

EVERY GENERATION NEEDS TO SELL ALL

Andrew Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 17 July 2022

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Introduction

I want to share with you, as I begin, that today is my birthday. Now, I only announced that to let you know that I am 59, and I feel like I am just about the oldest person in the room.

The interesting thing is that much of what I want to share with you today is a testimony, as a father, to encourage you to the fellowship that you find with the shepherding administration - the elders and leaders, the fathers - within the body of Christ.

Participation of families in the *agape* meal

I thought I would begin by noting, as you all would have noted, that our *agape* meals have become very real, and very delightful, in open conversation with families, without any projections.

I particularly note that is because of *the participation of the children*.

As we were having an *agape* meal recently, we were talking about the treasure of our sonship. We were talking about that with the children, and they were all engaged and listening very carefully.

So, here was I, 59, having an engagement with young children. I said, 'So, "such and such" (I won't mention any names), what do you think your Dad would delight in the most? What is his greatest treasure when he thinks about you and your brother, and how you're meeting the Lord and knowing Him? What do you think his great treasure is?'

He thought very carefully and said, 'The TV.' I thought, 'Well, of course! Maybe I was unclear in what I said.' So I explained it again and said, 'What does Dad love when you share?' And he said, 'No, still the TV.' And of course, this person hardly ever watches TV; but it is kind of interesting.

And then we had another conversation. You'll appreciate these stories, because I'm talking about us not being awkward in our families. We delight in this, because it is our conversation as well. This is what we are learning - the

conversation that is real; the testimony that is real; the open-heartedness that is delivering us from our own counsel - the counsel of the wicked, the counsel of the ungodly.

So I had this other conversation. We were sitting at the *agape* meal, and talking this time about 'the Spirit and the bride say, "Come".' So, what is that? A young fellow had written down his, 'Well, what does that mean?' question, and there was some sharing around that.

And then I said, 'Well, I'm thinking about the word and how we come prepared to share at church. I'm sure you have a conversation with Dad as we come and gather on Sunday morning, about what you're going to share at the *agape* meal and what your testimony is.'

The answer was, 'Nope. Nope. We never do that. How come we never do that, Dad?' And Dad, of course, was very embarrassed. 'Oh, son. No, no, no. You know, this morning, we talked about "such and such". We had a conversation about it.' 'No, no. We never do that. Never, never. Do we ever do that?'

And, of course, they do, all the time. So I'm delighting that the Lord is delivering us to the ease with which we engage with the familiar in our families, and are delivered from trying to project something.

Connecting with a fellowship beyond our families

Today, I will link the idea of 'selling all' and what the Scriptures mean by selling all, with the importance of *our connection to a fellowship that is beyond our families*; a fellowship with Christ's shepherding administration - the elders, and the leaders.

And I suggest, today, that that is true for all of us. That is true for every 59 year-old in the room, but it is something that we particularly learn in our young adult years - how to be met in that way as a son of God, outside of our family.

Importantly, presenting ourselves to these conversations is absolutely essential for us to learn about our participation in the whole *agape* fellowship, as a son of God.

Not keeping old conversational ways; being known

So, there are conversations that we are leaving behind us.

There was a way whereby, perhaps, in the past, we have sought certain conversations to seek approval or affirmation, and we have tried to present our best religious selves. We call that 'projection'.

We have tried to convince those whom we have sought out that we are wonderful people, instead of acknowledging that we are the wicked who are being delivered from our carnality; joyfully, because that is the Lord's provision to us.

Rather, I am presenting myself to be *known* - to be known in my repentance; to be known in my faith; to be known in word, in works, in testimony and in confession.

Fellowship is not crisis management

The second focus is that it is *not* crisis management. That would be familiar to my generation.

This is where we may have a big issue which looms large in life, and so we quickly go off to have a conversation with one of the young adult leaders about that. Now, that is perfectly legitimate if it is part of that *ongoing conversation*.

But we are not to use that fellowship merely as a 'resource' to help us to answer this particular problem.

Fellowship with messengers, in offering

Lastly, it doesn't matter who we are or how wise our parents are, we all need to *find fellowship with messengers and that shepherding administration* that is *apart* from our families

This is because it is from that ground of *fellowship* that each of us, as a son of God, can be *offered to the body of Christ*.

We are *not* offered to the body of Christ by our families proclaiming, 'Here is my great son. He can do this.' No!

