

## How to Use the Outline

The Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching

There are two important features to note:

1) The first page of this outline provides an overview of your sermon and may be produced and inserted into your church bulletin. The members of your congregation will profit from having it in front of them as you preach, and you may wish to encourage them to take it home for referencing during the week. Hearing your sermon and reading this outline will reinforce the content of your message in the minds and lives of your congregation.

2) You will note that the small numbers followed by the underlined words "Illustrate," "Amplify," or "Exegete," correlate to the underlined numbers on the last few pages of the outline located under "ADDITIONAL ANNOTATIONS." While these illustrations and amplifications have been provided, there is room left within the margins and within the areas marked "Amplify," "Illustrate," "Exegete," for you to write your own thoughts and illustrations tailored to your local situation. These are not "canned" sermons and are not intended to substitute for your own sermon preparation. Dr. Olford desires these sermons to supplement and enhance your own study of the Word and to sharpen your preaching skills.

The need for men of God in today's world has never been greater. As C.H. Spurgeon said, "The Holy Spirit will never set His seal to falsehood. Never! If what you preach is not truth, God will not own it." The *Expository Preaching Outline* volumes provide direction to the pastor. They are biblical sermon materials which have been tried and tested, and that, with the Holy Spirit's help, produce tangible results.

## Forty-seven, Sermon Outline

### THANKSGIVING

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**SUBJECT:** Thanksgiving for Everything

**READING:** Ephesians 5:14-20

**TEXT:** "Giving thanks always for all things unto God" (5:20)

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#### Introduction

The apostle Paul had learned to give thanks, even in the most unpropitious circumstances. This man, who with his companion sang hymns to God at midnight in the cramped discomfort of a Philippian jail, had earned the right to recommend the same attitude of heart to others. So he says, "Be filled with the Spirit....giving thanks always for all things unto God" (Ephesians 5:18, 20). Here we have:

#### *I. The Standard of THANKSGIVING (5:20)*

- 1) God-Exalting (5:20)
- 2) Christ-Revealing (5:20)
- 3) Time-Investing (5:20)
- 4) All-Embracing (5:20)

#### *II. The Substance of Thanksgiving (5:18-20)*

- 1) Speaking the Truth of God (5:18-20)
- 2) Showing the Joy of God (5:19-20)
- 3) Sharing the Love of God (5:20-21)

#### *III. The Secret of Thanksgiving (5:18, 20)*

- 1) The Incoming of the Holy Spirit (5:18, 20)
- 2) The Infilling of the Holy Spirit (5:18, 20)
- 3) The Inspiring of the Holy Spirit (5:18, 20)

#### Conclusion

For the Christian, every day should be Thanksgiving Day, for God has created and blessed us daily with His grace and mercy. When we know what it is to be *continually* filled with the Holy Spirit, we can be truly thankful for everything.

## Forty-seven, Expanded Sermon Outline

### THANKSGIVING

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**SUBJECT** Thanksgiving for Everything

**READING:** Ephesians 5:14-20

**TEXT:** "Giving thanks always for all things unto God" (5:20)

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#### Introduction

The apostle Paul had learned to give "thanks always for all things," even in the most unpropitious circumstances. This man who, with his companion, sang hymns to God at midnight in the cramped discomfort of a Philippian jail, had earned the right to recommend the same attitude of heart to others. So in his letter to the Ephesians he says, "Be filled with the Spirit....giving thanks always for all things unto God" (5:18, 20). Here we have:

#### I. THE STANDARD OF THANKSGIVING

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:20). This standard of thanksgiving for all things is a uniquely Christian concept. In fact, the very word "thanksgiving" has as its heart the idea of "grace." By nature we are devoid of the grace of God, and therefore know nothing of true thankfulness (see Romans 1:21). But when we turn to God in repentance, receive Christ Jesus our Lord as Savior and experience the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in our human personalities, we become possessed of the grace of gratitude which gives thanks always for all things to God. Our standard of thanksgiving from this point onwards becomes:

##### 1) *God-Exalting*

"Giving thanks...unto God and the Father" (5:20), or more literally, "Giving thanks...to God, even our Father." Paul conceived of God as the giver of every good gift.

Addressing the Athenians on Mars hill, he could say: "God...giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24, 25; cf. James 1:17). True gratitude flows from contemplating all that God is in Himself, and all that He has done on behalf of the human race.

#### 1. ILLUSTRATE

##### 2) *Christ-Revealing*

"Giving thanks...unto God...in the name [through the name] of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:20). Thanksgiving is properly rendered to God in the name of Christ, not only because He is the One through whom we approach God, but also because He Himself constitutes the crowning subject of our thanksgiving. In other words, true thanksgiving is confessional.

#### 2. AMPLIFY

##### 3) *Time-Investing*

"Giving thanks *always* for all things" (5:20). Paul has already said, "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil....giving thanks always for all things" (5:15-16, 20). The implication is obvious: when we do not "redeem" or wisely invest our time, our minutes, hours, days, weeks, and years, we are not living lives of thanksgiving—a solemn thought, when we reflect on the proportion of time we spend in grumbling and complaining.

#### 3A. ILLUSTRATE

#### 3B. ILLUSTRATE

##### 4) *All-Embracing*

"Giving thanks *always for all things*" (5:20). If ever there was a man who endured hardships for his Lord and Master it was Paul the apostle. He had been a regular jailbird for Jesus Christ, he had fought with beasts at Ephesus, he had been dragged out of the city of Lystra as already dead, he had suffered shipwreck at sea, he had experienced beat-

ings with rod and scourge—and yet he could say, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God.” Like his Master before him, he could lift his heart in gratitude to his God, whatever his circumstances.

#### 4. ILLUSTRATE

### II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THANKSGIVING

“Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks...unto God” (5:18-20). Paul makes it quite clear in these verses that the giving of thanks is not something abstract or nebulous; on the contrary, it is both an activity and attitude of life which is biblically informed and spiritually specific. In simple language, this life of thanksgiving involves:

#### *1) Speaking the Truth of God*

“Be filled with the Spirit; speaking...giving thanks” (5:18-20). In a corresponding passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul adds the words “teaching and admonishing” (3:16). One of the greatest gifts of God to man is that of conversational fellowship. The ability to communicate our thoughts in language that can be understood is one of the greatest potentials for good or evil.

#### 5A. ILLUSTRATE

#### 5B. ILLUSTRATE

#### *2) Showing the Joy of God*

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks” (5:19-20). Paul obviously has both worship and witness in mind. In describing worship, the apostle categorizes three expressions of praise—psalms, hymns and songs. With the worship there is also the witness of joy, such as David expresses in Psalm 40:3.

#### 6. ILLUSTRATE

### *3) Sharing the Love of God*

“Giving thanks...submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (5:20-21). Only a thankful life can truly express the love of God. Thanklessness and lovelessness are fundamentally synonymous. So Paul presses home the fact that our human relationships should be deepened by our thankful and loving lives.

