



Sermon – July 07, 2019
Chris Osborne

Verses Covered

Ephesians 4:13

Matthew 16:13 – 17

John 6:

Well welcome this morning. So glad you're here. It's a beautiful day to be in God's house. As we enter into the first part of July. So I invite you to come in and find a seat. In just a moment we're going to invite the Lord, He's already here because He is present everywhere, but we're going to ask that the Spirit of God would just fall especially in this place today and speak to our hearts that we would hear His voice from His word and we'll be drawn into Spirit of praise. So as we sing this first song, it just says, Spirit of the living God we only want to hear Your voice and we're hanging on every word. So this morning I invite you as we sing. As we lift our voice it might not be, it might not your thing always to be a singer, but this morning God hears as you sing from your lips as it's tied to your heart. So we're going to begin. Seek His face.

Well good morning and welcome to Central. We just hope that is your prayer this morning that our desire is to hear from the Lord. Not only from His word but just in our hearts as He speaks to us. We are glad that you are here. If you are a first time guest with us at Central, we're especially glad that you came to visit with us. If you would take the white card that's in the seat back in front of you, we would love for you to fill that out for us. You can place it in the offering plate at the end of the service. We'd love to get information to you and we'd love to get information about you so we can tell you a little bit more about who we are and what Central is all about. Also, just a reminder, no Life Groups during the month of July, but there are a multitude of other things going on during the week. You can find out about different activities this week in the Central Today. Also, you can be praying this week for our Special Needs VBS. Every night this week it's going to be taking place. A great opportunity for us to really reach into our community. So be praying for them as we minister this week in the evenings. So if you would, take a moment right now, stand up, look around, greet someone you have not seen yet this morning.

Father, this is our song today. Praising You. Thanking You. Father, the only reason we can do that is because You first loved us; gave Yourself for us. You paid a debt that we couldn't pay. And You paid it freely for us. So thank You, God, and help us to all have songs on our heart, God,

that resonate all the time. Even in the tough times. Even in the trials of life. God, Your joy is never ending. So thank You for the opportunity we have to hear Your word proclaimed today and I pray that You, Holy Spirit, will take and apply it very specifically to our hearts. In Jesus name. Amen.

So I was excited when I heard that Joe Biden was running for office. He's my favorite guy because when he goes off script, and he always goes off script, you don't know what he's going to say because he doesn't know what he's going to say. It's entertaining. I told my wife this is going to be a really fun deal. But the other day he made a statement that he got killed for. And really the statement was right. I mean he got slaughtered when he said, when he first went to the Senate there were, and there were segregationists from the South that were bigoted and racial. There were sitting senators and he said, "I had to work with them and so what I did, I didn't agree with them in anything they said, but I did what I could to get the best deal for the country at that time." Immediately Kamala Harris and Cory Booker went off on him saying, "Listen, you don't ever work with people like that." Which is why we're in the craziness that we are in this country. We're not going to get anything done because everybody hates each other. When Obama got elected, first words out of Mitch McConnell's mouth was, "Hey, we're not going to give him anything he wants." You don't even know what he wants yet. But immediately we've decided: he's Democrat, I'm Republican, we're done. I'm a Republican, I mean we're just, we don't like each other. And now it's got completely crazy with the Colin Kaepernick Nike deal that they put Betsy Ross's flag on the back of some shoes. He whined about it and so they took it off. If I remember right, I think she was a Quaker. She didn't have anything to do with slavery. But heaven forbid that the facts ever get in the way of hatred and anger. So we're a country hopelessly divided and nobody sees a way out. But that's a great time for us. Because we have the chance to show the world something they can't get to. We're in the book of Ephesians, right, chapter 4. Talked about those of us that leave the church, our job is to get you to a certain place where you start ministering to each other. And then, listen to what he says beginning in verse 13. Here's the direction. Once the body's edified in Christ, we're performing a work of ministry, we're equipping the saints. Here's what happens. Look at this.

¹³until we all arrive at the unity of the faith,

We have the chance to display the fact to the world that you can only really be unified if you center around the things you have in Jesus Christ. And we have a ton of differences in here. We've got homeschoolers, we've got public schoolers, we've got private schoolers, we've got Republicans, we've got Democrats. I know because I see the Facebook posts. You can't hide there. I love, I don't know what it is with us. We had some girl we'd interviewed for one of our jobs and we didn't hire her because she put some pretty bad stuff on Facebook. And she said, "Well that's private." Once you put it out there, I know who you are. So we have a lot of differences. But he says one of the things that we arrive at that's really good is the unity of the faith. That is what a believer, remember he talked about earlier, he mentioned seven things. And he says, these seven things are the basis of our unity. He talks about the fact that we're, we're one body, one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father over all. Listen, all those things are true for anybody that knows Jesus Christ. I don't care where you've come from. I don't care what your skin color is. None of that matters to me. What matters to me is do you k

now Jesus? And if you do then there has to be unity because we're all locked around the same beliefs inside this book. We're locked down there.

