



Almont Vineyard Church

Week 7 Sermon Series: The Sandals of Jesus/ Alive in Christ Pt 2

July 18, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the AVC App!

Whether you've been walking with us for years or you're joining us for the very first time, we're truly glad you're here.

You've landed in the Sermon Section — your go-to place for thoughtful commentary, spiritual reflections, discussion questions, and more. Everything here is designed to help you press deeper into Sunday's message and apply God's Word to your everyday life with Christ. As you read and reflect, we pray the Holy Spirit illuminate's fresh truth and strengthens you for the journey ahead.

We're now in Week 7 of our series — "Alive in Christ," Part 2. If you missed the live message, here's the link <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

As I shared last week, the Holy Spirit shifted my outline, and we're continuing in this powerful theme. A couple of weeks ago we looked at the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. When the son finally came home, the father declared, "This son of mine was dead and is alive again." Friends, if we're honest, we as Christians can drift away from the Lord just like that son. Our spiritual fire can grow dim... and we can lose our edge at times.

I'm reminded of the Apostle Paul's words in Romans 12:11: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." Zeal means keep your speed and stay focused. Fervor means to boil — to be hot. This is telling us we must have a spiritual fire burning within our souls. We must be on guard, because this world will attempt to steal our joy in Jesus.

This Sunday we're hopping back into the book of Ephesians chapter 1, where the Apostle Paul prays: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Alive in Christ means we walk in His power. The word Paul uses for "power" is *dynamis* — dynamite! It is inherent power — not just raw force or potential energy, but active, effective, miracle-working strength that accomplishes God's purposes. It is power capable of breaking through hardness of heart, shattering strongholds, and bringing life where there is death.

We're going to dive deep into all of this so you can walk in the power and authority of Jesus Christ and truly be Alive in Him. Join us this Sunday as we are equipped and encouraged by God's Word!

In Christ,

Rev. Pastor Brad

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Week 7 Summer Series: The Sandals of Jesus/ Alive in Christ Pt 2"
Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our

Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

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Key Sermon Text

Ephesians 1: 15-19

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A%2015-19%20&version=NIV>

Luke 15:17-24

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2015%3A17-24&version=NIV>

Romans 12:11

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A11%20&version=NIV>

Galatians 2:20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%202%3A20%20&version=NIV>

What Does It Mean to Be Alive in Christ?

To be **Alive in Christ** means we no longer live the old, drifting life — but Christ now lives in us with resurrection power. It is a daily, Spirit-empowered reality where we stay spiritually awake, fervent, and fully alive to God.

The Apostle Paul captures this beautifully. In **Galatians 2:20** he declares:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

This is the heart of being alive in Christ — our old self is crucified, and His life now flows through us. Just like the Prodigal Son who was "dead and is alive again," we can drift away if we're not careful. Our spiritual fire can grow dim. That's why Paul exhorts us in **Romans 12:11**:

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

Zeal means keep your speed and stay focused. *Fervor* means to boil — to be hot. We must guard a burning spiritual fire within our souls and stay on guard, because this world will try to steal our joy in Jesus.

Paul prays for the Ephesians (and for us) that the "eyes of your heart may be enlightened" to know God's **incomparably great power** for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18-19). The Greek word for this power is *dynamis* — the very word from which we get "dynamite." It is not just raw force or potential energy. It is **inherent, operative, transformative power** — active, effective, miracle-working strength that accomplishes God's purposes.

This *dynamis* power is the same mighty strength God exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion (Ephesians 1:20-21). And wonder of wonders — that same power now works in us who believe! We are united with the risen Christ, who is the head over all things for the church, His body (Ephesians 1:22-23).

To be Alive in Christ therefore means:

- Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20)
- You walk in resurrection *dynamis* power that breaks strongholds, shatters hardness of heart, and brings life where there was death
- You maintain zeal and spiritual fervor, refusing to grow cold or complacent
- Your inner eyes are enlightened to see the hope of your calling and the riches of your inheritance

This is not a one-time event but a daily reality we live by faith. May the Holy Spirit continually enlighten the eyes of your heart so you walk fully alive in Him.