#### 7A. AMPLIFY

#### 7B. ILLUSTRATE

### III. THE SECRET OF THANKSGIVING

“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit...giving thanks” (5:18, 20). Paul uses the law of contrast to show his readers that the secret of true thanksgiving and joyfulness is not to be found in physical stimulants, but in the spiritual reality of the fullness of God the Holy Spirit. This fullness of the Holy Spirit implies three things:

#### *1) The Incoming of the Holy Spirit*

“Be filled with the Spirit...giving thanks” (5:18, 20). Before the Spirit can fill our lives He must enter our lives by way of that miraculous operation we call regeneration. On the day of Pentecost, Peter described how this would take place. Speaking to men and women who were convicted of their sins he said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). God’s prerequisite for His fullness is still the same.

#### 8. EXEGETE

#### *2) The Infilling of the Holy Spirit*

“Be filled with the Spirit...giving thanks” (5:18, 20). Dr. Handley Moule’s rendering of this is beautiful. He says, “Be filled with a fullness habitual, normal, always supplied and always received, in the Spirit.” The Bishop then goes on to say that this fullness of the Spirit is “a state wholly unattainable by training, by reasoning, by human

wish and will. It is nothing less than God in command and control of man's whole life, flowing everywhere into it, and out from it to all around."

### 9. ILLUSTRATE

#### 3) *The Inspiring of the Holy Spirit*

"Be filled with the Spirit....giving thanks" (5:18, 20). Only the Holy Spirit can truly inspire the standard and substance of true Christian thanksgiving. To attempt to work up thanksgiving by our own efforts is not only a frustrating experience, but is also totally unacceptable to God and insipid to our fellow man. Nothing is more pathetic than to hear someone trying to be thankful without any motivation or inspiration. But when the Holy Spirit fills and floods the life, thanksgiving becomes both inevitable and irresistible.

### 10. ILLUSTRATE

#### Conclusion

Let us reemphasize that for the Christian, Thanksgiving Day is every day. This is why God created us, and it is for this purpose that He has blessed us with His grace and mercy. When we know what it is to *be continually* filled with the Holy Spirit, we can truly be thankful for everything.

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## Additional Annotations

### 1. ILLUSTRATE

Sir Moses Montefiore, the Hebrew philanthropist, had as the motto for his family, "Think and thank." In the old Anglo-Saxon language thankfulness means "thoughtfulness"; and this is how it should be.

### 2. AMPLIFY

...this thought by using Hebrews 13:15 with careful attention to the context.

### 3A. ILLUSTRATE

A young Vietnamese woman who fled the communist regime and brought her four children to the United States carries on day after day, year after year, continuing to hope and pray that her husband, a prisoner of the communists, will ultimately be freed. In the meantime, in addition to the responsibility for their children, she cares for other Vietnamese children, sharing her meager income with them, takes courses at a junior college, and works part time. It is not only what she manages to accomplish, however, it is the attitude of thankfulness she exhibits to God and to those who try to help her—even in the face of staggering disappointments and seeming setbacks. She has not allowed her personal sadness to interfere with her thankfulness or her concern for others.

### 3B. ILLUSTRATE

When the New England colonies were first planted, the settlers endured many privations and difficulties. Being piously disposed, they laid their distresses before God in frequent days of fasting and prayer. Constant meditation upon their distress kept their minds gloomy and discontented and even made them disposed to return to their Fatherland, with all its persecutions. When it was proposed once again to appoint a day of fasting and prayer, a plain old common-sensed man arose in the meeting, saying he thought that they had brooded long enough over their difficulties and that it was high time they should consider their mercies. After all, the colony was growing strong, the fields were increasing in harvest, the rivers with fish, the woods with game, and the air with sweetness; but beyond all this, he pointed out, their wives were healthful, their children were dutiful, and now they possessed what they had come for, namely, full civil and religious liberty. So he recommended an amendment to the resolution for a fast and proposed in its place a day of thanksgiving. As we all know, that day has now become part of the very life and culture of the American people. But for the Christian, one day a year is not sufficient!

### 4. ILLUSTRATE

"One night, during the Chapman-Alexander meetings, a poor paralytic was wheeled down the aisle and placed just before the platform. In the preliminary part of the service, Mr. Alexander caught sight of him, and said, 'What is your favorite hymn?' He

immediately answered, 'Count your blessings!' There was no wail, no complaint from the poor cripple; just a vivid sense of the goodness of God" (*Pulpit Helps*, Nov. 1980).

#### **5A. ILLUSTRATE**

The Reverend Leslie F. Church, a man greatly used in the East Africa revival, tells of a friend who was staying in a little town in Yorkshire, England. On a very wet Sunday he was told on the way to church that in all probability there would only be three people in the audience and that the service would be taken by a lay preacher who would have walked 15 miles over the hills in the morning rain to get there. "Is he a great preacher?" the friend asked. "No," came the reply, "but he can praise, and he always begins, continues, and ends with thanking God." Sure enough, there were only three in the whole congregation when the old man came into the pulpit, drenched through and through, but punctual to the minute. As he stepped up to the pulpit, he opened his prayer with these words: "Almighty God, we thank Thee that it is not always as bad as this!"

#### **5B. ILLUSTRATE**

Stephen Olford recounts an occasion when he confronted a man in one of his pastorates who was involved in serious sin. Up to this point in time the offender had engineered a clever cover-up, but he was visibly miserable. When faced with the truth, however, there was instant relief. Even though confession and discipline had to follow, the dear man bowed his head and said, "Thank you, pastor, thank you, pastor." Jesus declared, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth not only leads to liberation, but also to celebration.

#### **6. ILLUSTRATE**

...by retelling the story of Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:23-40). Here was worship and witness at their best.

#### **7A. AMPLIFY**

...to show how this works out between pastor and people, husband and wife, parents and children, employers and employees.

#### **7B. ILLUSTRATE**

Sandi Wisley in *The Alliance Witness* (Nov. 15, 1978)

recounts: "A tearful woman in her mid-50's graciously hugged and thanked me. We had been standing in line at the grocery store when this lady and I had a warm and helpful encounter. As my husband carried the groceries to the car he asked about it: 'What did you do to get a response like that?' After thinking for a moment I had to admit, 'All I really did was *listen and care.*'" This is sharing the love of God.

#### **8. EXEGETE**

...Acts 2:38 to show how the Holy Spirit is initially received through repentance, faith and obedience.

