

## Prestonwood Connection 2004

### Vision

#### Ephesians 4

Wednesday, August 25, 2004 • Dr. David McKinley

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And Lord tonight I pray that in all seasons of life that we would learn to let worship flow to You; whether it is the trickle of tears down our cheeks because of hurt and hardship or whether it is the overflow and the abundance of a heart that's like a waterfall filled with praise and gratitude and joy for Your goodness. A..., would You teach us to worship You in all times and all season of life and to know what it is to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Father, tonight I pray that in this moment that Your word will flow to our hearts and will flow through our lives praise and thanksgiving and conformity to the image of Jesus Christ and I wanna thank You for all that You are going to do tonight and in this new season of The Connection Service. In Jesus name, Amen!

Last night I a..., had the opportunity of having a little time before bed to get with my daughter Lizzie, 14 year-old freshman here at Prestonwood Christian Academy and to sit down and watch some of the Olympics together and a..., I hope many of you have done that. How many of you have at least seen one or two of the events of the Olympics? So that's been a pretty common experience, many and most of us have done that and we were watching last night and of course one of the more enjoyable things of anything that is in a sporting event, an athletic competition, as America are the commercials that come on and off in between and a..., last night we were watching and the new McDonalds commercial came on and the new slogan, the new theme for McDonalds is "I'm lovin it!" "I'm lovin it!" And interestingly enough Lizzie looked at me and said, "I like their old theme better." I said, "Really?" She said, "Yeah, you know the old theme, a..., we make you smile." And she said, "I liked the theme about smiling better than the theme about 'I'm lovin it!'" And I was thinking about that today because I was thinking about how many times certainly in marketing in America and in so many different parts of life that we end up picking up slogans a..., slogans that a..., we gain and that we gather and that often linger long beyond even their use in the common market place. I'm thinking about some of those slogans and I'm curious how many of you a..., might know some of these as well.

*"A day without orange juice is like a day without...?"* [sunshine]

Yeah, Florida said that for many years and it still stays with us doesn't it? A..., how bout this one?

*"Aren't you glad you use...?"* [Dial]

Yeah, *"And don't you wish everybody did?"*

Heh, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

*"The breakfast of...?"*

Champions, what does that promote? Wheaties, and obviously some of these Olympians will be on the Wheaties box. They will be seen as the champions and that's been a part of life and culture for us. A..., this one says:

*"Don't leave home without it."*

American Express Card! And a..., so that's a common one. See, most of us know that.

*"Bet you can't eat just...?"* [one]

Yeah, and that's a company near and dear to the heart of Dallas, who is it? Lay's Potato Chips! Isn't it amazing all these slogans that we know. We've learned them, we've heard them, we've embraced them through the years.

*"Good to the last...?"*

Drop, and that is a..., Maxwell House Coffee. I'm sure the people at Starbucks wish that they could just, you know, could somehow change that out.

*"Be all that you can be."*

That's the United States Army.

*"Just do it!"*

Nikki, yeah, we've got that, got that one down.

*"It keeps going and going and going."*

Yeah, the Energizer Batteries and...

*"It's the real thing."*

Coke, that's right, Coca Cola, the real thing. Well, you know slogans aren't things that we just learn through the marketplace, the products that are there to a..., to be used and utilized, but we often associate them with products, all types of organizations use slogans to communicate their vision and their values. And, you know I've noticed that we have some slogans around Prestonwood, but no slogan that we have is more significant or more dominant than the one that you find on the front of our Bible Fellowship guide and it simply says, "There's a place for you at

Pl...Prestonwood." We've used this in all kinds of things. You've probably seen the Prestonwood Life Magazine and certainly this Bible Fellowship piece and a variety of other pieces of communication and information a..., from our ministry because one of the things that we want everyone who ever has a contact with this church to know is that yes, Prestonwood is a big place and lots of people and it's hard to park here and if you have to move around with a lot of people here, but there's something we want you to know and that is that there is a place for you and there really is a purpose in that statement and in that slogan. It shares something of our vision and of our values and of our church. It really is saying that there is something that is here for you personally, but there's also a place, a place of service, a place of ministry, a place of growth and it's in this place called Prestonwood and I think that theme and that slogan is significant because I think it communicates two very important perspectives that we are given in the Bible.