Citations / References: 1-5

Power Prison

Staying Alive in Christ Through the Dynamite Power of the Holy Spirit

This world is coming at us nonstop with lies, temptations, and straight evil lurking around every corner. If we are not careful, we can get sucked into a deep, dark hole that sucks the life of Christ right out of us. Satan wants to put us in prison—a prison of our own making that snuffs the light of Christ right out of us.

But we do not have to live imprisoned. We have the power to fight back and stay alive in Christ.

The Danger: Drifting Into the Prison

All of our lives look a bit different, but life can make us lose our edge. Our joy fades. We can become complacent. Our spiritual fire can grow dim. The enemy loves it when believers drift—slowly, almost unnoticed—until we wake up far from the vibrant life we once knew in Jesus.

Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:17-24). The son took his inheritance early, squandered it in wild living, and ended up feeding pigs in a far country. He came to his senses and returned home. The father ran to him, embraced him, and threw a feast, declaring, “This son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

If we are honest, we can drift away like that son. We can lose our first love, let the pressures of culture and the cares of life cool our zeal, and find ourselves spiritually “dead” while still breathing. That is the prison the enemy wants for us.

The Dynamite Power That Breaks the Prison

The good news is that God has given us explosive power to break out and stay alive. In the 19th century, Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel mixed two very dangerous chemicals that made things blow up. He stabilized the mixture and called his invention **dynamite**—from the Greek word *dynamis*, meaning power.

That is exactly the word the Apostle Paul uses in the New Testament for the power of God. *Dynamis* is not just raw force or potential energy. It is **inherent, active, miracle-working power** that accomplishes God’s purposes. It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. It is capable of breaking through the hardness of heart, shattering strongholds, and bringing life where there is death.

Paul prays this powerful prayer in **Ephesians 1:15-19** :

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, **and his incomparably great power for us who believe**. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead.”

The Holy Spirit: The Indwelling Source of Power

Jesus promised this power would come through the Holy Spirit. In **John 14:15-17**, Jesus said:

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

The Holy Spirit is the *Pneuma*—the breath, the wind, the very Spirit of God. He is not just with us; He lives **in** us. That means the dynamite power of Christ lives inside every believer. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now lives in you to keep you alive in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is our Counselor. He is the Spirit of truth. He brings peace. He is our Teacher who reminds us of everything Jesus said. And He speaks directly to our troubled hearts: “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)

Staying Alive in Christ: A Daily Choice

Walking in this power is not automatic—it is a choice. The Lord has given us a great gift: the power of the Holy Spirit.

Last week we talked about being alive in Christ. This week is Part 2. The truths of **Ephesians 1:1-14** declare who we are in Him:

- You are blessed in Christ Jesus.
- You were chosen before the creation of the world.
- You have a destiny and a purpose to fulfill.
- You have redemption through His blood.
- You are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Galatians 2:20 (NIV) captures it perfectly:

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Christ lives in you. That is the power source.

Romans 12:11 (NIV) gives us the practical command:

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

Zeal means keep your speed and your edge—stay focused. Fervor means to boil, to be hot. The picture is something bubbling over. Don’t let your spiritual fire grow cold.

Spiritual Applications: How to Walk in the Power

1. **Daily Dependence** — Start each day surrendering to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to fill you fresh (Ephesians 5:18) and to strengthen you with power in your inner being (Ephesians 3:16).
 2. **Keep the Fire Hot** — Guard against complacency. Stay in the Word, in prayer, and in fellowship. When you feel the edge slipping, repent quickly and return to the Father like the Prodigal Son.
 3. **Use the Power Against Strongholds** — The *dynamis* power breaks chains. Bring your struggles, addictions, fears, and sins to the Spirit. He is able to shatter what has held you.
 4. **Bold Witness** — The same power that came at Pentecost is for you (Acts 1:8). Share Christ with courage. The Spirit will give you words and boldness.
 5. **Endure in Weakness** — When you feel weak, remember 2 Corinthians 12:9: God's power is perfected in weakness. The dynamite works best when we are humble and dependent.
 6. **Live the "Alive in Christ" Life** — Because Christ lives in you, you can live by faith, not by sight. You are not a prisoner—you are more than a conqueror through Him who loves you.
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Conclusion

The world and the enemy want to lock you in a dark prison and steal your joy, your edge, and your effectiveness. But Jesus has given you the dynamite power of the Holy Spirit—the same power that raised Him from the dead.

