

## Ephesians 1:9-10 (Neil Whatmough) 210731

St. Louis Conference: 2004, We Have the Mind and Counsels of God (1:9-10)

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Afternoon by singing #330 What raised the wondrous thought? Or who did it suggest that we the Church to glory brought, Should with the Son be blessed? Oh God, the thought was thine, thine only it could be fruit of the wisdom, Love, Divine, peculiar unto thee #330. What? Race. You. Somehow. Oh. Great, great. Sores. By all of the day and God means. The. The. So bright. For now. And we stand up and open God's word. You say for sure, no other mind or thoughts so bold, so free greatness or strength could ever find that. Only it could be. It's really quite something to open our Bibles and to say that we have the mind of God, to know what was in the mind of God before the foundation of the world.

And to say we know the one who purposed everything after the council of his own will. And I'm thinking too of the dearest Saints that are going home and safety is of the Lord. And two, as we stand here, that our sister is being laid to rest. And I just like to read a verse before we pray in connection with that in the 16th song. Psalm #16. Verse 8. Two verses. I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, and I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices, and my flesh shall also rest in hope. Well, our dear sisters body is going to be laid in a grave by loving hands. This our work and her question is going to rest in hope as we sit here and have the same hope of the Lords coming, that we might all be changed. But we do desire the comfort of those that more than two the many that will come to the funeral perhaps hear words whereby they might be saved. Just look for the Lord's help. Well, I'd like to turn first of all to a verse in Ephesians. And back up in time. To see what the counsels of God are concerning. All things our brother spoke after the break you've read about. Israel's hopes and it is a wonderful thing to think of. Verse 10 Verse Verse nine of Ephesians chapter one having made known unto us the mystery of his will. According to the good pleasure which yet purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him. In whom we also have obtained an inheritance. Well, it's not my purpose to speak along. That line particularly, but more the practical side of things as to what the Church is. But our brother brought before us the hopes of Israel. And it is a wonderful thing to think that in the purpose purposes of God, that God purposed that there would be blessing here on earth and blessing in heaven. But as we turn to Matthew's Gospel, we find that a king was born into this world. And he was banned, turned to the word of God to find him, that they might kill him. And as the gospel unfolds, we he say he that came from heaven to be born king of the Jews was rejected. And it culminated in them actually seeing all those good deeds that he did, and he's saying that he did them by the power of the devil. And So what is unfolded to us then is something that was in the heart of God beginning to be unfolded to us from the heart of God. That God was in the interim that he was rejected, that his Son was to be rejected by his earthly people, was going to call out of this earth a heavenly people. The Jew was looking for blessing here on this earth, and there will be blessing here on this earth. But that there was in the heart and thought of God that he should call out a heavenly people. And that he was going to this people called out, he was going to call was the church. They're going to be friends of the bridegroom too, but they was going to call out of this earth in the in the period of the rejection of his son. And so that he might have a companion with himself. When he took that place of headship over all things, whether they be in heaven and on earth. And so it ought to be of the deepest interest to everyone that belongs to Christ that. They're going to be associated with Christ for all eternity.

