

Ephesians 4:4 (Heinz Brinkmann) 216758

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I like to turn to Matthew. Verse well known, I'm sure, to most of us. And that's in Matthew 18. We have heard. Of the divided state. Of God's people. That is reason for all of us to be humbled. We cannot divorce ourselves from the. From the shameful history of the church, or the shameful history of that which God raised up 170 years ago. What a shameful history. But, I like to especially. Dwell on that which we have in the midst of such ruin. Is we find ourselves in. And diverse in Matthew 18. Verse 20. Over two or three are gathered together. Into my or unto my name. There am I in the midst of them. You know, in many places today. The number has been greatly reduced and many times there aren't many more than two or three. But what a comfort that we have this verse. Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them. The Lord Jesus promises his personal presence. To be in the midst of those who gather unto his name. Even if that number is reduced to two or three. The Lord Jesus says damn I in the midst of them. When we think of this shameful division in Israel. There were two things I believe that those 10 rebellious tribes. Manifested it was disowning the authority of the House of David. And the sin of Rehoboam was. That they set up. Two opposing centers. To the only center that God would recognize, and that was in Jerusalem. And this is what has happened in the Christian profession. The authority of the Lord in the midst of his own. Has been ignored. We often read Matthew 18:20 and find comfort in the fact that the Lord promises His presence. In the midst of the two and three, and it is certainly well used application, but I believe the main force of Matthew 18:20 is this. Because he is there, his authority is vested. In the midst of the two and three, and we better recognize their beloved brethren. And that we bow to the authority that the Lord has vested in the assembly, and when it says of the one that had sinned against. The individual after he didn't listen to the efforts of seeking to restore that one. Take two others with you. Then if he doesn't listen to them, tell it to the church. That is not the church universally. That is the local assembly. The Lord has vested His authority in the local assembly, and His presence there gives to the local assembly. I'm emphasizing that because we tend to forget that sometimes, beloved brethren. He has vested his authority in the Local Assembly to deal with local matters. But what a privilege to be gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus. He's in the midst. He is the center. Unless we are at that center.

We are not gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. Many profess to be so gathered. But unless you are at the center, since he is the center. You're not gathered to his name unless you are gathered. Where He is in the midst, He is the center. Sometimes you hear this expression about other believers. Where those gathered to the name of the Lord literally say they are gathered with so and so brethren, you know, as if they are gathered. Well, that would be more correct to say the meeting with other Christians. To be gathered means that there is a work of the Spirit of God. Which brings hearts to that center so that they are gathered around him. You know, we had some comments in. Regina. This year, and we commented that that is as much a work of the Spirit of God to gather us to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as it is to work with the Spirit of God to save our souls. It's his work, a brother said. Somebody else had said it's a greater work of the Spirit of God to gather us to the person of Christ. Then our personal salvation. I believe it's true. It's a work of the Spirit of God. And if you and I. Find ourselves where the Lord Jesus is in the midst. It's a work of His grace, a work of the Spirit of God that has. Brought us to where the Lord Jesus is. People might ask themselves the question. They might say, since there is such a divided state. In Christendom. Can we still give expression? To the truth that there is one body. That we are one. At the time, allow a personal experience. When we were exercised where the Lord would want us to be, because we had become convicted that we did not think that where we were and had grown up where even my grandparents already were. That we were really, truly gathered to the name of the Lord. That we had to find where. Those Christians were that truly were gathered to Christ with whom we wanted to be identified. So I called a brother not gathered. Who was in one of the groups of brethren. I had met him at a funeral. And I said brother. I said we under exercise where the Lord would want us to be. We cannot continue where we have been all of our lives. He immediately attacked the gadget, saying. And he made this statement. AC Brown and Ch Brown out West. I talked to them and they had the nerve to tell me that they were not gathered in division. And I immediately responded and I said, brother. If they are truly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, they are not underground of division. Let me repeat that if we're truly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, we are not on the ground of division. We are the ground of the one body and the truth of God. And the wonderful truth of Scripture is, beloved Saints of God, is that we can give expression to the truth that there is one body. Without having every member of the body of Christ there with us. Personally represented. This is a great comfort. For us to lay hold of. I hope we all miss. Of fellow believers. You know, if we do not miss them.