You do not have to drift. You do not have to grow cold. You can stay alive in Christ.

Choose today to walk in the power. Let the Holy Spirit fill you, teach you, remind you, and empower you. The Father is still running toward prodigals. The Spirit is still breaking chains. And the dynamite power of God is still at work in you.

Christ in you—the hope of glory. Christ in you—the power to stay alive.

Key Scriptures: Ephesians 1:15-19, John 14:15-17, Galatians 2:20, Romans 12:11, Luke 15:17-24

Sources: 1, 6-8

Protecting Ourselves from a Prodigal Experience

As Christians, we cannot afford to let our guard down. We must reject any casual attitude that says, "I'm saved, so nothing bad could ever happen in my life." Some of these very thoughts likely passed through the mind of the prodigal son. He lived in a prosperous home with a loving father and a secure inheritance—essentially with "the world by the tail." Yet something enticed his eyes and captured his imagination. He allowed his mind to wander toward what he imagined was greener grass on the other side. In the end, he left everything behind.

This is how the enemy still works. Satan dangles bait before our eyes and plants tempting thoughts in our minds, just as he did in the Garden of Eden with Eve. We must therefore be wise in the Lord's eyes, diligently guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The Spiritual "Death" of the Prodigal Son

In Jesus' parable (Luke 15:11–32), the father declares of his returning son, "this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24; see also v. 32). This "death" was not primarily physical but spiritual. It resulted from willful separation from the father through disobedience. The younger son demanded his inheritance early, left home, and squandered it in reckless living. He cut himself off from the source of his identity, provision, and blessing.

This mirrors the broader biblical teaching on spiritual death. Ephesians 2:1–5 describes it vividly:

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

The wages of sin is death—not merely physical death, but spiritual alienation from God (Romans 6:23). The prodigal’s story shows that this separation can happen even to those who once enjoyed close relationship with the Father. Yet the good news is that spiritual death can be reversed through genuine repentance and the Father’s welcoming grace.

Key Practices for Spiritual Protection

Scripture gives us clear, active steps to guard against drifting into a prodigal-like experience:

- **Recognize and live out your new identity in Christ.**

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness” (Romans 6:11–13).

This is not passive. Daily we must deliberately acknowledge who we now are in Christ and refuse to slide back into old patterns.

- **Guard against complacency and sin’s reign.**

The verses above (Romans 6:11–13) warn us that sin will try to regain control. We must actively present every part of ourselves—our eyes, minds, time, resources, and relationships—to God as instruments of righteousness.

- **Maintain active, ongoing faith in Jesus’ word.**

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (John 5:24–25).

Protection flows from continually hearing and believing Jesus, not from coasting on past decisions.

- **Cultivate genuine love for the body of Christ.**

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death” (1 John 3:14).

Isolation and broken relationships are major warning signs of spiritual drift. Loving community acts as a powerful safeguard.

Additional Scriptures for Protection

Here are other powerful passages to anchor our hearts and help us stay vigilant:

- **Guard your heart and mind.**

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

- **Stay alert to the enemy’s schemes.**

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

“Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:14–15).

• **Watch and pray; stand firm with humility.**

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:12–13).

• **Encourage one another daily.**

“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Hebrews 3:12–13).

“Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position” (2 Peter 3:17).

Spiritual Applications

1.Daily Heart Examination – Start each day asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart (Psalm 139:23–24). What are you allowing your eyes to dwell on? Where is your mind wandering?

2.Accountability and Community – Stay deeply connected in a local church family. Share struggles openly and receive encouragement before small compromises become major departures.

3.Renew Your Mind – Replace worldly “greener grass” thinking with God’s Word. Memorize and meditate on the protection scriptures above.

