

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 4:14
Message 64
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INTRO: Ephesians 4:1-16, the first section of the practical section of this letter deals with unity in the church. In verses 1-6 we have the call to unity and in verses 7-11 we have God's method of maintaining this unity. First, He provided gifted men. Through these we first got the NT and then those who were gifted to bring this message to the lost in other places. Once churches were set up, He provides pastors and teachers.

And the reason for these gifted people is ultimately to finish the believers, that is to perfect them or make them like Christ. And God will do this through the ministry of pastors and teachers and they will edify or build up the believers with the aim of perfecting them. All this, as I outline the passage is God's method of bringing about unity in the church.

Now in all this, God has an aim and we find it in verse 13 which says:

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

It is this aim we want to explore in this message. In view in this verse is the entire pastoral ministry. Well, verse 13 is an important verse regarding the effort today to bring churches together and we will get right to the verse and the aim it presents.

2. The provision for unity (4:7-16)

b. God's method of unity (4:11-16)

3) The aim (4:13)

God provided pastors and teachers to complete the work in Christians which God wants to accomplish. They do this by ministering to the saints to edify them. This edification goes on with this aim in mind, and I quote verse 13:

13 *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*

In the great commission the Lord instructed the disciples as to the work He had for them to do. It was first to disciple all nations and baptize the new believers. There is the work of the evangelist who uses the message of the Apostles and prophets. Unbelievers are converted and brought to salvation, and when that has taken place, they acknowledge their conversion by baptism. This is the evangelism of verse 11.

After the work of the evangelist is done, we have the pastors and teachers. This began in the days of the Apostles and is still ongoing. They are to take the new believers and finish them, or complete them in the faith. They do this by teaching them to observe all things that Jesus had instructed them in, and we get this in the rest of the NT.

So we come to the first part of verse 13. The new believers are to be edified:

13 *till we all come to the unity of the faith*

-WHAT THIS CHURCH UNITY IS NOT

So we ask, what is this unity of the faith? Let me begin by saying what I think it is not. First then, I believe this unity is not a call to an effort by churches to bring about unity between separate churches or between different denominations. For example, let us say a church is Charismatic or Calvinistic or Baptist or Mennonite in doctrine, I believe the pastor's task is not to seek to bring these separate churches to unity. As I see it, the pastor's task is to finish, or complete the believer in his local church.

So let me share a few things I see. First, it is helpful to recognize that there is a lot of unity between all true Christian churches regardless of denomination. There is agreement that the God of the Bible is the one true God. That is big. There is agreement that the Bible is the Word of God. That is also big. There is agreement that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah and that He was born of a virgin. There is agreement that justification is by grace through faith alone, and we could list numerous more such things. I call these the major Christian doctrines. So that is a large amount of unity in the faith.

But then there are secondary doctrines that divide us. We have those who believe only immersion baptism is valid. We have those who believe women should wear a head covering. We have charismatics and Calvinists and a host of other views. These divide us.

I might add to this that today I see greater divisions being caused by what professing Christians practice than by what they say they believe. For example the songs being sung in most churches, the practice of sloppy dress in church, the music styles, the practice of divorce and remarriage or drinking alcohol all have contributed more to a division between the true and the false than what these churches preach and profess to believe.

Now here is the question our text raises; are we to seek to come to a unity with all other churches? And here is what I believe. God did not place pastors and teachers in order that they should bring about unity between churches and denominations. He gave the gifts of pastors and teachers to finish the saints; to edify the saints in their local church until they come to the unity of the faith.

Their task is the local church of which they have the oversight. Their task is not given as to seek to bring about unity between churches.

Here is my understanding of true unity. True unity is based on the truth. A church must come to unity through preaching of the truth, not by compromising positions on secondary issues or practice. I believe we must be agreed with any other church in the essentials of the faith in order to respect that church as a true Christian church. For example, if we are not agreed on justification by faith alone, or the deity of Jesus Christ, the true Christian could not view that church as a true Christian church. We would not view them as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Second, on many secondary issues we might disagree but we can accept that church or denomination as a Christian church or denomination. But I do not believe this passage teaches that we should strive to bring our views into unity with their view. How do you unite a Calvinistic church with one that believes that God has not predetermined everything? If you seek unity then either side has to give up their view to achieve unity, or both must agree that their view is not as important as unity. This leads to compromise of belief somewhere. The only way true unity can be achieved is if both come to the truth on that matter. So, the task of pastors is to teach the Word of God accurately in the local church UNTIL we all come to unity.