In that way, as his bride and the youngest child, if they bow their head and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. In reality, was made a member of his body. That is going to be the bride presented to him as the bride of Christ. It's a wonderful thing. You know, we can't act properly if we don't know what our position is. If we walked in the door of this hotel and we didn't know whether we were a busboy or a chef or whether we were a guest, we wouldn't know how to behave ourselves. And we will not know how to conduct ourselves in this world in a proper way if we do not know. What our place is in this world and what our association is. And many dear believers don't know what the church is. They know it's not a building. I think it's rare to find somebody that believes that the church is a building. They always revert to speaking that way. They say, well, we know the church is not a building, it's the people in the building. But I trust as we unfold from God's Word, we're going to see more than it is a bunch of people that gather themselves together. But that it is the expression here on this earth of the fact that he is gathering. A people for himself, forming a bride for himself here on this earth. You know, when brethren first started to break bread in the last century, what exercised them was here was a man preaching the gospel in a republican country, and if one wanted to be part of the church, they had to swear allegiance to the Queen of England and they had to go to a place that. Where the Bishop was appointed by the British Parliament. How would you like it if the brother stood up here and preached the Gospel last night and said, well, if you want to be part of the church, you're going to have to be? Swear allegiance to the Prime Minister of Canada and you're going to have to go to a place where the minister is appointed by the Prime Minister. Canadian Parliament. Well, that was the level of understanding of people of what the church was in the last century. And so it was a wonderful thing, this truth that we're going to turn to Matthew's Gospel that first of all to see what the Lord was going to build. I'm just going to make two comments because we're going to take up particularly one side of it. We see that what the Lord is forming here on this earth, He makes no mistakes, He adds no bad materials to it. It is done an absolute and complete perfection. But what has been committed in demands hands. There's failure in connection with it and. We are associated with that failure and it's particularly that side of things that we want to look at. Not the failure, but the Lord's provision for it in a day of ruin. And that really brings in not the body side, but the house side of the truth. And let's just perhaps we could turn to First Timothy and look at a verse that would bring out the burden of my heart and bring out these things. First Timothy, chapter 3. I'm going to read it in the King James. It reads better in Mr. Darby's translation, but not to be flipping back and forth. Paul writes to Timothy. And he's Speaking of the local church and the administration of the local church. That is the local expression of the church here. And he said, verse 15. But if I tarry long that thou mayest knowest how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God. The pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy. Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit scene of angels, preached on to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory. But thou mayest note how thou oughtest to behave thyself

in the House of God. There's a lot of bad behavior in the House of God, and God would have us behave ourselves properly in His house. We're associated with the House of God. Let's just go back to Matthew 16. And here we find it formed in its perfection by Christ. This is all Christ's work. But it's the foundation of it. Matthew 16.

And verse 13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, AM? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremias are one of the prophets, and he Seth unto them. But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be. Loosed in heaven, and he charged his disciples that they should tell no man that Jesus was the Christ. What we're reading here of what Christ was going to do as a future thing, and that was build his church, and it was built on the foundation of the fact that Jesus was the Christ the sent one of the Father. The son of the living God. You notice that in Timothy that the House of God. You find that expression in the living God. When we are brought to the assembly, we are brought to the place. That is built on the foundation of the confession of the Son of the living God, and we have become associated with the living God. And I might say that a great deal of difficulty that comes into your life and into mine and into the assembly. Stems not from what we don't understand, but what we lose sight of. Of the fact that we have to do with the living God. That the living God is in the midst of his people. It's not just to some doctrines on which things are built, but it is a living God with whom we have to do. And so we turn over to Matthew 18. We see very quickly that. The question of responsibility comes in, and we're not going to tarry on this, but you see already the question of an offense between two brothers comes. And so he has put into the hands of the church, which he is going to build the authority to deal with that sort of thing. Why? Because they are in the presence of the living God, and he is given his authority for them to deal with that. And we're not going to. Dwell on that side of things. I think we've heard an awful lot about that, about binding and losing. Except to say that what we find here in verse Matthew 18 and 24, where two or three are, are gathered together in My name, they are My in the midst of them. That is what the Church is. It is not a society. It is not the Church of England. It is not a society that may follow a man like Luther or John Wesley, as godly as those men may be and as thankful as we are for their memory of them. It is not. A society that is formed around a reformation of the doctrine Reformed, as thankful as we are for what took place, but it is where two or three are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he is the Son of the living God. And so because he is there and because they are gathered to his name and responsibility, he does not want anything associated with his name that is going to detract from who he is. And I may say that if we went back to Matthew 16, it is a very, very serious thing for ones to call into question the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is built on the foundation that that Christ was the Son of the living God. And you know, there may be brethren. I was among a group of brethren that in outward ways may have in many ways met like we do. But there arose a man that denied that Jesus was eternally the Son of God. And some other brothers come from another assembly and they visited and they said, well, it was all right for him to break bread and to teach as long as he didn't teach that. What a serious thing, what a serious thing it is to say that the Son of God could sin in him was no sin and.