4.Repent Quickly – If you sense drift, run back to the Father like the prodigal. His arms are open. Restoration is always possible.

5.Live with Gratitude – Regularly thank God for your “inheritance” in Christ (Ephesians 1:3–14). A grateful heart is far less likely to wander.

The prodigal’s story is ultimately one of hope. No matter how far someone has wandered, the Father is watching and ready to run toward the returning child. But the wisest path is to never leave home in the first place. Guard your heart. Stay alert. Remain in the Father’s house.

Source: 1 & 9

Commentary, Spiritual Applications, and Theological Reflections

Romans 12:11 : “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul moves from the rich doctrinal foundation of God’s mercies—laid out in chapters 1–11—to the practical outworking of the Christian life. Believers are urged to present their bodies as living sacrifices and be transformed by the renewing of their minds (vv. 1–2). Verses 9–13 then detail how this renewed life manifests in relationships within the body of Christ, calling for genuine love, brotherly affection, and hospitality. At the center of this section stands Romans 12:11, a powerful charge against spiritual sluggishness and a summons to passionate, Spirit-empowered service.

“Never be lacking in zeal” (or “not lagging in diligence”) directly confronts any inclination toward laziness or half-hearted effort in the Lord’s work. Biblical history is filled with examples of godly zeal: from Phinehas’ decisive action that averted divine judgment (Numbers 25) to the prophets’ burning commitment against idolatry. Across the history of world religions, fervent devotion has taken many shapes—ascetic intensity in certain Eastern traditions, missionary zeal in Islamic expansion, or the disciplined piety of monastic orders—but Scripture uniquely anchors Christian zeal in humble, responsive obedience to the God of mercy rather than self-effort or external ritual.

The command to “keep your spiritual fervor” is especially graphic in the original Greek (*zeontes tō pneumati*), meaning to be “boiling” or “seething” in spirit. David Guzik captures it well: “Fervent in spirit could be translated, ‘with respect to the spirit, boiling.’” This is not manufactured emotionalism but a sustained inner heat kindled and maintained by the Holy Spirit. The Life Application Bible Commentary notes that the two phrases in verse 11 stand in contrast: believers must reject apathy and ensure their service is enthusiastic. Paul is not endorsing busyness for its own sake but the consistent exercise of spiritual gifts for the good of the body. Christians have been called, challenged, and equipped for this task (Romans 1:6–7; 12:1–2, 4–6). While fatigue is part of the rhythm of ministry, apathy has no place in the believer’s life. One must actively resist discouragement, depression, and negativity to keep the spiritual temperature elevated.

This boiling fervor finds its true purpose in “serving the Lord.” In the ancient world, religious service might involve temple rituals or civic cults, sometimes accompanied by ecstatic displays. Paul redirects all passion toward Christ-centered, everyday ministry—practical expressions of the genuine, self-sacrificial agape love described in verse 9. If believers are called to warm relations, good manners, and honoring one another (vv. 9–10), they are equally summoned to diligent labor. The church is no place for laziness.

Spiritual Reflections:

Romans 12:11 integrates powerfully with its context. Sincere love without hypocrisy must produce zealous action: abhorring evil, clinging to good, showing devoted brotherly affection, and pursuing hospitality with vigor (“love for strangers”). The Life Application Bible Commentary stresses that this agape love—poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5)—is the hallmark of spiritual health. It demands more than politeness; it requires time, resources, and personal involvement. No single believer can love an entire community, but the body of Christ can. Jesus’ own words in John 13:34–35 confirm that such love marks His disciples.

Zeal and fervor equip the church to rejoice in hope, endure tribulation with active steadfastness (as Leon Morris described), and persist in prayer. Practical care for the saints—distributing to needs and

offering hospitality—becomes the outflow of this inner fire. The strong language of “given” to hospitality implies pursuing others with intensity, mirroring the pursuit of good even amid difficulty (v. 14).