The second thing I believe this unity is not to do is seeking to bring about unity in the universal church. Today there is a much broader effort. It is to seek to bring about unity among different denominations, extending even beyond that to seeking unity with the

Catholic church. It is called ecumenism. They take the unity spoken of in this passage to refer to the Church universal.

So let me now ask, what is ecumenism? The word comes originally from the Greek word *oikoumenikos*, which comes from *hee oikoumenee ge*, meaning the inhabited world. From there it came to be used for the Church in the sense of the Church worldwide. A definition I found online said it represents a number of different churches. They gave synonyms like nondenominational, nonsectarian, universal, catholic, all-embracing, all inclusive, 'an ecumenical church service.' And again, promoting or relating to unity among the world's Christian Churches, ecumenical dialogue.

A Wikipedia article says, "The term **"ecumenism"** refers to efforts by [Christians](#) of different Church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings. The term is also often used to refer to efforts towards the visible and organic unity of different [Christian denominations](#) in some form.

The adjective *ecumenical* can also be applied to any interdenominational initiative that encourages greater cooperation among Christians and their [churches](#), whether or not the specific aim of that effort is full, visible unity.

The terms *ecumenism* and *ecumenical* come from the [Greek](#) οἰκουμένη (*oikoumene*), which means "the whole inhabited world", and was historically used with specific reference to the [Roman Empire](#).^[2] The ecumenical vision comprises both the search for the visible unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:3) and the Eph 4:13 Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man, into

the measure of the age of fullness... "Of the full age, or, the perfect stature." } of Christ;"whole inhabited earth" (Matthew 24:14) as the concern of all Christians" end quote.

But maybe you say, "But should churches not try to get along? Should they not gather together and combine their efforts for the greater good to reach out to the world?" That is the beginning of ecumenism. I think where a church can work together with others without compromising their own unity or what they believe, it may have some benefit but it is almost always a slippery slope towards compromise.

WHAT THIS CHURCH UNITY IS:

So if the text does not have in view an effort by pastors and teachers to bring about the unity of the universal church or even the unity between protestant churches or even evangelical churches, what then is in view here?

The task of the pastors and teachers is to finish the sheep of their local church, to edify them until they are mature. They must be fed the truth until they come to this point. True unity must be based on the Word of God. And it is achieved by pastors and teachers, in whatever church they are by teaching the truth of the Word of God. If true unity is ever to be achieved by pastors and teacher in such a way as to unite churches and denominations divided by secondary issues, they must come to a unity on the things that divide them on those points. They must both come to the true view as to what the Bible teaches on those points, not by giving up secondary issues in order to bring about unity.

So we ask, how is this unity to come about if it ever does happen? Well, the Apostle will now further show what the aim of the edification Christians receive from their pastors is

and how it is achieved. We go on to the second part of this verse which says:

Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,

If we supply the elliptical words it would read like this: 'till we all come to the unity of the faith, till we all come to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.' A question now arises which is this: What is the difference between the unity of the faith and the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God?

This is a debated subject but I think the idea is that the unity of the faith is further explained as coming to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God. Now, the word for *knowledge* is *epignosis*, not *gnosis*. The word *gnosis* speaks of knowledge. *Epignosis* speaks of a more full, experiential knowledge. Such believers both know Christ and have experienced the knowledge of Christ in true salvation and in Christian life.

Turn to 2 Peter. True unity must then be based on a fuller experienced knowledge of the Son of God. Peter speaks a number of times about this *epignosis*, this fuller knowledge. In the following verses the word knowledge is always *epignosis*. He says in 1:2:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

He then goes on like this in verse 3:

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

Then in verse 8 he says:

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of

our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you go over to chapter 2 he says in verse 20:

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

The experienced, full knowledge of the Son of God is crucial for Christianity. A mere knowledge of Christ may not only be useless but even detrimental.

Now before we go on let me give one word of warning with regard to this *epignosis*, this fuller or experienced knowledge of the Son of God. Listen to Hebrews 10:26-31 as it speaks of this knowledge:

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge <epignosis> of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

The people spoken of in this passage are those who had received the full, experiential knowledge of the truth. What happened? They sinned! They sinned knowing they were sinning! Recently a man in our community crossed an ice bridge over the mighty Peace River which he had built to his property. He had done this

for many years. He was well experienced. And this year he broke through. I ask you, what feelings must go through a person in those last seconds of life? I ask you, what must go through a person when he dies and wakes up in hell, having once received the full knowledge of the truth?

