the Earth, then we don't just leave. We won't give up on each other. Anybody here perfect? Yup, me neither. I guarantee you that at some point I will do something or say something that you will disagree with. And you will do the same. But we never give up on each other. Amen? The stakes are too high. The Church is too important. So we pray for each other. We ask the Spirit to lead us into godly, fruitful conversations, so we can hear one another, work things out, resolve our differences.

When we have a disagreement in Church what should we do?

We don't just take off and leave. The reason is if you don't work things out here, and you leave, you will go to another church and guess what will happen there? You end up doing the exact same thing you did here. Why? Because the problem is NOT just the Church. The problem is you. And you cannot escape yourself. *Wherever you go, there you are.*

Why is it that leaving Church does not solve our problem?

Have you ever talked with someone who is just so sure that he is right and everyone else is wrong? My dad absolutely INSISTS that the Palompos are part Italian. He has said this for YEARS! Well, one day I took a DNA test, and I showed him the result. I said, "Look, dad, I'm completely Filipino! No Italian." He looked at me and said, "You mean, you're not my son?" We need to help each other, because no one is perfect. Let's go back to our diagram. [Return to the diagram to show the pieces coming together.] What if we became SUPER committed to each other? Loved one another, honored each other, regarded each other as the re-presentation of the Presence of God on the Earth? What if we spoke truth to each other in love? Not try and force others to see things our way, but instead really listen to each other? Now, check out our diagram! Look at the love and power of God working through us! This is called ALIGNMENT. Everyone say "ALIGNMENT." I've just described for you what Paul is talking about here in Ephesians. Let's read it out loud together. Ready go:

"³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all" (Ephesians 4:3-6 NLT).

What happens when the Church comes into alignment and becomes ONE?

ONE body. ONE Spirit. ONE hope. ONE Lord. ONE faith. ONE baptism. ONE God.
SEVEN ONES. Perfect oneness. When we are united in Christ we have perfect alignment. Now watch how the love and power of God can flow through us with greater glory. God is counting on us to be ONE, because if WE can't get it right, then the world doesn't stand a chance. In our next series coming in February, we will go into greater detail on how to succeed as ONE CHURCH and work together in unity. But for now, how many of us want to be the Church that Jesus envisioned? Not consumers, but carriers of God's Presence, advancing God's Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven? If that's you, pray with me:

Write your own personal prayer to Jesus about becoming a carrier of His Presence instead of a consumer of Church. Write a response to anything else He spoke about to you today.

"Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus. Jesus, thank you for taking us to the Father and filling us with Your Spirit. Now we have a new vantage point, a new scenic outlook, from the Heavenly Realms. Now we see the Church in a new and fresh way. We repent from being consumers of church and we embrace being carriers of Your Presence on Earth. We will not gather around a preacher but around Your Presence. Now we will love one another, honor each other, as if we are interacting with God Himself, because we are. And we will become the ONE CHURCH you prayed for: Make us ONE CHURCH, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. Tell the person next to you, "I love you and there's nothing you can do about it."
We'll see you next week as we talk about ONE FAMILY. ALOOO-HA!