#### **9. ILLUSTRATE**

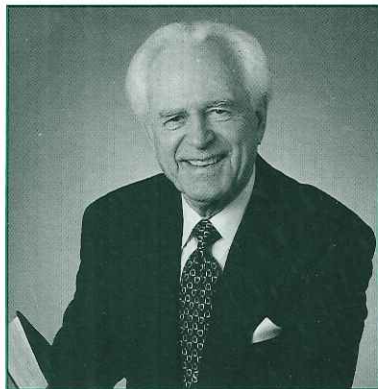
"A young artist was trying to copy Raphael's 'Madonna and Child,' one of the most beautiful pictures in all the world. He went to Florence and gazed on it, then got his easel. Sitting down in front of it he began to copy it. As he looked at it his picture became a thing of beauty, too. But suppose that, instead of only copying, the spirit of Raphael could have [entered and filled] that young man: what a difference it would have made! When we come to the Lord Jesus He gives us His Holy Spirit to help us live as He would have us live, and the more the Holy Spirit controls our lives, the more like Him we grow" (*Intermediate Young People*).

#### **10. ILLUSTRATE**

"In her book *Floods on Dry Ground*, Miss Stuart Watt tells of a revival at an African village named Imbai, which was characterized by intense joy. People would come from far distances with the request, 'We want the overflowing joy.' Among others, three Walese, semi-pygmy, were sent there by a missionary. At first, for they were heathen, they were unmoved by the meetings, but later they were awakened by the Holy Spirit, and when asked what they really wanted God to do for them, replied, 'The Christians have an overflowing joy. We want God to give that joy to us.' When the way of salvation had been made clear to them, they prayed thus, 'O God, we don't want our sins any more. Take them away and give us the joy the other people have got in Jesus.' When telling their friends about it afterward, they used to add, 'And God gave it to us that day'" (*Sunday School Times*).

# An Invitation To Greater Preaching

**P**reaching. A high calling requiring men of God who know how to rightly divide the Word of truth—men who are in tune with heaven and who long to be God’s mouthpiece here on earth. Such a calling demands training, discipline, prayer, time, the anointing of the Spirit, and the necessary tools to be an effective communicator.



Here is where we can help you. Each *EXPOSITORY PREACHING VOLUME* offers 52 weekly sermons in condensed form that are exegetically sound, masterfully constructed, faithful to the text, and relevant to the times. Most volumes contain a number of series, seasonal messages, and a book study designed to feed your people with a balance of teachings throughout the year. A summary one-page outline is provided for reproduction and distribution to your congregation.

**These are not “canned” sermons**, nor are they meant to substitute for your own sermon preparation. Their purpose is to supplement and enhance your own study of the Word and to sharpen your preaching skills. While illustrative material has been provided, ample space has been left to insert your own thoughts and amplifications, tailored to your local situation. A bibliography suggests books for further reading and study.

The benefit of the EPO material is that it provides you with direction: you know where you’re going and what you hope to accomplish in your preaching. You have sermon material that has been tried and tested, that produces results. This helps to build confidence. The well thought-out headings provide a structure by which you can easily recall your message. This stimulates thinking and furnishes additional insights. Time is well spent now and the hours saved can be used in other areas. You sense a new attentiveness from your congregation. People come to church eager to study God’s Word and comment on the spiritual content of the message and the personal enrichment they receive.

The need for men of God in today’s world has never been greater! We invite you to use this expository resource to prepare yourself to become a “worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tm 2:15, NKJV).

# Table of Contents

This reference booklet is intended to facilitate your use of the *EXPOSITORY PREACHING OUTLINES* by Dr. Stephen Olford.\*

The two primary elements of the seven volumes—a volume index of the individual messages and a Scripture index—are combined in one reference source.

The guide has been three-hole punched so that it can be inserted in the front of any of the volume binders for easy access.

We hope that you find the guide useful in finding the “right” place within the volumes. More importantly, we pray the material will help you to break open God’s Word in transforming power in your own life and the lives of your people.

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Deuteronomy	Dt	Job	Job	Obadiah	Ob
Joshua	Jo	Psalms	Ps	Jonah	Jh
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\*The Expository Preaching Outlines (Volumes 1–7) are also available on CD as the *Institute For Biblical Preaching, Volumes 1–7*. Call (800) 843-2241 for details.

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(or The Christ of Today)  
(Jn 6:16-21)
- 26 — The Opening of a Blind  
Man's Eyes  
(Jn 9:1-11, 35-38)

#### **THIRD QUARTER**

#### **GOD ALIVE: IN LIVING MIRACLES**

(continued)

- 27 — The Raising to Life of  
Lazarus (or The  
Destroyer of Death)  
(Jn 11:1-44)

#### **GOD ALIVE: IN LIVING INTERVIEWS**

Seven doctrinal messages on the interviews of our Lord.

- 28 — Christ and a Respected  
Moralist  
(Jn 1:43-51)
- 29 — Christ and a Puzzled  
Theologian  
(Jn 3:1-21; 7:45-53;  
19:38-42)
- 30 — Christ and a Dissatisfied  
Libertine (or The Secret  
of Satisfaction)  
(Jn 4:1-30)
- 31 — Christ and a Living  
Businessman  
(Jn 1:43-46; 6:5-9)
- 32 — Christ and a Notorious  
Governor  
(Jn 18:28-40; Mt 27:11-25)
- 33 — Christ and a Skeptical  
Disciple (Jn 11:7; 14:1-6;  
20:19-29)
- 34 — Christ and a Converted  
Fisherman  
(Jn 1:40-42; 21:15-19)

#### **RADIANT LIVING**

A spiritual treatment of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians.

- 35 — Introduction to Philippians  
(Phl 1:1-2)
- 36 — The Secret—  
The Fellowship of  
the Gospel  
(Phl 1:3-11)
- 37 — The Secret—  
The Furtherance of  
the Gospel  
(Phl 1:12-26)
- 38 — The Secret—  
The Faith of the Gospel  
(Phl 1:27-30)
- 39 — The Standard—  
Positively Revealed  
(Phl 2:1-4)

#### **FOURTH QUARTER**

#### **RADIANT LIVING**

(continued)

- 40 — The Standard—  
Perfectly Realized  
(Phl 2:5-11)
- 41 — The Standard—  
Practically Related  
(Phl 2:12-16)
- 42 — The Standard—  
Personally Reflected  
(Phl 2:17-30)
- 43 — The Satisfaction—  
Presented  
(Phl 3:1-14; 4:4-5)
- 44 — The Satisfaction—  
Protected from Judaism  
(Phl 3:1-11)
- 45 — The Satisfaction—  
Protected from  
Perfectionism  
(Phi 3:12-16)
- 46 — The Satisfaction—  
Protected from  
Antinomianism  
(Phl 3:17-21)
- 47 — The Strength—  
Stability in Christ  
(Phl 4:1-7)
- 48 — The Strength—  
Serenity in Christ  
(Phl 4:8-9)
- 49 — The Strength—  
Sufficiency in Christ  
(Phl 4:10-19)
- 50 — Conclusion  
(Phl 4:20-23)

#### **CHRISTMAS**

- 51 — The Challenge of Christmas  
(Lk 2:1-11)

#### **END OF YEAR**

- 52 — A Call to Remembrance  
(Dt 8:1-20)

#### **VOLUME 3**

Introduction  
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for Volume 3

## FIRST QUARTER

### NEW YEAR'S SUNDAY

- 1 — God Is Faithful  
(1 Co 1:1-9)

### THE LAWS OF LIFE

A textual series on the Book of Proverbs.