Well, we go on in our passage. Pastors and teachers are to edify believers until they all come to the unity of the faith, to the unity of the full knowledge of Christ, and now to our next words:

...to a perfect man,

Here is one of the greatest reasons the Church has not achieved greater unity. Pastors and teachers have not done their task in finishing sheep. Pastors are to edify the believer until he arrives at the unity of the faith and the unity of the knowledge of Christ until he comes to the state of a perfect man.

We come to another difficulty here. When it says 'to a perfect man' the word 'man' is *anaar*, referring to a male, not to one of mankind in the sense of including women. Now why would Paul say 'to a perfect man'? Skipping the argumentation, let me say that I think the reason the word 'man' is used here is because the goal is Christ-likeness, so it is to make us like Him. And He was a perfect man, and it is this perfection that this text aims for. So it uses the term perfect 'man' because Christ was a man. We are to achieve the perfection He had. All, whether men or women can achieve this. What the idea here is, is full maturity.

Now this maturing of the believer, how long does it go on? Until the believer is perfect! Now you will say, "That is impossible. Nobody ever becomes perfect!" Go to Matthew 5. This is the Sermon On The Mount. And in verse 48 Jesus

said:

48 *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

That is a command from Jesus. Now I ask, is it possible to fulfill this command? Would Jesus give it if it was not possible? You may not remember but I have explained it like this in the past. Let us say you have an apple tree and it is the spring of the year and the trees are just blossoming. If a tree has a good blossom but it is not a full grown apple, is a nice healthy blossom perfect? Well, for that time of year it is. If in a month it has formed into a little apple, but it is not a full grown apple yet, is it still perfect? Well, for the stage in which it is, it is perfect. Now the fall time of the year arrives and all the apples are getting ready for picking, and this apple is also ready for picking and it looks like the rest, is it perfect? And a Christian is to progress in this way until he becomes full grown spiritually.

In our text, we are looking at the idea of maturity, rather than the process of getting there. The pastor's task is to edify the believer until the believer is a mature believer. This is the goal of edification.

We go on now to the next 'to' phrase. God gave some pastors and teachers to finish, or complete the Christian, and I read the whole verse:

13 *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man...*

And here is now the final aim of the ministry of pastor and teacher. It is that the Christian will mature, and I quote:

...to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

We begin with the words, "...to the measure..." We come to a word we have met before. It is *metron*. We get our word 'metric' from this word. Here is the measurement mark which is the aim of pastors edifying believers. Here is what God wants the pastor to achieve. Here is the mark.

I go into some homes sometimes and I see a tall ruler on the wall. Here some growing child is measuring how tall he or she is. Most likely a measuring stick for some boy. But I have not seen it with an aim, how tall this person would like to get, it just measures how tall the person is right now.

Every Christian is at some stage of maturity. If there was a measuring stick that would measure the point to which God wants us, where would we be at present in light of the final aim God has for pastors and teachers to bring us to?

So, just what is this aim? Well, we go to the next words, '...to the stature...'. The word here is *heelikia*. The Onlinebible says it speaks of age of life, or age, or adult age, maturity, or the suitable age of anything. Or when it is used metaphorically as here, it speaks of an attained state fit for a thing.

So in our province you have to be 14 years old before you can get your learners license. When you reach that mark, you can try for your learner's license. The word *heelikos*, means 'as old as', or 'as tall as', or 'how great', or 'how small'. We get the idea. The aim of edification is the measurement of maturity the Christian the pastor and teacher aims for.

So what is this measurement of maturity? What is the mark God ultimately wants the believer to arrive at? Well, it is the measurement of the stature of the fullness of Christ. You see, to finish cattle or sheep you have a certain

aim to achieve. They are not finished until you arrive at that aim, that measurement of stature. And a Christian the pastor has not achieved the aim of his task until the Christian has reached the mark of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

And so we ask, what is the mark of the stature of the fullness of Christ? I mentioned it when we spoke of the word 'to finish' or 'to complete'. Turn to Romans 8. Paul has said in verse 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Then he goes on like this in verse 29:

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Those God knew in His foreknowledge that they would choose Him in salvation, He predestined. Here is the mark of the stature He is aiming at. This is the word that describes it. It is to mark out beforehand. And what is that aim that is marked out? It is that the Christian should be conformed to the image of Christ. It is that we come to the stage where we live like Christ.