We are *offered from the fellowship that Christ establishes in His body*.

That fellowship is established through His word which is in the hand of a presbytery; in the hand of this administration. So we must be *known* in order to be presented, or offered, in that way.

Selling all to buy the field to obtain the treasure of our sonship

We will now pick up the theme of 'selling all'. 'Selling all' is the theme of the parable of the treasure in the field.

'The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that is hidden in a field, which a man found and hid and for the joy over [that treasure] he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field.' Mat 13:44.

Of course, we have noted that the thing that he was joyfully selling all to buy was the *field*.

Let us look at the corresponding passage where the apostle John picked this up in his first epistle. John spoke about our joy in the treasure of our sonship that will be made full as we buy the field.

'That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.' 1Jn 1:3.

We could say it this way: without the messenger establishing that ground of fellowship, our joy could never be made full. We could never realise the treasure of our sonship.

The treasure, of course, is *our calling as a son of God*. It is our name, our works, and our unique part within His body.

We find that this treasure is buried in the ground, or field, of *fellowship* that is established by the presbytery through the proclamation of the word. This is the fellowship that is 'with the Father and the Son'.

Forsaking our own understanding

Jesus explained that to obtain this treasure, we must sell all that we have to buy the field, and we must sell our most prized article, which is *our own understanding*.

This is our own understanding of the gospel; our own understanding of how life works; and what the way to success looks like.

I was quoting there from the book, *The Mystery of Godliness*. Another way we could say that is that we are understanding that our name, our predestination as a son of God, is *written in the tree of life*. It is written in the *fellowship* that we find at the tree of life.

We also have come to understand that this ground of fellowship is where we find *deliverance*, where we find *healing*; where we find *illumination*; and where we find *restoration*.

The word of fellowship is also a sword that divides

I will read on in *The Mystery of Godliness*. 'We also note that this word is establishing the ground of fellowship.'

We are beginning to understand the nature of some our engagements in relation to the conversations that we are having.

'We are also understanding that the word that establishes the ground of fellowship that we are selling all to buy, is a fiery sword in the hand of the presbytery. The effect of its ministry is that the hearer is delivered from walking according to the sight of their own eyes, and they are freed to receive the word which becomes the expression of their life.'

These are beautiful things. It is an absolute treasure to discover that selling all is not rushing out in some glorious, self-sacrificing actions that we perceive, on behalf of Jesus.

Selling all is *engaging with the eyes of Christ* in relation to His word, and finding a conversation in our families and with our peers.

The shepherding hand of Christ, turning us from our own understanding

My focus today is in relation to *the shepherding hand of Christ*. Peter affirmed this in his first sermon at Solomon's Portico. He affirmed this truth by connecting the blessing of Abraham with the divine nature found in families, which is sonship coming into every house.

Peter's affirmation was, 'You are the sons of the prophets, and you are sons of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'In your seed [Christ] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' Act 3:25-26.

So the promise of God is the divine nature, *sonship*, coming to covenant households.

Then he tells us how that blessing comes to us.

'To you first, God raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you [to bless you - how?], in turning every one of you from your iniquities.'

That is, from your wickedness; or we have been using the term, 'carnality'. Carnality is simply the description of a son of God who is walking after the flesh or after their own understanding; in their own counsel, if you like.

Peter said that the blessing of Abraham is coming to us to turn us from our iniquities; *from our own understanding*.

Being cleansed by selling all to receive the word in fellowship

I thought that a quote from the article in the booklet about the lampstand survey would be useful at this point.

Who has had that thought resonating within them in relation to how we are choosing a lampstand church, and our participation on the ground that the Lord is defining?

The article reads, 'It is important to recognise that the capacity for fellowship is not innate within any person or any family.

Rather, it needs to be *learned from Christ through our participation in a lampstand church*.'

The apostle John described our participation in a lampstand church as 'fellowship with the presbytery'.

So, the principle that we are considering, of course, is connected to selling all.

How do we do that? Obviously, we cannot sell all and be delivered *by our own self-defined effort or self-defined plan*.

We can only do that *in the light of the word and through the fellowship* that He has given to us.

At Easter, we heard about selling all in relation to the messenger word, and in relation to the cleansing of that propensity in us to try to deliver ourselves from the uncleanness, or carnality, that is in our own houses.