- 2 — The Law of Knowledge  
(Prv 1:1-7)
- 3 — The Law of Wisdom  
(Prv 2:1-7)
- 4 — The Law of Faith  
(Prv 3:1-6)
- 5 — The Law of Life  
(Prv 4:23-27)
- 6 — The Law of Love  
(Prv 5:15-18)
- 7 — The Law of Hate  
(Prv 6:12-19)
- 8 — The Law of Obedience  
(Prv 7:1-5)
- 9 — The Law of Happiness  
(Prv 8:32-36)
- 10 — The Law of Longevity  
(Prv 9:1-12)
- 11 — The Law of Diligence  
(Prv 10:1-6)
- 12 — The Law of Soul-Winning  
(Prv 11:27-31)
- 13 — The Law of Encouragement  
(Prv 12:18-28)

## SECOND QUARTER

### EASTER SUNDAY

- 14 — The Empty Tomb  
(Mt 28:1-10)

### THE LAWS OF LIFE (continued)

- 15 — The Law of Enrichment  
(Prv 13:1-7)
- 16 — The Law of Backsliding  
(Prv 14:12-18)
- 17 — The Law of Prayer  
(Prv 15:26-33)
- 18 — The Law of Guidance  
(Prv 16:1-9)
- 19 — The Law of Cheerfulness  
(Prv 17:22-28)

- 20 — The Law of Friendship  
(Prv 18:19-24)
- 21 — The Law of Anger  
(Prv 19:9-12)
- 22 — The Law of Laziness  
(Prv 20:4-13)
- 23 — The Law of Reality  
(Prv 21:27-31)
- 24 — The Law of Parenthood  
(Prv 22:1-6)
- 25 — The Law of Learning  
(Prv 23:19-26)
- 26 — The Law of Humanity  
(Prv 24:11-12)

## THIRD QUARTER

### THE LAWS OF LIFE (continued)

- 27 — The Law of  
Communication  
(Prv 25:11-14)
- 28 — The Law of Retribution  
(Prv 26:26-28)
- 29 — The Law of Futurity  
(Prv 27:1-2)
- 30 — The Law of Transparency  
(Prv 28:11-14)
- 31 — The Law of Vision  
(Prv 29:18-27)
- 32 — The Law of Confidence  
(Prv 30:29-31)
- 33 — The Law of Wifehood  
(Prv 31:10-31)

### TRUTH FROM THE TABERNACLE FOR TODAY

Typical teaching on a much neglected area of biblical truth. The tabernacle provides symbolic teaching at its best on the person and work of our Lord, the life and service of the Christian, and the meaning and ministry of the church.

- 34 — The Introduction  
(Ex 25:1-9; Heb 8:1-5)
- 35 — The Purpose  
(Ex 25:1-9; 29:39-46;  
Heb 9:1-12)
- 36 — The Erection  
(Ex 25:1-9; 31:1-11; 35:20-  
29; 36:5-7; 40:17, 33-38)

- 37 — The Structure  
(Ex 26:1-37; 27:9-18;  
36:8-38; 38:9-20)
- 38 — The Coverings  
(Ex 26:1-14; 36:8-19)
- 39 — The Furniture in the  
Outer Court  
(Ex 27:1-8; 38:1-5;  
30:17-21; 38:8)

## FOURTH QUARTER

### COMMUNION

- 40 — The Lord's Supper  
(1 Co 11:17-25)

### TRUTH FROM THE TABERNACLE FOR TODAY (continued)

- 41 — The Furniture in the  
Holy Place  
(Ex 25:23-40; 30:1-10,  
34-38; 31:8; 37:10-28;  
39:37; Le 24:5-9; Heb 9:2)
- 42 — The Furniture in the  
Holy of Holies  
(Ex 25:10-22; 37:1-9)  
(also see Ex 19; 20:1-7;  
Mt 22:36-40; Ex 16:11-31;  
Nu 11:1-9; Ps 78:24-25;  
Jn 6:30-38; Rev 2:7;  
Nu 16:17)
- 43 — The Priesthood  
(Ex 28, 29; Le 8; Heb 5:1-10)
- 44 — The Offerings  
(Ex 40:34-38; Le 1:1-17;  
13; 14; 16; 17; Nu 19;  
Heb 7-10)

### THE GRACE OF GIVING

A topical series of seven messages that provides the biblical mandate for financial stewardship. Will offer the impetus needed to increase your church's giving.

- 45 — The Basis of Blessing  
(Mal 3:7-15)
- 46 — The Essentiality of Giving  
(1 Co 15:51-16:1-4)
- 47 — The Example of Giving  
(2 Co 8:1-9)

- 48 — The Ethics of Giving  
(2 Co 8:10-15)
- 49 — The Efficiency of Giving  
(2 Co 8:16-9:5)
- 50 — The Enrichment of Giving  
(2 Co 9:6-15)
- 51 — The Maintenance of  
the Ministry  
(Ga 6:6-10)

### CHRISTMAS

- 52 — The Search of the Shepherds  
(Lk 2:8-20)

### WEDDING

- 53 — The Master at a Marriage  
(Jn 2:1-11)

### FUNERAL

- 54 — At Home With the Lord  
(Jn 14:1-3; 2 Co 5:6-9)

## VOLUME 4

Introduction  
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## FIRST QUARTER

### NEW YEAR'S SUNDAY

- 1 — A Milestone in the Ministry  
(Acts 28:11-16)

### THE BIBLE SAYS

Uses one verse from each letter of the alphabet to highlight great gospel texts (except the letter "X").