Now I ask you, is this achievable in life? Yes! Is it achievable before one dies? Yes, long before, if one is given any number of years. But like Israel, many Christians wander in the wilderness for 40 years. They live after the flesh. They fail to obey the Bible. They do not go through, clear through! They come to some point and compromise.

But let me tell you this. If you want to reach this point you will be tested to points almost beyond your endurance. I don't know if there are any exceptions to this. You will come to points where you will want to give in or where you will say, "I can't go on." But you can.

Many of you have already faced great tests, and you have been obedient. But, before you may lie even greater tests and you will be tempted to compromise.

And for some, between this mark and where they are now may lie some point of disobedience that they are not willing to repent of, and they will not reach this mark. I am not saying they are not Christians. I am saying they don't reach this mark. Some sin, so as to ultimately and finally go to hell. Some are stunted so they never truly fully mature.

So let me tell you what this perfection is not. It is not talking about a person who never sins again. There is such a view, called 'sinless perfection'. But here is what I believe this mark is. You see, there is such a thing as overcoming sin and living in a state in which one is not aware of any sin that needs to be taken care of. If such a person commits a sin and repents when he becomes aware of it, that sin does not change his state before God. Such a person is a victorious Christian. He is mature. If such a person becomes aware of some sin and repents, he or she is still victorious. If a person falls into sin again and again on the same thing, I think he or she is not yet mature.

I must warn, there is such a thing as deceiving oneself. The Christian who is not living in obedience or is compromising on some point may deceive himself. James says that a person who hears the Word but does not do it deceives himself (James 1:22).

There is an OT picture that explains this Christian victory, this mark Paul is talking about. But let me assure the Christian that wants to live in full victory, this is not an easy road. The devil will do absolutely everything to keep you from it. Israel was in Egypt. Egypt is a picture of being in need of salvation.

Israel was in bondage to Pharaoh and Pharaoh would not let them go. That is the state of the lost. They are in bondage to Egypt.

Then God dealt with 10 of the gods of the Egyptians and showed He was superior to them all. And when the firstborn were slain, Pharaoh finally agreed to let them go. There is a picture of God's firstborn giving His life for the lost. On that night each home in Israel sacrificed a lamb, picturing the death of Christ. Then they applied the blood to the doorposts of their homes. And when the death angel passed through that night, no homes where the blood was on the doorposts lost a firstborn to the death angel. But all homes that did not have this sacrificial lamb lost a firstborn to the death angel. All this is a picture of Christ dying for the lost. That night, after the first Passover meal, Pharaoh let Israel go. And so the Israelis set out for Canaan. Do you know how many of those who set out in Egypt arrived in Canaan? Only Joshua and Caleb. Not even Moses arrived. He too failed at one point. Very few arrived.

Now I believe Canaan does not picture heaven. Canaan pictures those who arrive at this point God has set out for them. Turn to the book of Numbers chapter 20. You see, some, like Moses, arrive at that point and then fail at some crucial point along the way. There was a time when Moses got frustrated and God said, "Moses, you have forfeited right to enter the land of Canaan." We start in verse 1:

1 Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.

2 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered

together against Moses and Aaron.

- 3 And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!"
- 4 "Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?"
- 5 "And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink."
- 6 So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them.
- 7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
- 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals."
- 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.
- 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"
- 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.
- 12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

You see, some disobedience or some compromise can cause one to fail. Compromise is a deadly thing. Numerous times when it came to dealing with sin in the church, fear set in on me. And the devil said, "If you do this, so and so will commit suicide." And now fear sets in. Very little will cause fear to set in like issues in one's family.

Compromise is a deadly thing. Don't compromise. When you meet compromised Christians, they are most often not rank liberals or unbelievers. They have learned to justify their choices and go on thinking all is well. I believe many of them see themselves as mature Christians but they are not. I am afraid to talk about this because when I address something like this, quite often in a short time I am tested on it. If you set out to do right, you will meet every obstacle under the sun.