I am orienting us now to how He engages with us in His word and in that fellowship that is now coming to deliver us, to cleanse us, to wash us, so that we can walk in the ways of the Lord, with the mind of Christ.

Jesus spoke about it this way. He told His disciples that they were clean; they were delivered from their carnality; they were delivered

from their own understanding, they were delivered from the oppression of unclean spirits.

He said, 'You are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.' Joh 15:3.

He was speaking to the disciples at the last supper, where He washed their feet.

And the apostle Paul wrote that the church would be cleansed and sanctified. Eph 5:26.

Cleansed and sanctified

We will consider those two things: being cleansed from walking according to the sight of our own eyes; and being sanctified to our name and works as a son of God.

The church is being cleansed and sanctified by the washing of water by the word.

Familiar spirits, familiar cultures, familiar modes and motives and oppressions rule people and their houses by feeding on what is unclean in them.

In other words, where we do not prioritise or do not receive the messenger word and the fellowship of that word; or where we modify the word or the message to be acceptable to our perspective of the gospel, *we become unclean*. That is very simple.

We cannot be cleansed if we reject the word

The word *is establishing a ground of fellowship*, but if we reject the word, we cannot be made clean; we cannot walk free from our own understanding.

We are receiving the word and its fellowship because, if we don't, we become unclean.

And the familiar spirits that are in our houses - the familiar profiles, our depressions, our anxieties, our reactive behaviours, our anger; whatever our particular temperament and familiar mode happens to be - begin to feed on our uncleanness and to produce oppression.

Separated by the word

Jesus noted that the word of the cross is coming *as a sword* into every house to separate us from that which is familiar and unclean so that we can be joined together in Christ, as sons of God in one Spirit. We have heard about that principle many times.

The sword, which is the word, is coming and it is separating us from the unclean, from the familiar, so that we can be joined in one Spirit.

This is the fellowship of the Father and His Son.

We recognise (and sometimes have not recognised) that this same sword, where individual family members reject that fellowship and leave the church, actually brings the cut of separation, alone.

It does not join to fellowship again.

It simply separates and cuts that away because, 'what fellowship can light have with darkness?' What fellowship can an unbeliever have with a believer? Jesus spoke this way to His disciples.

Delivered to our own accountability by the word

Are we all very comfortable with the fact that the sword, in a covenant house, is coming to divide us and to separate us from one another in our families?

It is not, 'Let's all get around in a huddle' - e.g. 'the Hay team' - and yell, 'Three cheers for Jesus!' It is *not* doing that.

It is separating and dividing us to our own accountability; our own engagement with the eyes of the Lord; our own presentation of ourself.

There is no 'we' in 'Jesus'. I made that up because there is no 'I' in 'team', as worldly coaches say. So we stand alone.

And, in our young adult years, we are growing up, not trying to keep family loyalties and 'doing it for the Hay team'.

Rather, we are meeting the Lord eye to eye and heart to heart, so that we can present ourselves on the ground of fellowship, and can be delivered and healed.

Receiving the treasure

'Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You". And Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no-one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands.'

Interestingly the word 'lands' is the same word as 'field'.

'For My name's sake and the gospel's.' Mar 10:28-30.

Jesus was deliberate in His words. 'Who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and lands.'

He added, 'with persecutions'. So we are joined to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings as we are delivered from those familiar relational lines.

'And in the age to come, eternal life.'

Restoration of sanctified family relationships is part of the treasure

Now, I suggest, in the first instance, that 'the hundredfold' that we are receiving now, in this time - houses, brothers, sisters, mothers and children and lands - is the re-joining of the Lord as *He connects us*, having separated us to our own sonship; to our own participation.

He is re-joining us now, as sons of God who are 'good ground' and are bringing forth 'a hundredfold'.

Is that the testimony of your house - that the Lord is calling us to be separated from the familiar; from the unclean?

He is bringing us illumination about that. We are seeing it, and He is re-joining us in one Spirit. His one hundredfold blessing is coming to our houses because it is good ground.

Restoration of sanctified relationships with our brethren is also part of the treasure

Equally, then, there is a one hundredfold blessing in the fellowship that we are finding in one Spirit with our brethren, our peers, our friends, our family, in the body of Christ; and in the age to come eternal life.

It is my testimony that this word is freeing families - and I am speaking here of my own family - to the accountability that 'owns' its own familiar ways and its own uncleanness.