One of those is **THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE**. And in the biblical view of the Christian's life, Christians, believers are always described and defined in relational terms, not just individual terms. Let me say that again. In the Bible, from a biblical perspective Christians, believers are defined and are described in relational terms, not just individual terms. We live in a very individualistic society and of course in America everything is about "Me" "My" and "Mine." There's kind of this little mantra that is muttered throughout the world and America every day and it is, mind your own business! Heh! Stay out of my life, stay out of my way and I'll stay out of yours. But the reality is, is that when you become a believer, a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, you enter into a new relationship with Christ that brings you into relationship with other believers, into a community of faith known as the church of Jesus Christ and therefore God brings us together in relationship. That's why the church is described as a family, it's described as a flock, it's described as a body. Yes, there are individual members, you and you and you and you, but there's a place for you in the whole of the place called Prestonwood, because we're an expression of the local body of Christ in this place. In fact the very word church, the word that is...that is a..., translated church in the New Testament is the Greek word, *ekklesia*, *ekklesia*, called out and so when you are a part of the church you have been called out of the world as it is, but you have been called in to this new relationship called the church of Jesus Christ and so from a biblical viewpoint the church and this whole dynamic of being a Christian is something that is relational and not just something that's individual.

Something else that we need to understand from a biblical viewpoint is that when we talk about the church and what the Bible teaches us about the church, the church is always presented, is always described in functional terms, not in organizational terms. The Bible presents the church as a unit that functions, not just an organization. I think you know in the world in which we live there are a lot of people who are suspect and suspicious of organized religion. It's big in our day to be spiritual, but don't talk to me about church. I don't wanna be involved in the church. I don't wanna be in the politics of the church. I just don't like the

organization of the church. Well, I want you to know the Bible never describes the...the church and never focuses on the church as an organizational model. The Bible speaks of the church in a functional fashion, how the body of Christ, how the family of God moved and worked and interacts together and it is God's design and God's desire that every individual believer be in a positive supportive relationship with a local church, a community of faith where you are connected with other believers and where that connection helps you to grow in your relationship with Christ and that's why we have this service. On this 1<sup>st</sup> night of coming back together in The Connection Service I thought that maybe it would just be good to remind us all why we're here and what we're trying to do, because if we all know why we're here and what we're all tryin to do it's going to really make a difference in the impact of this gathering every Wednesday night. I'm praying that over the weeks and months that come that we're gonna continue to see this gathering expand even more as we are able to reach and touch more needs through the body of Christ known as Prestonwood and even in the community at large. I don't for a moment assume that everybody here is a part of Prestonwood. Some of you are guests here tonight, first time tonight. Some of you have come because this is a church close to you in this community at this time of the week and we are thankful that you are here. But, I want everybody to know what we're trying to do and over the months of the summer I've been thinking afresh and anew about this ministry and this context in this gathering and my mind and heart has gone back to the book of Ephesians chapter 4 and I want you to look there with me tonight, Ephesians chapter 4 and I wanna **SUGGEST 4 WORDS TO YOU TONIGHT** that will introduce concepts and perspectives that all of us need to seek and to embrace as we come to this gathering tonight and in all the days to come. I don't know, maybe we need a slogan for The Connection Service and if you've got a good idea give it to me. Not right now, but sometime write it down, send it our way. But we to communicate afresh and anew the vision and the values of what we're trying to do on Wednesday night together and I thought about what the Bible says about the church here in the book of Ephesians chapter 4 and I thought this would be a beneficial study for us tonight. Let's begin reading in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 11, the Bible says: [NAS]

*And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,*

There's even a translation that says teaching pastors. Heh, I like that translation. [slight congregation laughter] That's my title here for those of you who don't know. Why did God give these gifts? Look in verse 12:

<sup>12</sup>*for the equipping of the saints...*

Who are the saints? If you know a saint lift your hand. Okay, good, all of you are saints if you're believers in Jesus Christ. A..., it's not a select group, it's those of us who have been transformed by the power of Christ and so the Bible says God has given gifts and leadership to the church:

*for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the building*

up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup>And as a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed about here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup>but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even...

Who?

...Christ,

Who's the head of the church? Christ.

<sup>16</sup>from whom...

Verse 16:

...the whole body, being fitted and held together...

Literally, being connected. The whole body is connected in Christ.