Then let me assure you of another thing. First you will meet many, many immature or misled Christians. There are very many. Then you will meet those who went down the right road and wanted truth and were willing to sacrifice until they came to some place where personal cost was too high, and they compromised. For some it is what one of our folk called 'get-alongism'. If I should ruin my 'get-alongism' I am willing to compromise. If something is a threat to my reputation, it will want to cause me to compromise. For some it meant some price in their own family was too high and then they compromised.

Or they compromised on some other issue such as worldliness or materialism or any other such thing. And you will hear some of the most plausible arguments from such people. They might tell you they prayed about it. But behind all that facade may be a compromise of some sort. And if I have any advice for you it is this, don't argue with someone who you

think has compromised. You will meet very spiritual sounding arguments, but they are a façade. And in their arguments you will get some blame against someone who is not willing to bend. It is hard to argue with evolutionists. It is hard to argue with Calvinists. It is hard just as hard to argue with compromised Christians.

You see, true Christian victory cannot be gained without a price. If our Savior suffered, we can expect no less. You see, between Egypt and Canaan lies a vast wilderness. If Israel had been fully committed to their Savior they could have been there in 40 days instead of 40 years. And they could have all been there instead of two. But between the mark that Paul speaks of in our text and true Christian victory lies a vicious wilderness.

Now this mark, this goal of our text I believe is pictured in Scripture as the believer's rest. It is the Sabbath of the soul. Turn to Hebrews 4 for a moment. I believe that to overcome and reach the mark spoken of in our text speaks of what the writer to the Hebrews calls the 'rest'. That 'rest' speaks of that which the land of Canaan pictured. Canaan does not picture heaven. There was much sin in Canaan. It may picture the millennium, as well as the picture of Christian victory, but it is certainly a picture of Christian victory.

You see, Canaan was filled with giants and very sinful people. All of these were to be driven out and this is what is to happen in the victorious Christian life. And so we ask, why could most Israelis who started out from Egypt not enter Canaan? We begin in 3:7:

7 *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,*

8 *Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of*

trial in the wilderness,

9 *Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works
forty years.*

10 *Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They
always go astray in their heart, And they
have not known My ways.'*

11 *So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"*

12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart
of unbelief in departing from the living
God;*

13 *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today,"
lest any of you be hardened through the
deceitfulness of sin.*

I spoke to a faithful Christian some time ago who has a good number of years as a Christian and asked, "How many who once professed to be Christians have you seen go off the road." And he said, "Oh, a lot!" But let me tell you this, many don't go entirely off the road. They slip in some place and if there is growth from there on, it is slow.

We go on in verse 14:

14 *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the
beginning of our confidence steadfast to
the end,*

15 *while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not
harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

16 *For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who
came out of Egypt, led by Moses?*

17 *Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with
those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the
wilderness?*

18 *And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest,
but to those who did not obey?*

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Compromise is unbelief and it is disobedience. No matter how nice you make it look it is still disobedience. And any such disobedience will keep one out of the victory possible. We go on to 4:1:

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

May I ask you, have you compromised in some area? Then I encourage you to repent and go on. The requirement of repentance stops most from entering the land of rest. Verse 8:

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

The KJV says, "For if Jesus..." Iesous, translated 'Jesus' in English is the Greek word for Joshua. Verse

9:

9 *There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.*

10 *For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.*

11 *Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*

Our text says that the pastor is to edify until the saints come to that mark of maturity God has set out for them, which is the fullness of Christ. The truly mature Christian has reached the fullness of Christ. This is the goal God had for Moses, to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. Even Moses, the meekest man on earth failed to enter. Now were they all lost? No. They never reached this mark of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

So you see, God gave some Apostles and Prophets. They gave us the Scriptures which have been completed. The message of those Scriptures are the message the evangelist brings to new people groups. And when there is response to that message, new churches are started and every churches needs a shepherd to take them from Egypt to Canaan.

CONCL: And because I have used up my time let me just conclude briefly. Pastors are to edify those in their flock to bring them to maturity in order to bring about unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe the Lord has not assigned the task of bringing about unity between the various churches and denominations, but to bring their own flock to maturity until they are finished or perfected, or completed.

Our ladies are going through a book by Andrew Murray on prayer and he recommended to pray for the unity of the larger Church. To pray for the unity of the Church in the larger sense, I would recommend to pray that pastors will preach so as to bring Christians to full maturity. Only then is true unity between churches possible. True unity can only be achieved by believing

the same thing in truth, not by tolerance or by compromise. We will see more of this as we go along in Ephesians 4.