First, there is *illumination* to that operation, that comes *in the light of the word*.

Then families can establish every relationship and every relational practice *in the gospel of sonship*.

Fellowship with the presbytery - walking in the light

The 'ground' of fellowship with the presbytery is being made very clear to us. In that context, it is a simple matter to find fellowship and conversation in relationship with the ones who care for us and watch over us, in the body of Christ.

That is contrary to our mode in the past. I am speaking now perhaps of my generation, and of those a little older, who grew up in a very different culture, rather than this open-hearted desire and delight in being able to find that fellowship.

Instead of walking in the light of that fellowship, we tended to keep the 'unclean' and 'familiar' hidden from sight, in our houses, while we tried to fix it up. Those over fifty years old, would you not say that was right?

We imitated Adam and Eve. Instead of bringing the whole mess to the tree of life, we were 'over in the bushes', thinking, 'It's all okay - nothing to see here. Just give me another 3 000 years, and these 'fig leaves' are coming together now. It's looking good. Yes, Jesus, we're coming.'

That is what we have done. And that is the very thing from which He is delivering us - from the mechanism that is driven by shame and nakedness, which tries to fix up the issues of sin and dysfunction, with our own 'fig leaves'. That was how we came into the problem in the first place.

All the time, the Lord has been waiting for us to bring that confusion and mess to the tree of life.

Selling all to obtain the treasure of sonship

Let us consider the encounter that we referred to, when Peter said to Jesus, in effect, 'Now, Jesus, we have sold everything and followed You.'

And Jesus replied, in effect, 'Oh, you are receiving such a blessing in doing that - a hundredfold. And you are finding that engagement with Me, as a disciple. Also, your families are being delivered and cleansed.' Mar 10:28-30.

Interestingly, that conversation happened after Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler, who was, also, called to 'sell all'. Mar 10:17-22.

The mode of the rich young ruler summed up that previous mode of how we might have presented ourselves to engage with Jesus or with that shepherding administration that I am referring to.

'As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up to Him and fell on his knees before Him. "Good Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"' Mar 10:17.

This is as though he came to another 'good' person and asked, 'Can we meet around "goodness", Jesus?'

Of course, Jesus replied, 'Why do you call Me good [That is not how we are going to engage here. That is not very real.]. No-one is good – except God alone.' Mar 10:18.

And Jesus began to list out the commandments. How many commandments are there? There are ten. Jesus was making a point. He was not saying, in effect, 'What is this guy on about?' He was actually starting to get to the heart of the matter.

Jesus said, 'You know the commandments [You are living by the law of your own perspective.]: you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother.' Mar 10:19.

' "Teacher", he declared [he interrupted].'
Mar 10:20.

Jesus was not able to finish the ten commandments list.

The young man cut Jesus off, and declared, in effect, 'Oh, I know all about that stuff. What are You talking about, Jesus? I know about all that. I have been doing that since my youth.'

'Jesus looked at him and loved him.' Mar 10:21.

It is interesting that we can often try to engage with those conversations *on our own terms*, instead of simply *presenting* ourselves.

Then, when that person – perhaps an elder or a young adult leader – may begin to talk about something that we actually don't want to talk about, or don't want to have that *conversation*, we might interrupt them, and say, 'No, "that" is not what I am here for; I am here to have "this" conversation.'

Jesus continued. 'Jesus looked at him and loved him.'

When we hear that Jesus 'looked at him and loved him', that was not with a warm, fuzzy feeling. These were the eyes that are 'a flame of fire' – these eyes were beginning to divide his heart. Rev 1:14.

It is a 'vehement flame of love'; but, in the first instance, it is as a 'fiery serpent on a pole', if you

like, that is being 'lifted up' so that this man could look at it. Son 8:6. Joh 3:14.

'One thing you lack. Go, *sell everything* you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.' Mar 10:21.

'At this the man's face [or countenance] fell.'
Mar 10:22.

Who was another man whose countenance fell when he engaged with the Lord in this way?

It was a young man, making offering, coming to meet the Lord on the ground of fellowship. He had his 'giant pumpkin' to offer. It was Cain, wasn't it? It was Cain.

So, here was another young man, coming very much in the mode of Cain, to present himself to a conversation. He had a projection of himself as being a 'good' young person, whom he hoped Jesus would give great affirmation and approval to.

And the Lord said, in effect, 'You lack the treasure; you lack one thing.'