That is the very foundation of our fellowship. We may do everything alike, and you may have there may be another meeting across the hall that meets in exactly the same way outwardly as we do. But if there is not that clear foundation as to the person, and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is a most serious thing, it attacks the very foundation on which Christ has built His church. Well, He had put into the authority the hands of those two or three gathered to the Lord's name. The authority to bind into loose, that is to say, is that. To bind a sin upon one, and to loose that sin upon one, and that authority to maintain the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well I'd like to turn now with the Lorde help to. This expression where we get the expression of this truth and that is we had in our 23rd Psalm, now prepare us. The table before me in the presence of mine enemies is just a turn to 1St Corinthians Chapter 9. I'm going to start to read from verse 24. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all but one receiveth the prize. Run that she may obtain, And every man that striveth for the mastery is tempered in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible crown. I therefore so run not as uncertainly, so fight. I not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body, and bring it in subjection, lest by any means when I had preached Christ to others. I myself should be a castaway. This is the Apostle Paul speaking here. And I read this first before we go into the 10th chapter, because he's going to lay some things on their conscience in the 10th chapter, which he first lays on his own. And that is that Paul conceived that he might have a saved soul and a lost life. And the Lord is called out, called you and me out. That's what the word church means. It's a called out company that we might bear a testimony to Him here in this world. And Paul was concerned that he would strive for an incorruptible crown. But that he might strive in such a way keep his body under subjection. That he might not miss the pathway. And certainly we have seen many, many miss the pathway. And. As a result, we see in responsibility what has happened to the testimony of the Church. If we turn to the second and third chapters of Revelation. We could see the prophetic outline of the church is history and the Lord's assessment of what He sees in it as a responsible testimony. I liken it this way. We've always been able to walk to meeting in Saint Thomas. We've had two different meeting rooms and sometimes when the children are young, they start to ask you questions and one might say, where was that? Why do we not see that what we saw in the book of the Acts of the Apostles anymore? Well, the Lord said to Ephesus that except you repent, he would remove the Candlestick. And you will not find the original testimony on the face of this earth anymore, where they were all together in one place. Because they left their first love, that was their love for the Lord, and the Lord through persecution brought them back in line. And we see that and we have the history of those that in Smyrna. But we found that the word, the church got comfortable and it settled in and it allied itself with the world to make the world a better place. It lost its sense of its heavenly calling and wanted to fit in with the world. It was tired of being persecuted. So as you say, if you can't lick them, join them. And the Church decided that it was going to join with the world to make a better world. But that is not our place. We were called out of darkness. And in so doing that, it got to the point. And now we pick up the walk with the boys and they go by the place and they say, if I may use this illustration, it's like the Spirit of God, the Son of God, looking into each place as a responsible testimony, saying what's going on in there? I see idols in there. Well, you know that they are believers and they took up with idols.

And it even says that they taught my servants to commit fornication and that goes on. Why has there been a breakdown in marriage? You know, a young man told me that a fellow worker had gone to the minister, He was getting married and the minister said, well, I think you should just live together for a while and find out whether it's going to work out before you get married. He was teaching them to commit fornication. And the priest taught the ones too, that divorce was a mortal sin, so that they should live together in sin because that was just a venial sin. They taught them to commit fornication. And that is why we've been plunged into this morass of immorality is because the church and responsibility has taught those things. And so you can find the judgment of God and what he's going to do about that in the Book of