My first church, small church, 30 in worship, really small sanctuary. There was a lady in town, single mom, who was not known for her integrity. She had a daughter. I can't remember, 14 or so, stole a car, tried to run away from home, caught her, brought her back. Judge got her in the court, and said, you can only pull this in East Texas, OK. But the judge looked at her and he said, "I'm going to give you two choices. You can go to juvie or you can go to church. Which is it?" "Church. I love God." So he said, "Where do you want to go? I need to know." She said, "I'll go to the Baptist church on the hill." Which was my church. So she came. I had a huge impact on her life. About a week later she stole another car and they arrested her again. She never came back. But her single mom, who again was had a horrible reputation in the city, began to attend everything we had. This is a rural East Texas church so you have Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night. So she comes forward one Sunday morning. She told me, she said, "Saturday night I took the quarterly, the Sunday School Quarterly you gave me and I read every verse on every page in the entire quarterly and I want to surrender my life to Christ." Man. Great moment, right. And I'll always be appreciative of the fact that she was so caught up emotionally in the moment that she didn't hear one of my ladies, she and her husband always there, second row, she didn't hear her say loud enough for everybody else in the church to hear, "I can't believe we're letting that riff raff in here." Here's the Bible's position. We're all riff raff. So there's nobody that doesn't need Jesus. And so anybody that comes to Jesus is now my brother and sister. There's an equality there and we have a unity of faith based on what we believe about this book. I don't care if you're a Democrat. I don't care if you're a Republican. I don't care if you're Independent. I care if you're Auburn. But everything else, there's a unity of faith among us that gives us the chance to demonstrate to a lost world we can have a thousand different viewpoints. But in Jesus Christ we have a unity of faith. And look at this.

[arriving unto a personal intimate knowledge of the Son of God,](#)

Now listen, because as you and I walk in this unity of faith we're walking toward what? Jesus. So the end result of that is we unify in our faith. We are going to experience Jesus Christ. That's what the Greek word means. That doesn't mean I know about Him. It means I actually intimately know Him. So I'm going to walk towards Jesus and we're going to experience Him together in the room. That is the second part. So the unity of our faith, now listen, social justice, now listen, social justice is always a consequence of walking towards Jesus and the unity of our faith, it's never the purpose. The purpose in the unity of our faith and us walking together is so that we in this room can achieve a personal experiential relationship with Jesus Christ. You don't just know about Him. You actually intimately know Him personally. Social justice is a consequence of that. I fear in our convention that after this year that we're moving toward the idea that social justice is the end of what it means to be a Christian. We fix the racial issues, we fix the Me Too issues, we handle everything. Listen, it's Jesus that is the driving purpose. Everything else is consequential.

It's interesting. In just a chapter later he's going to address the worst institution in his day which was slavery. He's going to address it. Now Paul's smart enough to know he can't fix it. It's a construct in the Roman empire. It's the law. You can't change it. He's not going to fix it. The church isn't going to alter it. And interestingly enough, inside this church in Ephesus, you have

slave owners and you have slaves. And they're coming to church together. So Paul does an interesting thing. Now we'll look at this in detail in a chapter or two. But here's what he says. He says, "You guys are slaves. I want, work for your master as if he were Jesus. And you slave owners, I want to treat, I want you to treat your slaves with no threat, but with absolute blessing because," and here's what he says, "your master and their master are the same person." Now if slave owner comes to church and he sits with his slaves and he understands that and he goes home and he hears that as they read the letter in the church and he goes home. What he's going to do is, is he going to sell that guy's wife out from under him? No. Is he going to sell his kids off? No. Is he going to mistreat that slave? No. If the slave says, "Can I earn some extra to be able to buy my freedom?" Absolutely, yes. He's going to do everything he can to make sure that person is blessed inside the construct that the society has placed him in. And he knew something else. When that slave owner and that slave sit together in church, and the preacher reads a promise and the slave owner realizes it's my promise, the slave realizes, my promise too. When they take the Lord's Supper, the slave owner gets a broken piece of bread. The slave gets a broken piece of bread. They both eat it. Same amount. Same time. They pass the wine out. Slave owner gets the same amount of wine. The slave gets the same amount of wine. They both drink. So they both understand that the efficacy of the cross of Jesus Christ is applied to both of them no matter what their status is in society. When they pray they both have access in prayer. The scripture is theirs. And what did happen was within time the slave owner came to realize, I can't own my brother in Jesus Christ. The gospel solves the social justice issues. Not because that's our driving purpose because that's the consequence when I really know Jesus Christ. Let me be clear here. I grew up in the South. I grew up as a kid and I can still remember a male bathroom, a female bathroom, and a colored bathroom. I can still remember two water fountains; a colored and a white. And I'm telling you, you can fight about it, you can argue about it, you can whine about it, you can print about it, you can pop off about it, but the only thing that changes the racism in a man's heart is the blood-bought redemption in Jesus Christ. That's it. So we're going to be unified. We're going to walk toward an experience with Jesus and look at this. If we do that, it results in, look at what he says,

[a mature man.](#)