A sobering biblical counterpoint appears in Revelation 3:15–16, where the risen Christ confronts the church in Laodicea: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Laodicea’s water supply was famously tepid, contrasting with the hot springs of nearby Hierapolis or the cold, refreshing waters of Colossae. Their spiritual condition mirrored this—comfortable, self-sufficient, and nauseating to the Lord. In stark opposition to the “boiling” fervor of Romans 12:11, lukewarmness represents a dangerous middle ground: professing faith without passion, activity without zeal, and knowledge without transformative power. Church history repeatedly shows the peril of such complacency, from periods of institutional decline to individual lives marked by drift. Revelation’s warning underscores the urgency of Romans 12:11: the alternative to boiling spiritual fervor is not neutral coolness but rejection. Believers must therefore guard their inner fire, depending daily on the Holy Spirit who sustains zeal amid trials and routine.

In leadership, family discipleship, or community engagement, this verse challenges self-examination. Are we lagging in diligence, or is our spirit boiling with holy passion? Such fervor, rooted in God’s mercies and expressed in love, enables the body of Christ to function as a unified, impactful witness—overcoming evil with good and shining as lights in a dark world. It anticipates the day when the rejected stone becomes the cornerstone of all things, calling every believer to fervent service until Christ returns.

Sources: 10-11

Commentary and Spiritual Reflections on Galatians 2:20

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Few verses capture the breathtaking mystery and transformative power of the Christian life as profoundly as Galatians 2:20. In the context of Paul’s defense of justification by faith against legalistic influences in Galatia, this verse stands as a personal testimony and theological pinnacle. Paul articulates the believer’s radical identification with Christ’s death and resurrection, shifting from self-centered living to a surrendered existence where Christ Himself becomes the animating force. It is a declaration of breathless wonder: we no longer live “our” lives in isolation, but have yielded to the Author of life, who now lives His life in and through us.

At its core, Galatians 2:20 describes a profound union with Christ. From a New Testament perspective, this is far more than metaphor. Through faith and baptism, believers are joined with Christ in the most intimate relationship imaginable, sharing in His divine life and blessings. This union is received by faith, not achieved by human striving. Christ indwells His people, producing love in their hearts through the Holy Spirit. It is a moral and ethical union that supplies the dynamic power for obedient living—far beyond mere ethical example or self-improvement. As R. David Rightmire explains, being “in Christ” heightens individual qualities rather than erasing them, involving a communal, corporate mysticism where believers form the body of Christ, empowered by the Spirit to manifest His presence.

The phrase “I have been crucified with Christ” points to the decisive, once-for-all transaction of conversion. It echoes Romans 6, where identification with Christ’s death breaks sin’s dominion. While this crucifixion is a completed reality, daily cross-bearing remains—denying selfish desires and

following Jesus (Luke 9:23). The transfer of ownership is complete: believers no longer answer to the old self or enslaving sin but to the Redeemer who purchased them with His blood. This new identity reorients destiny, as “Christ lives in me” becomes the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). Just as a branch cannot bear fruit apart from the vine (John 15:4–5), neither can we apart from this vital union.

Paul’s theology here is richly Christocentric yet grounded in the Trinity: “God was in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19), and fellowship with Christ is fellowship with God. The Spirit mediates this presence, never acting apart from Christ. Faith serves as the indispensable response—self-abandonment to the Redeemer—while the union carries eschatological hope. Present communion, though real, yearns for fuller intimacy at Christ’s return (parousia). Thus, “in Christ” encompasses soteriology (salvation), pneumatology (the Spirit’s work), ecclesiology (the body of Christ), ethics (new humanity in the Second Adam), and eschatology (kingdom presence and future glory).

Spiritual Reflections: Galatians 2:20 invites deep personal surrender and daily dependence. In a world of self-actualization and autonomous individualism—echoed in various philosophical and religious traditions that emphasize human effort or absorption into the divine—Paul proclaims a different path: crucifixion of the old self and resurrection life through indwelling Christ. This is no passive mysticism but active faith-union that transforms character, relationships, and mission. The life we now live “in the body” is by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself. This love becomes the motive power for obedience, freeing us from legalism and performance.