- 2 — Guilty Men  
(Ro 3:10-26)
- 3 — The Infallible Detective  
(Ro 3:10-26)
- 4 — The Death of Christ  
(1 Co 15:1-4)
- 5 — Getting Right with God  
(Ja 4:1-10)
- 6 — The Call to Repentance  
(Lk 12:54-13:9)

- 7 — The Nature of Saving Faith (Ro 10:11-21)
- 8 — The Life That is Eternal (1 Jn 5:1-13)
- 9 — So Great Salvation (Heb 2:1-10)
- 10 — Cleansing from All Sin (1 Jn 1:5-10)
- 11 — Justification by Faith (Ro 3:19-31)
- 12 — Guarded by God (1 Pt 1:1-9)
- 13 — The Gospel in Depth (Col 3:16-4:1)

#### BAPTISM

- 14 — The Blessings of Obedience (Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34)

### SECOND QUARTER

#### THE BIBLE SAYS (CONTINUED)

- 15 — Dying to Live (Col 3:1-15)
- 16 — The Call to Churchmanship (Heb 10:19-25)
- 17 — Christian Leadership (Heb 13:7, 17-25)
- 18 — The Test of Truth (1 Th 5:14-28)
- 19 — Quenching the Spirit (1 Th 5:19-24)
- 20 — Christian Joyfulness (Phl 4:1-8)
- 21 — Service with Gladness (Ps 100)
- 22 — Christian Warfare (Ep 6:10-20)
- 23 — The Pilgrim's Progress (Dt 8:7-10; 9:1-6; 10:12)
- 24 — The God of Victory (Prv 21:21-31)
- 25 — The Coming of Christ (1 Th 1:1-10)
- 26 — The Yielded Life (Ro 6:1-14)
- 27 — On Fire for God (Ti 2:11-15)

### THIRD QUARTER

#### HE STOOPS TO CONQUER

##### REV. IAN BARCLAY

This British guest writer expounds passages from the Gospel of Mark. In this quarter he emphasizes the mighty work of the Servant as well as the mighty words the Savior.

- 28 — The Work Commencing (Mk 1:1-45)
- 29 — The Work Criticized (Mk 2:1-28)
- 30 — The Work Conquering (Mk 3:7-35)
- 31 — The Work Challenged (Mk 4:1-20)
- 32 — The Work Confronting (Mk 5:1-20)
- 33 — The Work Commissioned (Mk 6:7-44)
- 34 — The Work Correcting (Mk 7:1-37)
- 35 — Plain Words of Teaching (Mk 8:31-38)
- 36 — Plain Words of Theology (Mk 9:1-13)
- 37 — Plain Words of Truth (Mk 10:46-52)
- 38 — Plain Words of Triumph (Mk 11:1-11)
- 39 — Plain Words of Testing (Mk 12:1-44)
- 40 — Plain Words of Travail (Mk 13:1-37)

### FOURTH QUARTER

#### HE STOOPS TO CONQUER

##### REV. IAN BARCLAY (CONTINUED)

Emphasizes the mighty witness of the Sovereign (Ch. 14-16).

- 41 — Plain Words of Trial (Mk 14:10-31)
- 42 — Plain Words of Transaction (Mk 15:1-47)
- 43 — Victory Over the Grave and Globe (Mk 16:1-20)

### CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

Its one theme is the duty or "oughts" of the Christian, e.g., obedience, intercession, humility, behavior, example, etc. "The Ought of Behavior" provides principles for church members, leaders and pastors.

- 44 — The Ought of Obedience (Acts 5:29-42)
- 45 — The Ought of Intercession (Lk 17:26-30; 18:1-8)
- 46 — The Ought of Humility (Ro 12:1-13)
- 47 — The Ought of Behavior (I) (1 Tm 3:1-16)
- 48 — The Ought of Behavior (II) (1 Tm 4:7-16)
- 49 — The Ought of Behavior (III) (1 Tm 3:14-16)
- 50 — The Ought of Testimony (Lk 12:1-12)
- 51 — The Ought of Self-Giving (1 Jn 3:11-24)

### CHRISTMAS

- 52 — The Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38)

### CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

(continued)

- 53 — The Ought of Example (Jn 13:1-17)

## VOLUME 5

Introduction  
Bibliography  
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### FIRST QUARTER

#### NEW YEAR'S SUNDAY

- 1 — The Companionship of Christ (Ex 33:12-23; Jo 1:1-9)

### CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

A three-part series on the Fact of God, the Son of God, and the Word of God.

- 2 — Why I Believe in the Fact of God (Ge 1:1; Jn 1:1-4; 1 Jn 1:1-3)
- 3 — Why I Believe in the Son of God (Jn 1:1-14; Col 2:8-12; Heb 1:1-2; 1 Tm 3:16)
- 4 — Why I Believe in the Word of God (2 Tm 3:14-17; 1 Pt 1:22-25; 2 Pt 1:19-21)

### WORDS FROM THE CROSS

A thoughtful treatment of our Savior's seven last sayings on the Cross (Lenten series).

- 5 — The Word of the Cross (1 Co 1:18-25)
- 6 — The Word of Forgiveness (Lk 23:33-38)
- 7 — The Word of Assurance (Lk 23:39-43)
- 8 — The Word of Affection (Jn 19:25-27)
- 9 — The Word of Anguish (Mt 27:33-50; 2 Co 5:17-21)
- 10 — The Word of Agony (Jn 19:28-30; Ps 69)
- 11 — The Word of Triumph (In 19:28-30)
- 12 — The Word of Confidence (Lk 23:46-49)

### EASTER SUNDAY

- 13 — Journey Into Joy (Lk 24:13-35)

### SECOND QUARTER

#### GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A textual treatment of eight subjects to aid those contemplating church membership.

- 14 — Christian Certainty (Ro 8:12-17, 26-39)

- 15 — Daily Devotions (Dt 8:1-14)
- 16 — Believers' Baptism (Mt 28:16-20)
- 17 — Church Membership (Ro 12:1-13)
- 18 — Consecrated Living (Ro 12:1-2)
- 19 — Systematic Giving (2 Co 9:5-11; Co 16:1-2)
- 20 — Dedicated Serving (Ex 21:1-6; Ro 12:9-11)
- 21 — Covenant of Membership (1 Co 14:36-40)

#### ARTICLES OF FAITH

#### PROBLEMS THAT PERPLEX

Shows the reality and relevance of the Word of God to such problems as anxiety, self-esteem, care, guilt, and loneliness.

- 22 — The Answer to Anxiety (Phl 4:6-7)
- 23 — The Christian View of Self-Esteem (Mk 12:30-31)
- 24 — The Cure for Care (1 Pt 5:6-11)
- 25 — The Remedy for Guilt (1 Jn 1:1-7)
- 26 — Overcoming Loneliness (Ps 68:5-6)

### THIRD QUARTER

#### SOME BURNING ISSUES

Four messages that exemplify the principle of biblical preaching dealing with issues in our contemporary religious scene which must be faced with faithfulness and fearlessness.

- 27 — Christian Citizenship (1 Pt 2:11-25)
- 28 — The Moral Minority (Ju 7:1-23)
- 29 — God's Answer to Social Unconcern (Ja 1:22-27)

- 30 — God's Answer to Human Need (Heb 7:19-28)

#### MEET THESE MEN

Character studies on Samson, Peter, Caleb, Barnabas and Isaiah.

- 31 — Samson: A Lesson in Failure (Ju 16:15-22)
- 32 — Peter: A Lesson in Forgiveness (Jn 1:35-42)
- 33 — Caleb: A Lesson in Faithfulness (Jo 14:6-15; 15:13-14)
- 34 — Barnabas: A Lesson in Fruitfulness (Acts 11:19-30)
- 35 — Isaiah: A Lesson in Fulfillment (Is 6:1-9)

#### LABOR DAY SUNDAY

- 36 — Divine Service (Jn 9:1-7)

#### THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

An in-depth examination of New Testament discipleship.