There's something radically wrong with us, beloved brethren. And sometimes the Lord has to bring things into our own families and lives and relationships so that we would feel this pain more deeply. And if all of our children and relatives are all walking in the same path. But you see their brethren, beloved members of the body of Christ. And we don't benefit from fellowshipping with them because we have to walk in separation from them because they are in a path of disobedience or in a path of indifference to Christ, to his claims. And we cannot go on with them. But do we feel it a painful thing? Not be able to walk with them, but beloved, we can give expression even in this ruined state around about us of the truth that there is one body. How do we do that? Turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 10, verse 15. I speak as to wise men. He what I say, the cup of blessing which we bless. Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The breadth which we break, is it not 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 thread. Behold Israel after the flesh on that day, which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar. What say I then, that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything but? I say that the things with the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrificed 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 the cup of devils he cannot be partakers of. Lord's Table and off the Table of Devils. Here in this passage, we have the truth of the Lord's Table. That which gives expression to the truth that there is one body. That's what the Lord's Table stands for. At the time when Paul was writing these things, there was only the Lord's table and the table of demons. And we would not dare, shouldn't dare, to refer to any independent tables that men have set up as the table of demons. There's a difference, isn't it? Places of convenience. Like it was in Israel when they worshipped Jehovah in high places. They were not committing acts

of idolatry. They worshiped Jehovah, but not in the place where he had said his name. They were specifically told that they should do so. In Deuteronomy 12 and other passages that they should do so where he had said his name. But how wonderful the Lord's Table expresses the truth that there is one body but. While it says we cannot have part at the Demon's table and the Lord's table, it still proves one point that we cannot be at two opposing tables. We cannot be at two opposing tables. What we find today is that men have set up tables who fall short of giving expression to the truth that there is one body. You know, if you take, for instance, the position of independent local churches or assemblies. That's a denial of the truth that there is one body that could never be the Lord's Table. Those who meet in that way could never claim that they are at the Lord's Table. They might truly in their hearts remember the Lord and His death. Don't tell me that I didn't before I was gathered to the name of the Lord. Maybe there were times when I did this.

Perhaps closer to the Lord in my soul than since I am at the Lord's table. But. That cannot be the Lord's Table if the position any group of believers occupied denies the truth that there is one body in practice. What about those who amalgamate, who come together underground of mutual recognition on the basis of compromise? Their position is that there are many tables. Giving expression to the truth of the one body in a divided state? Preposterous. Can't be. But it is possible, beloved Saints of God, to be at the Lord's table. Today. To meet with Christians strictly as members of the body of Christ, recognizing the Lord in the midst, His headship, His authority, and to give expression to the truth. There is one Body, and as I said, we do not need every member of the Body of Christ in one given community. Be present there with us in order to express that truth. Remember what happened in Israel after they had divided. Into the two and 10 tribe nation. They still had the temple, didn't they? And they still have the table of Showbread. How many loaves around that table? 12 loaves were on their table. There were only two tribes that were at the divine center, and some who humbled themselves and came, as we have heard, to that divine center, but they still give expression to the truth that all those people are one. The Lord Himself, someone has said, refuses to see his own, but as one. He always sees them as one and a great comfort we find and should find in the fact that the Lord Jesus. He's carrying on a work that our unfaithfulness does not ruin or destroy. He's building a house. Everything is perfect. He's adding to that body. Everything is perfect. For us to give expression to their truth, that's another story. But we also find remember when the prophet built that altar, when he faced all those priests of Baal, hundreds of them? How many stones did he use to build that altar? 12 Stones. 12 storms. He had the mind of the Lord. He saw God's people as one. You know, and he was a prophet in Israel. No, but he was a prophet of the Lord. Well, beloved Saints of God. Should we not be thankful that it is still possible to come together in the name of the Lord Jesus? As imperfectly as we're doing it. We cannot but have to confess that we have given very poor expression to that truth. But I do believe the Lord and His goodness has preserved a testimony to that truth. We still can gather around the Lord Jesus. We still can be at His table. And I hope we remember when we come together that in that law of every St. of God is represented. I think Neil referred to Brother Albert, meaning that Christian on the street, a dear child of God. After the breaking of bread, he said. I saw you in the meeting this morning. I've never been in your meeting. I saw you in that meeting. You see, he explained, he broke bread. And that predict not only speak of the body of the Lord Jesus in which he suffered, it speaks of that one body that He formed, of which He is the glorified head, and by the Spirit we are linked to Him, a living head in heaven, and to every St. of God on earth. You know, I'm even thankful, beloved Saints of God, that. To some extent, we can even have fellowship with members of the Body of Christ in our personal contact.