Historically, this truth fueled the early church’s boldness amid persecution and has sparked revivals whenever believers reclaim the wonder of Christ living within. It counters any drift toward lukewarm Christianity. Just as Revelation 3:15–16 warns the Laodicean church against being neither hot nor cold—threatening to be spit out—so Galatians 2:20 calls us away from tepid self-reliance into boiling spiritual vitality. The same Christ who indwells us empowers fervent zeal (Romans 12:11), producing fruit that lasts.

For pastors, leaders, and everyday disciples, this verse reorients everything: ministry flows not from personal strength but from Christ’s life within. Challenges become opportunities to trust the indwelling Savior. Identity crises dissolve in the reality that “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” May we daily affirm this by faith, abiding in the Vine, manifesting His love corporately, and anticipating the fullness of union when faith becomes sight.

Sources: 12-13

Commentary and Spiritual Reflections on Ephesians 1:15-20

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 1:15-20 Commentary & Spiritual Reflections

Audience and Historical Setting

The letter was written to the churches in Ephesus and the surrounding region in the Roman province of Asia (Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey). Ephesus stood as a major political, commercial, and religious hub at the intersection of key overland routes and with access to the Aegean Sea via its harbor on the Cayster River. Once a thriving port known as “the Landing Place,” the city faced

economic challenges as the harbor silted up. Its prosperity increasingly relied on the massive temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—four times larger than the Parthenon, built entirely of marble, and drawing tourists and worshipers from across Asia. The city also featured a huge amphitheater seating over 25,000 and a stadium for athletic and gladiatorial events.

Paul began his ministry in Ephesus in the synagogue among the Jews (Acts 19:8), then moved to a lecture hall when opposed, teaching for two years so that “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10). The church grew with both Jewish and Gentile believers, eventually flourishing under leaders like Apollos (instructed by Priscilla and Aquila), Timothy, and later the apostle John. This was a remarkable community commended in Revelation 2 for its deeds, hard work, and perseverance—yet warned about losing its first love.

Most scholars view Ephesians as a circular (encyclical) letter intended for multiple churches in the region, not solely Ephesus. Early manuscripts omit “in Ephesus” in 1:1, allowing the destination to be personalized as the letter circulated. Its general tone—lacking specific personal greetings despite Paul’s three-year ministry there—supports this broader audience. The epistle likely traveled a route similar to the letters in Revelation 2–3, beginning in Ephesus and moving through other Asian churches. This makes its truths applicable to all believers across the church age, presenting God’s eternal purpose for the Church as the body of Christ.

Paul’s Prayer for the Believers (1:15–23)

Verses 15–23 form one long sentence in Greek, moving from thanksgiving (vv. 15–16) to intercession (vv. 17–19) to praise of God’s power (vv. 20–23). After celebrating the spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3–14), Paul turns to prayer for those chosen to receive them.

1:15–16 – Thanksgiving and Faithful Prayer

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.”

Paul thanks God for the believers’ faith (faithfulness exercised in the Lord Jesus) and their love for all the saints. Genuine faith in Christ naturally expresses itself in love for other believers. Though Paul knew the Ephesians intimately, he includes the wider circle of churches he had only “heard about.” His persistent prayer life models what it means to be a prayer warrior—remembering churches by name with thanksgiving and intercession (cf. Rom 1:9; Phil 1:3–4; Col 1:3–4; 1 Thess 1:2–3).

Life Application: Many Christians emphasize sound doctrine and preaching, yet neglect prayer. Truth without prayer is like a powerful engine without oil—it will eventually seize. Prayer unleashes the Holy Spirit’s strengthening, guiding, convicting, encouraging, and healing work. If your church depended on your prayers, how long would it thrive? When you tell someone “I’ll keep you in prayer,” follow through. Persistent, personal prayer keeps the body of Christ running strong.

1:17 – Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”

Paul addresses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the only One worthy of all glory—and requests the Holy Spirit’s gifts of wisdom (seeing life from God’s perspective) and revelation (enlightened insight into divine truth).

