

PLEASANT SPRINGS CHURCH • SERMON • THE CONQUERING KING,
PART TEN

Conquering Divisions

The bond of peace — an exploration of Ephesians 4:1–6

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The Conquering King, Part Ten — Ephesians 4:1–6

Preached Sunday, September 27, 2026 by Pastor Jeremy Arnold

Ephesians 4:1–6 • Matthew 28:19–20 • 1 Corinthians 4:5 • Matthew 18:15–17 • Philippians
2:3–5 • Ephesians 6:12 • Galatians 5:17

For nine weeks the Conquering King has taken ground — outside the camp, then inside our own chest. This week the battlefield is the pew beside you. The flesh that wants to control me is the same flesh that divides us.

THE SERMON TEXT

Ephesians 4:1–6 (ESV)

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

RECAP

Last week we talked about conquering the flesh. God is faithful to provide a way of escape from temptation. The issue lies with us — will we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit and submit to Him in obedience, or will we follow through with our own desires? We learned that God has given us Himself and the resources to overcome every scheme of the wicked one and to live victorious lives in and through Christ.

SO WHAT IS OUR CALLING?

As we look at today's Scripture we see that we are called to walk worthy of our calling in Christ. Our calling begins with who God created us to be as His image bearers, but in Christ that calling is restored and redirected toward making disciples and living as the people of God.

Matthew 28:19–20 (ESV)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

We are simply called to be students, and to make students, of the Word and of Christ.

Point

If we are called to make disciples, division inside the body works directly against that mission.

- Christ creates the unity.
- The Spirit establishes the unity.
- We are responsible for maintaining the unity.

The only way we can effectively accomplish this is to follow Paul's teaching to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 4:1–6.

Just as when we are tempted to sin, sometimes our emotions and perceptions become out of focus and skewed. It is in these times that we are confronted with the hard decision to follow after the Spirit rather than following our emotions and the flesh. The same principle applies when offence comes.

Someone says something. Someone doesn't call you. Someone doesn't include you. Someone gets the position you wanted. Someone makes a decision you don't like. Someone misunderstands you. Someone hurts your feelings.

Then the flesh rises up.

There is a moment where we are presented with a choice — follow the flesh or follow the Spirit. And in that moment God provides a way of escape. Here are our choices:

- **Obedience to the Spirit** or reaction.
- **Grace** or retaliation.
- **Prayer** or gossip.
- **Conversation** or speculation.
- **Forgiveness** or bitterness.

The enemy wants us to react before we pray. The Holy Spirit wants us to stop and pray — searching our hearts, and the Word — that we may respond like Jesus.

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Don't assume you know someone else's motives. One of the most destructive things we do is assume the why behind something:

- "They are trying to run things."
- "They don't like me."
- "They are just jealous."

1 Corinthians 4:5 (ESV)

"Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart."

Point

God knows the heart. We don't.

APPLICATION FOR UNITY

Go to the source. And go asking, not accusing:

- “Can you help me understand?”
- “Do you realise how that made me feel?”

Matthew 18:15–17 (ESV)

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

Point

The goal is not winning or getting even. The goal is repentance, restoration, and reconciliation wherever possible.

This connects to conquering the flesh, because division is often not conquered by winning an argument. It is conquered by crucifying the flesh.

- **The flesh says** surround yourself with like-minded people. Jesus says love your neighbour, and love your enemies.
- **The flesh says** protect yourself. Jesus says lay your life down.
- **The flesh says** make them pay. Jesus says forgive.
- **The flesh says** they hurt me, so I will hurt them. Jesus says take up your cross.

Point

The flesh wants to be right. It wants to be heard, to be recognised, to be owed an apology.

THE DANGER

You can be right about an argument and wrong in the spirit in which you approach it. Often the issue at hand is not the issue any more — it becomes an issue of being heard, and then an issue of me versus them.

Many times issues can be resolved by good listening: giving our full attention to the person we are speaking with. The Word of God gives us a great recipe for this:

Philippians 2:3–5 (ESV)

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

Point

We are called to treat one another with the humility and self-giving love that Jesus demonstrated.

Stay focused. The person standing in front of you is not the enemy. He or she is created in the image and likeness of God, just as we are.

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

The flesh that wants to control me can become the flesh that divides us.

The enemy wants us to see them and me. Paul reminds us that in Christ there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Father. The flesh asks, “Whose side are you on?” The gospel reminds us that if we belong to Christ, we belong to one another.

— Pastor Jeremy Arnold

QUESTIONS TO PONDER THIS WEEK

1. The assumption.

Whose motive have I decided I already know? What would it cost me to ask them instead of telling myself?

2. Right, and wrong.

Where have I been right about the matter and wrong in the spirit I carried into it?

3. Go to the source.

Who is the one person I have talked ABOUT more than I have talked TO — and what would “Can you help me understand?” sound like this week?

4. One another.

If belonging to Christ means belonging to each other, which relationship in this body am I quietly treating as optional?

GROW FURTHER

THE CONQUERING KING, PART NINE

The Choice

Last week — the moment between the temptation and the transgression, and the way of escape God provides in it.

DISCIPLESHIP

Binding and Loosing

Matthew 18:18 — the verse immediately after the three steps this sermon walks through.

DEEP RESEARCH

Ephesians 2:1–10

Two made one, and the wall broken down — the chapter that sets up the one body of chapter four.

“There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.”

Ephesians 4:4 (ESV)