This young man had come from a Christian home. In that home, he had received many benefits. He had a good relationship with his parents, material wealth and the privilege of a good education. He was well-spoken, respectful and law-abiding. He had been taught to value right from wrong, and good from evil.

Furthermore, he perceived that Christ had come from God, bringing eternal life.

We can imagine his shock when Jesus told him that he had *no treasure in heaven*.

In his parents' house, he had not learned that, to obtain the treasure of sonship, he would have to 'sell all' and become a disciple of Jesus. He could not do this from the basis of his family.

The ministry of Christ's administration – learning a conversation based in our sonship

Hallelujah! Isn't that fantastic? That is why we have a young adult's program, isn't it! That is a very important part of the learning of a conversation that is not coming from the basis of family; but, rather, is coming from the basis of the sonship that the Lord is delivering us to.

We have delighted in those Gospel accounts. That is what our little children are learning now –

how to present themselves at the *agape* meal, from the basis of their sonship.

Let us remind ourselves that this is the ministry of the church; this is the ministry of Christ's administration.

The ministry of the seventy – the shepherding administration in lampstand churches

After sending out the twelve disciples, Jesus appointed seventy others. He sent them out to find 'worthy houses' and 'sons of peace'. Luk 10:1,5,6. Mat 10:11.

We understand that 'the seventy' is representative of the lampstand administration – there are seventy parts in the lampstand. The seventy were 'sent out'.

The ministry of the twelve was established in the first period after Christ's resurrection - on the Day of Pentecost.

Then, for the whole church age, we see this ministry of the seventy.

When Jesus sent them out, He said, in effect, 'You are to go and find worthy houses and sons of peace. And you are to engage them in a fellowship that will deliver them from their own way. This will enable them to 'sell all' and find that fellowship with Me, which is the fellowship of the Father and His Son. You will establish that "ground".'

The ministry of the seventy, which He spoke about there, corresponds to that shepherding administration in lampstand churches, which will continue for the whole of the church age.

A healing administration – deliverance from the familiar, the unclean, the carnal

The Scriptures make the point that this is a 'healing' administration. It is *delivering* us from the familiar, the unclean, the carnal.

Jesus said that, when they went into those houses, they were to *'heal the sick* who are there and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you".' Luk 10:9.

The kingdom is here now – come and be joined to this healing administration

That kingdom is now here, isn't it!

That is what we have heard. The New Jerusalem is *coming* down – the kingdom is here.

That administration is saying, 'Come!'

The Spirit and the bride are saying, 'Come!'

And everyone who hears, is saying, 'Come! Come and be joined to this – this healing administration.' Rev 22:17.

Receiving the messenger, finding fellowship – deliverance for worthy houses

Let us note what happened next in the same account from the Gospel of Luke.

'The seventy returned *with joy* [to the Lord].' Luk 10:17.

He sent them out to 'heal', and to say, 'The kingdom is coming.' But they came back with joy, and said, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' Luk 10:17.

'And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions." ' Luk 10:18-19.

He gave them another – if you like, a *new* – authority, and a new mandate in relation to this work, going forward.

'I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.' Luk 10:19.

So, *this administration is delivering us*. It has the capacity, in the name of the Lord, to deliver every house from its uncleanness and its carnality.

It has the capacity to deliver every house from simply being a captive to their own understanding and mindset – captive to their own perspective. That is what He is coming to do through this administration.

The worthy house is a house that has joyfully sought and received that word and that fellowship. It is a house that has been 'made clean'.

That is why they came back and said, in effect, 'The demons [the familiar spirits] have been cast out as people receive us, and the word and the fellowship that we are bringing. The demons are going.'

Jesus replied, in effect, 'Yes, that is the ministry that I am giving you.'

A worthy house is a house that is not 'scrubbed up, looking great' and whatever. It started out as 'unclean'; but, because it received the messenger and found that fellowship, found that conversation, it has been made 'clean' and it has been 'healed'.

Our young adults are finding this fellowship conversation with the presbytery

As a parent, I can tell you that I am delighting in this season, and embracing the fellowship conversation that I am having, and that my children are having, that is beyond my reference and understanding.

I want to share a testimony with you. And I would hope that all parents are 'in the same boat' – delighting in seeing our young adults finding this fellowship conversation.