Life Application: Knowing about God through study is valuable, but truly knowing Him requires spending time with Him in relationship. There is no shortcut. Immerse yourself in the Gospels to see

Jesus' character and meet Him daily in prayer. Personal knowledge of Christ transforms everything. Ask the Spirit continually for wisdom and revelation so your walk with God deepens.

1:18–19 – Enlightened Hearts and Three Key Realities

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength.”

For the Jewish mind, the heart represented the core of personality—thought, will, and moral judgment. Paul prays for inner illumination (a continuous reality rooted in conversion) so believers grasp three truths:

1. The hope to which He has called you – Not vague optimism, but confident assurance based on God's promises, secured by the Holy Spirit. Believers have a secure future inheritance and present blessings because of God's past election.
2. The riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints – God's people are His treasured possession; in the end, He will claim them fully as His own forever.
3. His incomparably great power for us who believe – Here Paul stacks four Greek words to reveal the completeness of God's power:
 - **Dunamis** (δύναμις): Power, capability, explosive or miracle-working potential. This dynamic force (source of the English “dynamite”) is capable of producing mighty deeds and change. Seen in the gospel's saving power (Rom 1:16), the Spirit's empowering for witness (Acts 1:8), and resurrection (Rom 1:4). Life Application: God's power breaks into impossible situations with transformative effect—rely on it for miracles and bold living.
 - **Energeia** (ἐνέργεια): Working, active energy, effective operation (root of “energy”). This highlights ongoing, productive power at work. Seen in God's inner work producing obedience (Phil 2:13). Life Application: His power is never idle but continuously energizes growth, guidance, and fruitfulness—expect it in daily obedience.
 - **Kratos** (κράτος): Might, dominion, ruling or overcoming strength. This sovereign force overcomes resistance and exercises victory. Seen in calls to strength for battle (Eph 6:10) and God's eternal dominion. Life Application: God reigns over every enemy; this dominion empowers victorious living and spiritual warfare.
 - **Ischus** (ἰσχύς): Strength, inherent might, enduring force. This is raw vitality and stamina. Seen in commands to love God with all one's strength (Mk 12:30). Life Application: When human strength fails, God's enduring reservoir sustains perseverance and wholehearted devotion.

These four words together show God's power as all-encompassing: capable, active, sovereign, and inherently strong—available right now “for us who believe.”

1:20 – God's Power Displayed in Christ

“Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”

God exerted this power first in raising Christ (defeating death and assuring our future resurrection) and then in exalting Him to the place of supreme authority at the Father's right hand (a position of equality and honor, fulfilling Psalm 110:1). Christ's finished work and headship over the Church flow from this power.

Life Application: Because Christ is risen and exalted, we need not fear dictators, nations, death, or Satan. God has won the victory. His power is actively working for us, enabling us to live as His body under Christ's headship. Walk in resurrection power today—confident, hopeful, and strong in the Lord. Let the “eyes of your heart” be opened daily to these realities. Live in the light of your calling and sure hope. Remember you are part of God's glorious inheritance—precious to Him. Draw on His

multifaceted power to overcome weakness, obstacles, and evil forces. The Resurrection is not just past history; it is ongoing reality in the life of the Church.

Overall Spiritual Reflection

In the context of ancient Ephesus—with its pagan temples and displays of human/imperial power—Paul proclaims the superior, comprehensive power of God available to ordinary believers. This truth has encouraged the Church across centuries, calling every generation to know and experience God's power personally through prayer, faith, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Sources: 14- 15

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, (1) Logos Bible Commentaries; [1] Ephesians 1:15-23, [2] Galatians 2:20, [3] Romans 12:9-13, [4] Commentary on dynamis power drawn from Ephesians 1:18–23- Logos Bible, [5] Rev. Brad Standfest, [6] James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 258. [7] Clinton E. Arnold, “Power,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 940. [8] Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, in *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1067, [9] Adam Harwood, *Christian Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Systematic* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), 641. [10] Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1992. *Romans. Life Application Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. [11] Guzik, David. 2013. *Romans. David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible*. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik. (Enduring Word) [12] Rightmire, R. David. 1996. “Union with Christ.” In *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., 792. Baker Reference Library. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. [13] MaGee, Gregory S. *Studying Paul's Letters with the Mind and Heart*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2018. [14] Barton, Bruce B., and Philip Wesley Comfort. 1996. *Ephesians. Life Application Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. [15] New Testament Greek lexical insights drawn from standard biblical word studies consistent with the commentary tradition.