~~...that by...and~~ that by which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

The Bible says that God has put the church together with all the parts, with all the gifts, with all the diversities to accomplish a function and that function is to build up every member in faith and to see every member find it's place, it's fitness within the body, so that the body can be strong and that ultimately the kingdom agenda for the church can be fulfilled and so that's what we're trying to do, is to build an encouraging and a challenging biblical community that will help us to grow in faith. I believe whenever the Bible talks about the church it always talks about what the church does as being outcome oriented. It's not just to be something that we do while we're here, there's to be an outcome. It's not an activity, a schedule or an agenda, there's an outcome through all of these things and that outcome is something that is to transform the lives of those who are in and who are a part of that relationship. So what is it that helps the church to find its fitness, its togetherness, its connectedness? Well I believe there are 4 things that I want to be **FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF EVERY GATHERING THAT WE HAVE HERE** and they all begin with the letter "I" "I". The first is...

**INSPIRATION**, inspiration, all right I want everybody to inspire. [pause] I want everybody to exhale. Weew... I didn't say expire, I think you know why. I want everybody to exhale, inhale inspire and exhale. We have to, moment by moment, hour by hour, we have to have a breath. A part of living is breathing, because breathing is what gives life to our lungs, to our oxygen, to our blood, to our heart, to everything that we need to function and it is vital that we have air, that we are able to breathe and my

prayer is that every time you come here on a gathering called The Connection that the first thing that will happen is that through worship you will breathe heavenly air, that through worship you will take in a fresh breath of the power and the Spirit of God and that you will think again about who God is and what God is like and what God is able to do. The problem with so many of us is that our God is too small and what worship does is that it enlarges and expands the horizons of life so that we begin to see a God that is huge and everything else in life is diminished in relationship to the magnitude of God and who He is and what He's like and what He's able to do. That's why I'm so excited about this new series that our pastor's beginning on the weekends called *God Of Wonders*. Knowing Him and making Him known, because to know Him and to embrace the wonder of who God is and what God is like is to so transform your life that everywhere you go you wanna express something of who He is and what He's like and every one of us spiritually needs the breath of fresh inspiration. You know, let's just be honest, life can take your breath away. Stuff that happens in life can literally just take the breath right out of you, the pressures of life, the stuffiness of life as life begins to box us in and press us out and as the weight of life gets upon us we loose our breath and therefore we need to come together in order that we might have a fresh sense of inspiration, being filled up and built up afresh and anew, fresh stimulus, fresh strength and a fresh sense of God's sufficiency in life.

We were talkin about the Olympics earlier. Have you seen some of the post event interviews that they've done with some of the Olympians? I'm not talkin about the next morning when they're in their warm-up suits and they're celebrating, I'm talkin about as soon as they finish the event. I mean they're sittin there and they've got that microphone in front of em and they've just finished running a 100 meters or swimming how ever many and all of that and they're there, sittin there goin, [heavy breathing] and have you ever looked at em and just thought hey, can you just let em get a breath? There he's holdin the microphone, what did you think about...tell me how you know...you're just there goin. [heavy breathing] [slight congregation laughter] I know just how they feel. Most Sunday mornings I'm running late for church, that's a confession. [more laughter] Do I have other confessors? Okay, good, I just wanna know who the procrastinators are in the crowd, so...most Sunday mornings I'm running late for church. I never speed. I pass a few people who do along the way. [pause for more laughter] But when I get to church on Sunday morning I pull into a parking place down at the back of this building and I start there running in the doors and goin the steps. But the Sunday School Class that I connect with on Sunday mornings at 8 o'clock is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the building. So I run in, I jump up the stairs, I run to the top of the steps and when I'm really running late I don't even have time to say anything to anybody before I walk into the podium to give announcements and greetings and I walk up to that podium and I go. Hi! We're...so glad...that you are...that you're...here...today and I'm just thinkin if I could just take a breath. But you see I don't want anybody to think I'm really out of breath from running up those stairs, even though I am, you know, post middle age and all those things at this point in my life, I'm tryin