As I said, that has not always been the case. Sometimes, parents have been a little protective, and a little alarmed, that their young adults have been speaking to leaders about the family – 'Don't say anything bad about us. What are you going to say? Don't tell them about the TV,' may have been our response.

I am thrilled to say to you, 'This is what we want; this is what covenant houses want.' This is the note of fellowship that we are loving.

All of my children are young adults, and one of my adult children, who is a completely committed, faithful, son of God, had been considering a significant life decision.

It was something that had been discussed in our home over a number of years, but nothing had ever really eventuated. During Covid – particularly the lockdown part – an opportunity for this child of ours to focus on that goal presented itself.

Interestingly, at the same time, the situation that they were in at their current workplace became difficult and personally frustrating.

On a familiar level, at our house level, it all seemed to make sense. Whatever my own and my wife's misgivings were, they didn't seem insurmountable to us. And they probably even appealed to our own values – in relation to education, hard work, maximising one's potential.

I was so thankful that one of the presbytery elders approached my child and spoke quite specifically

in relation to the wisdom and mode of fellowship that had led to that decision. Hallelujah! We thank God that that is the fellowship that He has placed us in.

They encouraged further reflection, prayer, and fellowship. They also spoke with me in great sincerity and warmth. I didn't feel exposed or ashamed, or a failure as a parent.

I felt delight that I was part of this sort of conversation. What a thrill for a parent – not to be limited only to the 'good' that 'I' see; the perspective that 'I' see.

The Lord was not only delivering my son or daughter; He was delivering us! Do you see that?

I cannot tell you how thankful I was, as a parent, for the fellowship that we were part of, that enabled 'the washing of the water by the word', which delivered us to a conversation of faith in our family, for an easy pathway forward. Eph 5:26.

Finding an obedience that is outside of our own understanding

As a father to young adults, I want to encourage you all to find fellowship, in open-hearted testimony and conversation, with those who have a shepherding care for you.

Of course, this is the same conversation and testimony that parents are also, joyfully, giving themselves to.

This aspect of fellowship in no way replaces or diminishes the testimony, process and conversation that belongs in our families. It is not a substitute. There is nothing more important in a child's development than the nurture and training in a Christian house.

However, I want you to know that I need, and want, my brethren, the elders and leaders of the young adults, to engage with my young adult children in relation to what they are engaging with me about, at home.

And, young adults, I am sure that you have had these conversations with your parents. There will be things that we, as parents, do not see, and areas where we will need help to see more clearly.

As a parent, the Lord is calling me to embrace this, as my own commitment to 'sell all'.

This is the testimony that my child has written: 'I have known a clear leading, and simplicity, in the

day to day timing of my life, and the practical initiatives that I take, only as I have sought a fellowship context where I can find obedience that is outside of my own understanding.' Hallelujah!

The work of a presbytery to disciple every person to the culture of Christ

Finally, as I mentioned at the start, in that fellowship, as much as we are being 'delivered from', we are also being 'delivered to'.

The apostle Paul wrote it this way when he spoke about the ministry of the word, and about that personal engagement in relation to the word.

'Him [Jesus] we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom [The wisdom that is coming *from above* that is *not innate to me*, which has to be *received*.], that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' Col 1:28.

When Paul used the word 'we', he was describing the work of a presbytery to disciple *every* person to the culture and ways of Christ.

This work enables *each* son of God to be able to present themselves in the body of Christ, as 'a living sacrifice', according to their name and works. Rom 12:1.

Rejoicing in the conversation of being known

The apostle noted that this ministry was *not* focused towards mobilising a generic team of young adults, because he used the words 'every man'; and we could say, 'every, single person'. The apostle emphasised that this ministry was focused towards mobilising *each individual*.

In this expression, he identified a close, personal relationship, which engaged with every element of a person's maturing as a son of God.

That is the conversation that I am exhorting us to have. That is being *known*.

Is that the way in which you are known? Is that the way in which I am known? Is that the way in which we are all known in this fellowship?

The writings of the apostle Paul include a long list of what this practically 'looks like': teaching, training, correcting, travelling, encouraging, admonishing, commending, strengthening, exhorting, bearing with, labouring together and reminding. This is the nature of that engagement.

Many of those elements would be in the conversations that we have. Regular encounters of this nature should be an uncomplicated and enjoyable feature of every believer's Christian walk.

We can rejoice in that together! I exhort us all to that, as our conversation.