We've had a family stay at our house three times. Dear children of God. Love them, came to love them. Godly souls. He stayed with us for a week. And we took a walk the last day, he said. Heinz, I'm so thankful you didn't try to convince me about your position. Well, I said, dear brother. If I would win an argument. What would be gained? The Spirit of God has to bring you to see where you are to be gathered around the person of the Lord Jesus. It's obvious that I would be very happy if you would see it that way, but I have to wait till the Lord shows it to you. In the meantime, I was glad to be able to have fellowship with this dear St. of God. And we came to some extent have fellowship with those that we recognize as members of the body of Christ. And as we have opportunity, we can share the truth with them. But remember, it has to be a work of the Spirit of God in order that it might be a lasting work. You know, it took me 20 years before the Lord. Showed us where I had to go. I know dear Chuck gave up on us. He said, Heinz, you'll never see it, you know. But the Lord did in his grace, delivered us and brought us to be where He is in the midst. But beloved Saints of God, He's holy and he's true. It's a great responsibility to be so gathered. And to give a true expression to the Church of God, and to be maintained holiness in the House of God. Well, Second Timothy. Two is another scripture that is of great comfort to us in the midst of the ruined state that we have round about. And what does it teach us? It teaches us that the House of God has become as. A great house. And. There are good and bad vessels in that house. And it is beyond repair. I challenge anybody, if you think that you can go into some church and try to change them to accept the truth of the church. You'll have a great disappointment, and the Lord hasn't called us to do that. You know, I'm thankful for every soul that we can come in contact with, and the Lord might use us to try to help them. And what a joy it is when they come to see the truth. But. The Lord hasn't called us to cause disturbance and turmoil in groups of believers. He has called us to go on faithfully, and the need for separation is clearly taught there in Second Timothy 2. Any man? Purify himself. By separating himself, he becomes a vessel fit for the Master's use. I cannot do that for my wife. My wife cannot do that for me. Leader cannot do it for my children. I wish I could pass on the truth to my children the way I can pass on material things. That's impossible. They have to come to personal faith in these matters. Under personal exercise, they have to take that step of faith. Step outside. Not only the negative thing of separating, but the positive thing unto him, to go unto him. As we have it in Hebrews outside the camp. And what a wonderful encouragement we find there in Second Timothy. Separation is a painful thing. Any of us who had to do that know very well what that means. To have to separate from bread and beloved bread and then let you to the Lord. Read and it taught you much of the truth of God you still enjoy.