- 37 — The Disciple's Relationship (Mt 10:16-27; Lk 6:35-42; Jn 13:1-17)
- 38 — The Disciple's Responsibility (Jn 8:31-36)
- 39 — The Disciple's Requirements (Lk 14:25-35; 9:57-62)

### FOURTH QUARTER

#### THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

(continued)

- 40 — The Disciple's Recognition (Jn 13:33-35)
- 41 — The Disciple's Realization (Jn 15:7-16)

#### MISSIONS

- 42 — Winged Feet (Is 52:1-12)

- 43 — The Whole Word to the Whole World (Mk 16:14-20)

#### THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Four expositional studies on "out of the ordinary" types of prayer: problem praying, pressure praying, public praying, and praiseful praying.

- 44 — Problem Praying (Ja 5:13-20)
- 45 — Pressure Praying (Acts 4:23-31)
- 46 — Public Praying (1 Tm 2:1-8)
- 47 — Praiseful Praying (Ps 22:1-25)

#### THANKSGIVING

- 48 — Counting our Blessings (Ps 103)

#### LIVING THE WORD

An exploration of John 1:1-18.

- 49 — The Preexistent Word (Jn 1:1-14)
- 50 — The Creative Word (Ge 1:1-5; Heb 1:1-3; 11:1-3)
- 51 — The Incarnate Word (Jn 1:1, 14, 16-18)

#### END OF THE YEAR

- 52 — The Help of God (Acts 26:1-23)

## VOLUME 6

Introduction  
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Overview of Sermon Outlines for Volume 6

### FIRST QUARTER

#### NEW YEAR'S SUNDAY

- 1 — Henceforth Unto Him (2 Co 5:14-21)

#### THE SECRET OF LIVING

A four-part series focusing on Christ as our mind, our prize, our strength, our Lord.

- 2 — Christ Our Mind (Is 26:1-8)
- 3 — Christ Our Prize (Heb 12:1-4)
- 4 — Christ Our Strength (Is 40:25-31)
- 5 — Christ Our Lord (Col 1:9-18)

#### SPIRITUAL SECRETS

A study on the life of Elisha.

- 6 — The Secret of Tragedy (2 Ki 6:1-7)
- 7 — The Secret of Misery (2 Ki 4:38-41)
- 8 — The Secret of Energy (2 Ki 4:1-7)
- 9 — The Secret of Victory (2 Ki 6:8-23)

#### THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Lenten series.

- 10 — The Centrality of the Cross (1 Pt 2:13-25)
- 11 — The Claims of the Cross (Mt 27:27-32)
- 12 — The Crime of the Cross (Mk 15:1-15)
- 13 — The Christ of the Cross (Is 53:1-12)

### SECOND QUARTER

#### THE CROSS OF CHRIST (continued)

- 14 — The Conquest of the Cross (Jn 20:19-23)

#### THE COMING OF CHRIST

Prophetic series on "the blessed hope of the believer." Shows how His Second Coming relates to the church, the Jews, and the nations.

- 15 — The Prophetic Word (2 Pt 1:16-21)

- 16 — The Promise of Christ's Coming (2 Pt 3:1-18)
- 17 — The Certainty of Christ's Coming (Jn 14:1-6; Acts 1:1-12; 1 Th 4:13-18)
- 18 — The Manner of Christ's Coming (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Th 4:13-18; 2 Th 1:6-10)
- 19 — The Nearness of Christ's Coming (Lk 17:20-37; Heb 10:35-39; Rev 22:6-21)
- 20 — The Challenge of Christ's Coming (Ti 2:11-15; 1 Jn 3:1-3; 1 Th 2:17)
- 21 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE CHURCH: The Redemption of the Church-1 (1 Th 4:13-18; 1 Co 15:35-58; 2 Co 5:1-11)
- 22 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE CHURCH: The Review of the Church-2 (Ro 14:7-13; 1 Co 3:1-15; 2 Co 5:1-11)
- 23 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE CHURCH: The Reunion of the Church-3 (Rev 19:1-10)
- 24 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE CHURCH: The Reign of the Church-4 (Rev 19:11-20:6)
- 25 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE JEWS: The History of the Jews-1 (Ge 12:1-9)
- 26 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE JEWS: The Destiny of the Jews-2 (Ro 11:1-36)

### THIRD QUARTER

THE COMING OF CHRIST (continued)

- 27 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE NATIONS: The Times of the Gentiles-1 (Da 2:1-45)
- 28 — The Object of Christ's Coming: THE NATIONS: The Judgment of the Nations-2 (Mt 25:31-46; Rev 20:11-15)

### BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Seven messages on such subjects as suffering, fear, temptation, despair, death, etc.

- 29 — The Christian Answer (1 Pt 3:13-16)
- 30 — The Answer to Suffering (2 Co 12:7-10)
- 31 — The Answer to Fearfulness (1 Jn 4:11-18)
- 32 — The Answer to Temptation (1 Co 10:6-13)
- 33 — The Answer to Indecision (1 Ki 18:17-40)
- 34 — The Answer to Despair (Dt 33:26-29)
- 35 — The Answer to Death (Heb 9:24-28)

### LABOR DAY SUNDAY

- 36 — Spiritual Stewardship (1 Pt 4:7-11)

### TRUTH FOR YOUTH

A popular series for young people.

- 37 — The Mind of Youth (Ecc 11:9-12:7)
- 38 — The Way of Youth (Ps 119:9)
- 39 — The Yoke of Youth (Lam 3:22-33)

### FOURTH QUARTER

TRUTH FOR YOUTH (continued)

- 40 — The Gift of Youth (Jn 6:5-14)
- 41 — The Role of Youth (1 Tm 4:10-16)

### GOD'S MAN

Studies in the life of David.

- 42 — God's Man: Introduction (1 Ki 9:4; 11:4, 6, 38; 14:8; 15:5; Acts 13:22)
- 43 — How God Discovers His Man (1 Sa 16)
- 44 — How God Distinguishes His Man (1 Sa 17:1-51, 57, 58)
- 45 — How God Develops His Man (1 Sa 18:1-5, 15, 30)
- 46 — How God Delivers His Man (1 Sa 20)
- 47 — How God Directs His Man (1 Sa 23:1-5)

### THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

- 48 — The Duty of Thankfulness (Ps 92:1-15)

### THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS

- 49 — The Wonderful Counselor (Is 9:1-7)
- 50 — The Mighty God (Col 1:1-18; Is 9:6)
- 51 — The Everlasting Father (Rev 1:19-20; Is 9:6)
- 52 — The Prince of Peace (Is 9:2-7)

## VOLUME 7

Introduction  
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### FIRST QUARTER

#### NEW YEAR'S SUNDAY

- 1 — The Contemporary Christ (Heb 13:1-9)

#### THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

A study of the Sermon on the Mount.