to hold it together and so I try to be composed and I try to say what I need to say, but I'm telling you if you have just done something and you try to control your speech you are just out of breath. Life...life causes us to get out of breath. Now one of the greatest things that can happen on a gathering like this on a Wednesday night is that we can take a fresh breath together. We need inspiration and so the first function of The Connection Service is inspiration, to be built up and lifted up and encouraged and to take a deep breath in worship. This leadership team that comes up here every week, what you don't see is how early they get here and how they get behind the scenes and pray and seek God and ask God to work in their lives. They typically are doing a personal Bible study together in addition to what they're doing and learning music together and under Rick's leadership and with the entire team coming together there is a sense in which they want to be able to come out and to worship God and to help you to get caught up in the worship. Inspiration! By the way wouldn't you like to say thank you to them tonight? [applause] Wasn't it great to have em back up here one more time tonight? [applause] Okay, 2<sup>nd</sup> thing, not only is there inspiration, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing is...

**INTERACTION**, the church is an interactive community. It is interactive in that it is brought together and it functions together and so we get fresh breath and a fresh worship in order that the body can be strengthened and then that we can act and interact according to the plan and the purpose of God. Go back to Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 12. The Bible says that he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers and then here's verse 12:

*for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ;*

Now, again, who were the saints? Okay, and so if that's us, then what are we to be built up for as saints? It is for the work of what? Of ministry or service. Who is... < turn tape > ...ministry of the church? Humm...do we have a consensus on that? How many of you think the pastors are to do the work of the church? Hum? Well, I just thank you for not holding up your hand, that's good, I haven't seen any. Of course I closed my eyes so I wouldn't, a..., you know [congregation laughter] point anybody out unduly. The pastors are to do the equipping of the church. The members are to do the work of the church. There is a little slogan that we use around there from time to time; "Every member a minister." and the ministers of the church, the ministry of the church is in the hands of the ministers of the church and the ministers are the members of the body of Christ. Now God has give equipping gifts and leadership gifts. I've been given a gift in that. Our pastor's been given gifts in that. Many of our staff team are here with unique and distinct gifts in order to enable the body of Christ, but the goal is always to build up the body so that they work together in the ministry. See, please, please get out of your mind any model that has the idea that the church is a big kicking unit, you know where we all get together in the stadium on Sunday and the pastor gets out here on the platform and the pastor sets up the ball and then he kicks and when he kicks the ball it goes through the upright and the crowd all goes, "Amen,

didn't he do a great job kickin today?" [slight congregation laughter] And they all go out and say, "Hope he has a great week and gets it all done this week." [more slight laughter] That's not the church. The church isn't a field goal unit. The church doesn't have just one big kicker and everything's ridden on his shoulders. Yes he has a role and he has a function but he's much more like a quarterback than he is a kicker and what he's really doing is not getting here to line up and to make the big kick so the whole stadium can erupt and say, "Yes, he won!" heh, or go out the door and say, "Woo he was off today! He was off today!" No! He's a quarterback who drops back, who passes the ball and the key is that you make the catch and go on and make the play. See, that's what it's all about. It's to be an interaction, an interaction of the church working together, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ and so God wants us to be built up. But, being built up is not automatic. We have to focus on that and we have to give ourselves to that task. Paul, over in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 11, the passage of Scripture that we often use in the Lord's Supper, was writing to the church in Corinth and this is what he said about em, he said you come together but you're not better for it. There are fightings and contentions among you and the bottom line is, Paul says, in Corinth there's a church that gets together but they're not together. Well, ladies and gentlemen our goal is to be together, to be together in the work of the ministry, to be interacting together and that's why we encourage you to participate and get to know one another here, because we wanna strengthen the community and the interaction of the church. So #1 is inspiration, #2 is interaction, #3 is...

**INSTRUCTION**, instruction, that's why we have The Connection Service, biblical instruction, making much of the Bible, of the Word of God. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:15:

*But speaking the truth in love, we grow up...*

Teaching is a vital part of ministry. The tool for building the church is right here in my hand and in yours, it is the Word of God and as we learn the Word of God, as we grow in the Word of God we are trained, given instruction according to righteousness. 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 3, verse 16 says:

*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,...*

And then it says...