Revelation. Then you may go by another place and it may even say on the front Bible church and you see. Things that are absolutely contrary to the Word of God going on there. And what is the Lord's assessment? He said. I have not found thy works perfect before God. And so he says what he's going to do about that, he's going to come as a thief. And take that which is valuable out of there. And then there was that company that kept his word and did not deny his name and how he should aspire to be a company like that. And then you may go by another place and it may even have a name to a good name on the front. Be common, they say, well, what what runs things there will the traditions of the laypeople and they're indifferent as to the person of Christ. Like the place it exercised me when I found that out that that man denied that Jesus was eternally the Son of God. There was indifference to it. Neither hot nor cold. There was indifference to it, and we see what the Lord thought of that. And so as the world looks on at the church, what is the testimony that it sees? But Paul in writing to the Corinthians in the first chapter, First epistle in the 9th chapter. He realized he was in a warfare not against flesh and blood, but he was in a warfare for the truth, and that if he did not keep his body under subjection. That he himself may be a castaway, that is, have a saved soul and a lost life, and it is the most solemn thing. But you know, our brother George referred to this yesterday, what we're going to come into in the 10th chapter, and he takes us up for very good reason, because the 10th chapter talks about the Lord's table. And he deals with this issue that there are many that profess. And. But God is going to test the reality of that profession. Let's just read this 10th chapter, First Corinthians. Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud and passed through the sea, and all were baptized to Moses, unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And all that eat the same spiritual meat, and all that drink the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be idolaters, as were some of them. As it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day. 320,000. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now these things happened unto them. For example, they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are calm. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There is there hath no temptation taken you, but such as his common demand, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that she may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee idolatry. I speak as to wise men, judging what I say, and then we'll come back to this, because he's going to begin to speak at the Lord's table.

Because the Lord's Table has to be a clean place and there are three things, there are a number of things that he brings out here. Is idolatry, fornication and murmuring. And how does that not characterize the day in which we're living? The Lord's Table has to be free of these things. Idolatry, fornication and murmuring. And so the warning comes out to them, and he includes himself. You notice he uses the first person pronoun we. That these things were written to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. That Paul included that in them because there's a practical lesson in responsibility for to display the character of Christ in this world. And so idolatry fornication. Murmuring were all associated with things that he could not associate with his table. And so we come to the 16th verse and you'll notice here when it speaks of the table, it speaks the cup of blessing which we bless. Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Now why does it mention the cup here first? Because it is the blood of the cup speaks to us of the blood of Christ. I realize that the older ones are clear on these things, or younger ones. Here it is the blood of Christ that gives me a right entitle to be at His table. But I'm cleansed by the blood of Christ. It's necessary that I show evidence in my life that I'm cleansed by the blood of Christ, but the cup of blessing. And so that is what is the ground to be at the Lord's table is that. We've known the value of the blood of Christ and he goes on to say the bread which we break, is it not the communion? Of the blood the. The communion of the body of Christ, for we being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread. I speak as to wise men that in partaking of that loaf that we recognize the fact of that broken loaf, that we recognize the fact that we are members of the one body of Christ. And I believe that that is absolutely essential. People say we hear this expression, the ground of gathering, and it becomes a bit of a cliché. And we say, what do you mean by this ground of gathering? We are gathered on the ground that there is one body, that they're not bodies that Christ is divided, but that there is one body. And we give expression to the truth that we're members of the body of Christ by partaking of that love. For man to set up a table and say, well, this, we're gathered on the grounds that we oppose this. I, I once read what Harry Ironside said. They said, what ground are you gathered on? He said, I'm gathered on the ground of those that oppose himself against the assembly decision against FW Grant. Well, that's a great ground to be gathered on. He openly confessed that that's the ground he was gathered on. Men may be gathered on the ground that they're Canadians or that they're of a particular doctrine, but were gathered on the ground that there is one body and the ground is of all importance. Everything may seem to be right, but if you're not on the right ground then it's in the wrong place. When I taught at the college, I had a student and he had built a large one of these large box stores and 100,000 square feet or whatever. He wasn't the Superintendent, but he told me that. Was late August, the store because it was a toy store was to be finished in early mid-october and they were well on schedule when a man drove up in a Lincoln and he said this is a nice they were putting the steel on the roof and he said this is a nice building but he said what are you building it on my ground for? Well, they sent for the surveyors right away, and they discovered that in fact they had put the footings on the wrong property, that there was nothing wrong. The building seemed in every way respect right, but it was on the wrong ground. Well, you know, it's interesting that men of the world, they're wise. And he said that very night the bulldozers came and were pouring footings to put it on the right ground and they dismantled the building. And he said he made a lot of overtime, but they had it done on time. And the man of the world is quite ready to correct a mistake like that because it it, it'll affect his pocketbook. But how often we become stubborn in the things of God when we see what ground the church is to be built on. It's to be built upon the confession of Christ.