- 2 — The Voice of Authority (Mt 4:23-5:2)

- 3 — The Vision of Necessity (Mt 4:23-5:2)
- 4 — The Key to a Life of Blessedness (Mt 5:1-12)
- 5 — The Blessedness of Emptiness (Mt 5:1-3)
- 6 — The Blessedness of Brokenness (Mt 5:1-4)
- 7 — The Blessedness of Selflessness (Mt 5:1-5)
- 8 — The Blessedness of Openness (Mt 5:1-6)
- 9 — The Blessedness of Tenderness (Mt 5:1-7)
- 10 — The Blessedness of Holiness (Mt 5:1-8)
- 11 — The Blessedness of Activeness (Mt 5:1-9)
- 12 — The Blessedness of Faithfulness (Mt 5:1-12)
- 13 — Spiritual Influence (Mt 5:13-16)

### SECOND QUARTER

#### PALM SUNDAY

- 14 — The Gateway to Glory (Jn 12:12-33)

#### EASTER SUNDAY

- 15 — Out of Desolation into Jubilation (Jn 20:1-18)

#### THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

(continued)

- 16 — Spiritual Radiance (Mt 5:13-16)
- 17 — The Life of Righteousness (Mt 5:17-20)
- 18 — Unholy Anger (Mt 5:21-26)

- 19 — Unbridled Lust  
(Mt 5:27-30)
- 20 — Unhappy Marriage  
(Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9)
- 21 — Unguarded Speech  
(Mt 5:33-37)
- 22 — Unbroken Self  
(Mt 5:38-42)
- 23 — Imperfect Love  
(Mt 5:43-48)
- 24 — The Priorities of Giving  
(Mt 6:1-4)
- 25 — The Reality of Praying  
(Mt 6:5-8)
- 26 — The Activity of Praying  
(Mt 6:9-15)

### THIRD QUARTER

#### THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

(continued)

Nine additional messages on the Sermon on the Mount.

- 27 — The Sincerity of Fasting  
(Mt 6:16-18)
- 28 — The Key to a Life of Wealthiness  
(Mt 6:19-24)
- 29 — The Key to a Life of Carefreeness  
(Mt 6:24-34)
- 30 — The Key to a Life of Discreetness  
(Mt 7:1-6)
- 31 — The Key to a Life of Prayerfulness  
(Mt 7:7-11)
- 32 — The Key to a Life of Lovingness  
(Mt 22:34-40)
- 33 — Life's Right Decision  
(Mt 7:13-14)
- 34 — Life's Real Profession  
(Mt 7:15-23)
- 35 — Life's Reliable Foundation  
(Mt 7:24-29)

#### THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE

Using the word "Christian," Dr. Olford addresses the issues of commitment, confession, obedience, and influence.

- 36 — Christian Commitment  
(Ps 37:1-7)
- 37 — Christian Confession  
(Mt 10:32-39)
- 38 — Christian Obedience  
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- 39 — Christian Influence  
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Hospitality, growth, worship, alertness.

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- 41 — Christian Growth  
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- 45 — A Distinguished Worker in the Church  
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- 46 — A Dynamic Preacher in the World  
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- 51 — The Gift of Gold  
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(NY) New Year; (L/E) Lent/Easter; (MD) Mother's Day; (LD) Labor Day; (T) Thanksgiving; (C) Christmas; (EY) End of Year.

For special messages the codes are: (B) Baptism; (LS) Communion; (F) Funeral; (M) Missions; (W) Wedding.

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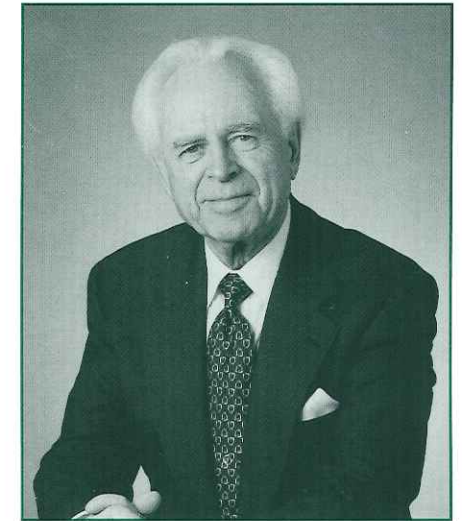
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## About Stephen F. Olford

**D**r. Stephen F. Olford, Founder of Encounter Ministries, Inc., is the son of missionary parents who early instilled in him a love for the Word of God. His original intent was to be an engineer, but God had other designs. Following a near-fatal accident, he sensed God's call to the ministry and studied under the famed Dr. W. Graham Scroggie. For 14 years he pastored churches in Wales and England, then served another 14 years as senior minister of Calvary Baptist Church, New York City. A man of God, a pastor to pastors, he carries a deep burden for expository preaching. Through preaching seminars and the Institute for Biblical Preaching, which he founded in 1980, he is training men with one objective: to preach the Word.



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# Sample Sermon Outline

## Fourteen, Sermon Outline

**SERIES:** STEADFAST CONTINUANCE

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**SUBJECT:** The Church Fellowship

**READING:** Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 14:26-39

**TEXT:** "They continued steadfastly in the...fellowship"  
(Acts 2:42).

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### Introduction

To neglect the privileges of church fellowship will inevitably lead to spiritual coldness and carelessness. Therefore, it is important to continue steadfastly in the fellowship.

#### *I. The Membership of the Fellowship of the Church (Acts 2:42)*

- 1) The Membership Is Exclusive in its Constitution (Acts 2:41)
- 2) The Membership Is Inclusive in its Composition (Acts 2:39)

#### *II. The Maintenance of the Fellowship of the Church (Acts 2:42)*

- 1) The Fellowship of Meeting (1 Corinthians 5:4)
- 2) The Fellowship of Serving (2 Corinthians 8:4)

#### *III. The Manifestations of the Fellowship of the Church (Acts 2:42, 43)*

- 1) A Distinctive Ministry (Acts 2:43)
- 2) A Distinctive Unity (Acts 2:44)
- 3) A Distinctive Charity (Acts 2:44-45)
- 4) A Distinctive Constancy (Acts 2:46)
- 5) A Distinctive Radiancy (Acts 2:46)
- 6) A Distinctive Purity (Acts 2:46)
- 7) A Distinctive Liberty (Acts 2:47)

### Conclusion

God's plan and purpose is to develop local churches that are so guarded in their membership, guided in their maintenance, and governed in their manifestations of the Holy Spirit that daily there will be added to the church "such as should be saved" (2:47).