*...for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be mature, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.*

God wants us to find sufficiency for the work that He's called us to and for the ministry that we are engaged in and the secret to that is biblical training and biblical instruction. Gatherings in the church are not venting sessions for our hardships, they're not chat rooms for our interest, they are gatherings that focus on teaching that changes lives



and therefore everything that we do is to be a part of engaging the training manual for life, the Bible, the Word of God in an effort to do everything that we can, to see people taken away from the winds and the changes of this world and drawn together in strength, faith and stability. So purpose #1 of our gathering is what? Inspiration! What's the 2<sup>nd</sup> one? Interaction! What's the 3<sup>rd</sup> one? Instruction! And I appreciate your love, your prayer and your encouragement as I have opportunity to give that instruction. #4 and finally...

**INTERCESSION**, not only does the Bible make much of the use of the Bible within the church of God and the reading and the teaching of the Word of God, but certainly there is much made in the Bible, in the church, of the activity and the function of prayer and prayer and intercession is nothing more and nothing less than connecting our needs and the needs of others with the sovereignty and the sufficiency of God and so when we come together, we come together for the purpose of intercession in order to be able to pray for one another and to carry one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ which is the law of love. Proverbs 15:8 says:

*The Lord hates the gifts of the wicked, but He delights in the prayer of the righteous.*

Again James 5:16 says:

*...The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

And then again the Scripture says in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:1 & 2:

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore I exhort first of all that supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup>for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*

God has called His church to the ministry and the activity of prayer on behalf of one another, on behalf of our community and on behalf of our nation and our world. We can touch the world from the ground of this church every week if we engage our hearts in intercessory prayer and it's interesting that God tells us where to pray for our leaders, our government. Obviously we're living in a day and time where there's a lot of antagonism and animosity within our government towards the public expression of faith and religion and there's been a series of slights, of injuries, of removals, of offenses a..., constantly in the fray of the media in these days of how we are no longer allowed in the public square to express any kind of defined religion. Obviously, one of the big moments of my lifetime was as a child was when prayer was taken out of public schools and that is a major issue.

In fact I heard about a couple of little boys who ended up together over in time out and while they were there when the teacher wasn't lookin one of them looked at the other and said what are you here for? Heh! He said I got in trouble for talkin to Jim. He said what about you? He said oh I got

in trouble for talkin to God. That's a sad reality isn't it? But I want you to know as sad as that is, the real issue is not can we pray in the school, pray on some public property, the real question is are we praying in the church? Because this is open ground for prayer, this is what this ministry is about and so we hear the Word of God, the words of Jesus saying:

*"Ask, and I will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you."*

And we are called and we are compelled to pray for one another and prayer is where sorrow is released, it is where faith is expressed and it is where grace is ministered to those in need. And so I want us to always come together and to make much of prayer and to grow in the ministry of prayer together and that's why from time to time we're gonna ask you to prayer and pray in groups and pray at the altar and pray for one another, because it helps us to grow in faith and to grow in Christ. Now I'm not saying that every time we gather we need to have long extensive prayers, there are far too many who think that they are heard for their long praying. Heh!

D. L. Moody, Dwight L. Moody was a great evangelist of yesteryear, but he did not have a lot of patience or tolerance when public meetings got out of hand and in particular long public prayers irritated him and it's said that on one occasion that a man started prayer and he prayed and he prayed and he prayed and finally Moody looked over at Ira Sanky who was the song leader and said, "Brother Sanky, lead us in a hymn while our brother finishes his prayer." Heh! [pause for slight congregation laughter] Well, we may not always have long times of prayer but we're gonna pray, because intercession is a part of the ministry of the body of Christ to one another. Let me see is I can get our little model back here on the screen again, the little model that we're got of the a..., of the service here, can we do that? That has our 4 words on it. There it is right there.

Inspiration • Interaction • Instruction • Intercession

Do you notice anything else about all of those words, not only that they be...begin with "I" but they begin with what else? "In" did you know that to be connected is to be in. Nobody wants to be out, we wanna be in. I wanna be in. The problem is we always wanna be in the wrong things. We wanna be in style and in fashion and we wanna be in all these things and they all have their place, but I want you to be in community with the body of Christ and in communion with God so that you live out a connected life in a disconnected world. That's what we're gonna do. That's what we're gonna be. Next week we're gonna come together to a place that none of us belong of our own efforts, but we are let in because of the grace of God. We're gonna gather at the Lord's Supper table and then the week after that I'm gonna start the fall series and I'm calling it The Life You Were Born To Give. It's gonna be a study in the book of Romans and we're gonna learn even more about connecting our lives to God's purpose. But right now I want us to close the gathering with prayer.