Now what's maturity? Really. Now I think it's time we understand this. OK. What is it to be mature in Christ? Does it mean you cry really well in church when we sing worship songs? Does it mean you have seven Bible studies under your belt this week? Does it mean you know more Bible than the preacher? What really does it mean that you're mature in Christ? Matthew 16. Jesus has got His guys at Caesarea Philippi, the mouth of the Jordan. And so He gets them alone and He says, "Alright what do people say about Me?" They say, "Well John the Baptist isn't it." "Well what do you say?" Remember, Peter, "You're the Christ. The Son of the living God." "Peter, blessed are you for my Father has revealed that to you." Now this is not a trick question. Not a VBS question for the children. OK. Not a trick question. Is Peter saved there? OK! Y'all are pathetic. You hear a couple people going, "Yes." Yes! He believes in who Jesus is. He's saved. Lock those doors. We're staying late today. But it's not maturity yet. This is maturity. Jesus speaks and He makes this statement. He says, "Truly, truly I tell you. If you don't eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you don't have life in yourself. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has life everlasting. I'll raise him at the last day. For My flesh is true bread and My blood is true drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in

Me and I in him.” He had 15,000 people following Him when He made those statements. After He finished them, it says this. After this many of His disciples went away and no longer walked with Him. And then Jesus turned to the twelve. He ran off 15,000 people. He’s got twelve apostles left. Now listen, because here’s maturity. (*John 6*)

⁶⁷“Do you want to go away too?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, where would we go? To whom would we go? ⁶⁹You have the words of eternal life and we have believed that and we have known that You are the Holy One of God.”

Now listen, listen. Maturity is not how high you jump in a worship service. Maturity is not how many Bible studies you’re in. Maturity is when you come to a place where you say, “Jesus I don’t care how you say it, I don’t care what You tell me to believe, I don’t care what You tell me to do, I am on board because I’m sure of who You are.” That is maturity. What happens as a result of that, I love this, and then He says:

we wind up as a measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Listen. In this church I don’t care who you are, riff raff or Democrat, that came out bad didn’t it. Riff raff or Republican, we’ll fine tune that later. We have editing services; we’ll take care of that. We’re going to be unified around our faith. We’re going to experience Jesus Christ. We’re going to reach maturity so that we can show off the fullness of Christ to this world. When you get here, in maturity in Christ, then you don’t want any decision in your life that would short circuit His fullness and you want every decision in your life that will authorize His fullness. I know when we watch TV or we pick up the internet, we’re a mess. But I’m glad because it gives us a chance to show off His fullness in contrast to who they are so they will wonder what we have and why.

The guy that was the best man in my wedding came to Mississippi College. Had been roguish in high school and he hung around with four or five others that were ministerial students. And one night he sat in the room with a guy Milton Cleash. He sat down with him and he said, “OK, I got to ask you, man. I thought you guys didn’t have any fun, but I’ve noticed in you something I don’t have. What is it?” And Milton led him to Christ. We can argue ‘til we’re blue in the face, but the fullness of Christ in our life is what will impact the dying world.

Let’s pray.

Father, thank You for Your truth, its reality, make it real in every life in this room. That means today, Father, there are people here that need to find You, if that means if the people that have found You need to become mature, Father, whatever You need to do You make the difference right now. I ask You that in Jesus name.

I’ve tried to think of a good way to do this. I don’t have it. So if you’ll bear with me, let me put it on the table. I’ll explain a couple things and then we’ll go. This afternoon the seminary is going to put out a press release that I’m under a presidential appointment to join the faculty at seminary. Be in the Spring in the school preaching and pastoral ministry. So I’ll be teaching both those areas as full professor, full time, which will necessitate obviously my resignation here. So I, so I’m tendering that today. My last Sunday will be the last Sunday in January. Couple reasons I want a

little time to be able to say goodbye. I don't think I can do that in just two weeks after 33 years here. Number two, there's some things I want to bat down and get batted down, ready for the next pastor so they can slide into the chair with no issue. Thirdly, I want to be able to spend a little bit of time with the pulpit committee, explain to them how pastor views this, how best to do this search, and what to do. So I'm going to spend a little time with them.

It's a good thing in the sense that I've watched numerous pastors stay past their time. When you're like me and you're at my age and you still enjoy what you do and you love where you are and all that, um, you have a tendency sometimes to stay past your time. I have a friend now that's doing that in his church, fighting his church, and I don't think I'm there yet, but I do think it's around the corner. So it affords me the chance to leave before then. It gets me off the field so that after having been here 33 years, the next guy that comes on I'm not in his back yard, so to speak. And it gives me a chance to do, in my retirement years, what God sort of dropped in my lap. Which is mentoring young men in the ministry. Gives me a chance to teach them, work with them, both in preaching and in pastoral ministry. The reason I do it is the same reason I came here. I was at a great church in Midland. Thoroughly enjoyed it. Compelled by the Holy Spirit to come here. I'm at a great church I enjoy. But I'm compelled by the Holy Spirit to teach in seminary. I can't today. So I can't today, share my heart. I will the last Sunday I'm here. But just let me tell you for the joy, privilege, and honor being here 33 years, again, thank you.