And then to have to separate from them. Has given some of us nightmares. To have to do that. But, beloved, it is necessary if you want to be faithful to Christ. Brethren are not to be the object. Christ is to be the object. It's a wonderful thing to have, brethren. Of like precious faith, brethren who share the same exercises. With him whom we can walk in the path of faith. But the object is not brethren, the object is Christ. If Platinum object, they sooner or later will disappoint you. And if Peter are the object, we deserve to be disappointed. But if Christ is the object, we will not be disappointed. He never will, but there is a collective path. Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call upon the name of the Lord. Out of a pure heart. Why is righteousness mentioned first? Why doesn't it say love first? Well, we have to withdraw from iniquity. When it comes to separation, what helps me in the German the word for iniquity is unrighteousness. We have to separate from unrighteousness. But then, in the collective path, in view of the necessity of separating from unrighteousness, the first thing stressed is righteousness. Of course, love is not left out. But faith is the next thing, beloved Saints of God. It takes faith in the midst of general ruin to believe that we can still practice the truth of God as given in the Word of God. Even in a limited way, not having the benefit of many of our. Fellow believers. And wouldn't it be wonderful if every St. of God would be willing to meet with us? Every gift that the Lord has given to His people present. Don't you think there would be quite an edifying thing? You know it takes faith, beloved Saints of God, to say the truth of God

works in 1997. We can still practice the truth of God. It's bound to be a feeble display because we are a feeble band. You know, feeble. Number of Saints of God. But we can. You heard me say that before, probably some of you here. We were out in California and went to. To the Hot Springs for a couple days of relaxation after the LA meetings. And here I met a German man from Potsdam, Germany, and he was a man that went from Bible school to Bible school to teach and he was even a chaplain on one of those mission ships. You know that they sent to these underdeveloped countries. He married an American lady and I gave him Bruce Enstein's book On God's Order. He knew English perfectly and he read in it for five hours. And. He came out of his room all excited. He said it's the truth. It's the truth. That's what Scripture teaches. But he said the people don't want it. I said brother. Can we not still practice it? But he wasn't willing to do that. He would have been out of a job. He would have been willing to do that. He didn't have the faith to act on the truth that he acknowledged. Well, I trust the Lord will give us. Faith and courage to stand on the truth of God and the Word of God. And if at anytime anything comes up among us where there is a danger that the truth might be compromised, I trust there will be faithful, faithful voices raised to support the truth, to exercise our consciences so that we might be preserved in the path of faith. What God hates is pride, beloved Saints of God.

There's absolutely no reason for pride if we recognize. That it is the grace and goodness of God that has preserved the testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus, and that you and I. Are permitted to be part of it. The young people, I hope, will come to see these things clearly. And it is discouraging when you meet a lot of godly souls out there. That perhaps in their individual life might be more faithful than many who are at the divine center. And the enemy can use that to confuse you. You know, but have your eyes on Christ. Familiarize yourself with the truth of God and test. The claims of man by the Scriptures. Many will say we are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. Well, when you test their position, it will be soon evident whether they are indeed practicing the truth of the Body of Christ, or whether they are together on the ground of mutual recognition, compromise. And voluntary association. It's not a voluntary association. The Saints of God, the Spirit of God has put us together and we haven't necessarily picked those that He has put us together with. And we're not always easy to get along with either. You'll find that very soon when you get to know us, you know, and there's patience and grace needed. In that collective pair, but if we all have one desire that we want to please the Lord. That we want to go on for His glory. He will help us and help us to be a strengthening factor. To his testimony and perhaps even be used to be of help to those who are seeking and searching. You know there are those that are seeking and searching and my prayer often is that they might come to see in the Lord Jesus the divine gathering center and not stumbled by the inconsistencies that they see in US who in grace are at the divine center. Let's be exercised, brethren, that we in our individual and collective life are real testimony to the Lord Jesus. Don't you think He looks down with great delight. At the Saints that want to go on for him. You know a book of remembrance was written in Malachi, You know, when those who feared the Lord spoke often one with another. The Lord recognizes anything that is truly for His glory, even in our day. Well, the path is not going to be easy and it's not going to get any easier. If anything, going to get more difficult, but the Lord is sufficient. Beloved Saints of God. He's able to preserve us and help us and keep us. We want to do we not be preserved at the divine center till we hear that child and be united to him forever. And what a comfort all will be there, all the Saints of God. Are gathering together unto him. 2nd 10 Thessalonians 21. What a comfort. None will be missing, all will be there. All will be for His praising glory.

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