## Fourteen, Expanded Sermon Outline

**SERIES:** STEADFAST CONTINUANCE

---

**SUBJECT:** The Church Fellowship

**READING:** Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 14:26-39

**TEXT:** "They continued steadfastly in the...fellowship"  
(Acts 2:42).

---

### Introduction

There can be no healthy Christian life in isolation. Anyone who is deprived of the privileges of fellowship will doubtless receive God's special help, but the deliberate neglect of this means of grace will inevitably lead to spiritual coldness and uselessness. The writer to the Hebrews must have had this in mind when he wrote: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24, 25). How important it is, therefore, that we should continue steadfastly in the fellowship! To understand what is meant by church fellowship, consider:

- I. **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH**  
"They continued steadfastly in the...fellowship" (Acts 2:42). The Holy Scriptures lead us to believe that membership in the fellowship of the church is exclusive, as well as inclusive.

#### *1) The Membership Is Exclusive in its Constitution*

"They that gladly received his words were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (2:41). Dr. Griffith Thomas used to say that "the church is a society of saved sinners," and for our purpose that beautifully sums up the exclusive character of this Christian fellowship. The inclusion of saved sinners implies the ex-

clusion of the unsaved.

**1. AMPLIFY**

**2) *The Membership is Inclusive in its Composition***

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (2:39). Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was heard by Jewish listeners gathered in Jerusalem "out of every nation under heaven" (2:5). But to forestall any doubt as to the inclusiveness of God's purpose in salvation, Peter added that the promise of the Holy Spirit is to "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (2:39).

**2. AMPLIFY**

**II. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

"They continued steadfastly in the...fellowship" (2:42). From a study of the New Testament and the regular habits of the local church, it is evident that the life, health and growth of the Christian community was maintained by:

**1) *The Fellowship of Meeting***

Paul refers to the occasions "when ye are gathered together" (1 Corinthians 5:4). A close examination of this expression "gathered together" reveals that such meetings were not so much for public witness to the world as they were for the assembling of believers for fellowship in Christ.

Paul describes such a meeting in 1 Corinthians 14, where one would announce a psalm; that is, a song of praise. Another would come with a teaching; that is, some exposition of truth. Yet another would share a revelation; that is, a declaration of some inner and

secret experience of Christ. Still another would come with a tongue; that is, a rapturous outburst of praise to God (though such speaking in tongues would be limited to two or three persons and would be exercised only if the gift of interpretation were present). Thus the bright testimony of some patient sufferer would rebuke discontent. The rough, honest speech of a working man, telling of a victory in his life, would teach the nature of reality. The quiet ministry of some gifted brother or sister would stimulate growth in the things of God.

The two ruling principles in these gatherings are summed up in Paul's two statements in 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40. First, "Let all things be done unto edifying;" that is, in a spirit of helpfulness, having the interests of all the fellowship in view. Second, "Let all things be done decently and in order;" in other words, in a spirit of harmony, "for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (14:33).

### **3. ILLUSTRATE**

#### ***2) The Fellowship of Serving***

Paul speaks of "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (2 Corinthians 8:4). If you were to take your Greek lexicon and trace the word "fellowship" with all its various English equivalents, you would find that all the forms of service in the Christian church are ministries of sharing. While individual gifts are recognized and used, there is no individualism or independence: all ministries are interdependent without monopoly or selfishness. As with the human body, no one member can dispense with another; all are necessary and share in the function of the whole body.

And so in the letter to the Philippians we have, in Chapter 1, fellowship in the gospel; that is, in the spread of the Church's message (Philippians 1:5). In Chapter 2 we have fellowship in the Spirit; that is,

sharing the fullness of the Church's life (2:1). In Chapter 3 we have fellowship in suffering; that is, sharing in the ministry of the Church's comfort (3:10). In Chapter 4 we have fellowship in giving; that is, sharing in the burden of the Church's expenses (4:15). The growth and maintenance of our church life would be no problem if we could capture this spirit of sharing in our meeting together and serving together.

#### 4. ILLUSTRATE

### III. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH

"They continued steadfastly in the... fellowship...and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:42, 43). A study of Acts 2:42-47 outlines some of the manifestations of true Christian fellowship. What a picture of oneness, joyfulness and usefulness these verses reveal! However strongly certain expositors may dismiss this as a short-lived experiment, occasioned by the phenomenal number of converts at that time in Jerusalem, it cannot be denied that the whole pattern of mutual life and love was created and controlled by the Holy Spirit. And since this is still the age of the Holy Spirit, surely the same manifestations of church fellowship should obtain among us. Indeed, a careful comparison makes it quite clear that the varied expression of social life, as described here, is an outworking of the Sermon on the Mount.

#### *1) A Distinctive Ministry*

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (2:43). Their gatherings were characterized by a reverential awe and a supernatural power.

#### 5. AMPLIFY

**2) A Distinctive Unity**

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common” (2:44). The world outside stood back and exclaimed, “See how they love one another!”

**6. AMPLIFY**

**3) A Distinctive Charity**

“All that believed...sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need” (2:44, 45). No one could be called needy as long as the spirit of fellowship was maintained.

**7. ILLUSTRATE**

**4) A Distinctive Constancy**

“They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house” (2:46). There was a faithfulness in their love and in their gathering for fellowship.

**8. AMPLIFY**

**5) A Distinctive Radiancy**

“They...did eat their meat with gladness” (2:46). This word “gladness” is significant. It was used by the angel when announcing to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:14). It suggests a joy which cannot be suppressed, that bursts out in unaffected gladness, the same quality of joy that is in evidence when the church experiences revival.

9. ILLUSTRATE

**6) A Distinctive Purity**

"They...did eat their meat with...singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). This is the only appearance of this word "singleness" in the New Testament. Its primary usage denoted the smoothness of soil without stones. Later it came to signify evenness and simplicity of character. This term well describes a spiritual quality of transparency and openness.

10. AMPLIFY

**7) A Distinctive Liberty**

"Praising God, and having favor with all the people" (2:47). All inhibitions and limitations had vanished. Indeed, such was the attractiveness of this freedom and fellowship in Christ that spiritually hungry people were inevitably drawn to the church. This does not mean that there was any kind of compromise. On the contrary, the thought behind Luke's descriptive word is that the fellowship was so convincing and captivating that it won favor with all the people; consequently, "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (2:47).

11. ILLUSTRATE

**Conclusion**

God grant that there may emerge in our time local assemblies whose fellowships are so guarded in their memberships, so guided in their maintenance, and so governed in their manifestations by the Holy Spirit Himself, that the world will see

that Jesus lives, and that daily there shall be added to the church  
"such as should be saved" (2:47).

*These messages are also available on cassette ("Steadfast Continuance," 57200/0). For further information and a free catalog listing other titles, write Encounter Ministries, P.O. Box 757800, Memphis, TN 38175-7800.*

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