As the Son of the living God, and there is one body. We didn't create that body, thankfully, I said. There's a side of it, man's responsible side, but there's God's side. At Pentecost, the Spirit of God came down and formed a living body. Not all of the living members in my body I had 10 years ago. Members have been added and members have been taken away. If I may put it this way, it's a living body. And so. Some are going to be saved and added to the body, and some members die off. But there is a living body here on this earth that was formed by the Spirit of God at Pentecost. We were all baptized by 1 Spirit into one body, and we are gathered on that ground. And I appreciate when people say we see in this one unbroken loaf that there is one body. But according to the language of 1st Corinthians 10, where we really see that truth and give expression to that truth is by partaking of that law. But as we had this warning and connection with the apostle, and I see her time is going on, we do want to get to the 11th chapter. He says, I speak as to wise men, that this table cannot be associated with idolatry. And so he goes on to say, that Behold Israel after the flesh. Are they not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then, that the idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to the idols is anything but? I say unto. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice, they sacrifice the devils, and not to God. I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. He cannot drink the cup of the

Lord and eat the cup of devils. He cannot be partakers of the Lord's table on the tables of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient. Well, here there was. These were Corinthians. They were called out of heathen behavior, and they were now saved and they were coming to the Lord's Table. But you know, they still had relatives that went into the heathen idols temples. And it appears as if not only they were tempted, but maybe more than that, some of them are going back to the temple and eating off the very temple idol, the altar of that temple. And Paul is saying that there can be absolutely no communion between these two altars. And what we see as a result of that happening, and I would never, ever say that. An altar that names the name of Christ as a table of devils, I would not say that. But there may be those things which have been borrowed from idolatry and brought in to Christendom, and there can be no fellowship between those two things. And by partaking of an altar, we have fellowship with it. Now, as I said, and I'm being personal the company where I can, they said they could sit down and break bread with a man who denied the eternal sonship of Christ, that he was eternally God. And they said, well, I'm not affected by that, but the moment that I do that, I'm in fellowship with that. And people say, well, why do we people go about and they say, well, why do we not receive this one? And that one fellowship is a known thing. There's a great deal of confusion in this world. And the principal desire of every upright heart is to keep His word. Every pure heart is to keep His word and not deny His name. And even if there may be a mistake in connection with that, in a constant connection with that, you don't want to have fellowship with that which would say that the Lord could sin, or that the Lord was not who He was and is. For that, that which condoned idolatry and fornication, there can be no fellowship with those things. Because by partaking of that, we're really partaking of that altar and bringing that into fellowship with the Lord's Table. And it is his table. It's not ours. It is his table to who we've been called, and we are the presence of the living God. And so Paul would labor with the Corinthians to show them this, that there could be no fellowship with that. Now I believe the question of the Lord's Table comes first because in Chapter 11 we're going to have the subject of the Lord's Supper brought up.

And the Lord's Supper should be eaten at the Lord's Table. I don't even say should be eaten at the Lord's table. The Lord's Supper is eaten at the Lord's table. I believe that wherever one may partake of bread and wine, they may remember the Lord in his death. But the Lord's Supper is eaten at the Lord's Table. Is that the Lord's if I call my sons to the table and? They come and they see it's a delicious dinner and perhaps my birthday dinner. And one brother is mad at his other brother and he says, well, I'm going to take my plate up and eat in my room. And so he sits down and he has a dinner and he has a piece of birthday cake. Is he thinking about my birthday? Yes. But is he eating my birthday? Birthday supper?

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