Sermon Notes:

Week 7 Series – The Sandals of Jesus “Alive in Christ Pt 2”

Happy Sunday everyone! All I can say is Praise God for A/C!

For those who may be listening from a year-round hot state... we are Michiganders. Let me put this in perspective for you: four months ago (literally March 15–17) we had a cold front that brought wind chills to minus 10–20 degrees. I'm totally fine if you call us wimps or sissies... give me my A/C! Thank You Jesus!

We are in a Summer Series titled: The Sandals of Jesus.

Quickly let me give you the AVC Connections: YouTube, App, Facebook / Website

[Let's Pray]

If you heard my sermon last week then you know the Holy Spirit changed things up on me. Last week I talked about Being Alive in Christ. This week is Part 2.

To kick things off and maybe to wake up some more, let's proclaim the Word of God out loud.

Repeat after me: **I AM... ALIVE IN CHRIST!**

Last week we dove into Ephesians Chapter 1. And we uncovered these truths:

- You are Blessed in Christ Jesus from the Heavenly Realms
- You were Chosen before the Creation of the World
- You have a Destiny... A Purpose & Plan to Fulfill
- You have Redemption of your sins through the blood of Christ
- You have a Supernatural Seal of the Holy Spirit on your Life

Several weeks ago I talked about the Story of the Prodigal Son (Lost Son). The short of it is... the Father gave his son his inheritance in advance before the Father died. The son squandered it all away with wild living.

I want to draw your attention to Jesus' words in this parable. (I paraphrased just a bit.)

Luke 15:17-24 "When the son came to his senses (he traveled back home) While the son was still a long way off the Father saw him and was filled with compassion and ran to him... hugged him and gave him a kiss. The Father said to the servants... Quick bring the best robe, ring, and sandals and put it on him. We are going to have a feast. For this son of mine was dead and is Alive again. He was lost but now he's found..."

Christians... if we are honest we can drift away like this son. All of our lives look a bit different... but life can make us lose our edge... our joy... we can become complacent... our spiritual fire can grow dim.

I think of the passage in **Romans 12:11**. It says: Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Zeal means... keep your speed & eagerness... stay focused.

Fervor means... to boil, to be hot... it pictures something bubbling over.

Friends... we must be on guard as this world will attempt to steal our joy in Jesus.

I want to take you back to the Church in Ephesus. But first listen to what they faced: I quote from Theologian Fredrick:

"The Christians in Ephesus faced relentless Cultural and Spiritual pressure from pervasive idolatry, imperial cults, and Roman Ideology that demanded allegiance to Ceaser and their gods- seeking to seduce, intimidate, and steal their exclusive faith in Jesus Christ." (Logos Bible Commentary)

Listen... we gotta stay "Alive in Christ" — don't be distracted.

Let's hop back into the Book of Ephesians and we are going to discover that there is Power in Christ that goes along with Being Alive in Him.

Read Ephesians 1:15-19a (Read in Bible)

- Spirit of Wisdom – God given Insight & Skill to live
- Revelation – Pulling back the veil so there is no darkness hiding
- Heart Enlightened – Let Christ illuminate your life

As if all of Chapter 1 was not good enough... Apostle Paul brings out the Dynamite Christians have to keep us Alive in Christ. Scripture says in v. 18 & 19: "... That you may know the hope to which he has called you, the richness of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparable great power for us who believe."

[Short Story]

In the 19th Century a Swedish Chemist named Alfred Nobel mixed two very dangerous chemicals

together that made things blow up. He called this invention Dynamite (from the Greek Word Dunamis).

Guess what... the word Power which Paul uses is Dunamis (Dynamite) Power.

This is so good I have to put it on the screen... Level 1 of Dynamite:

Dynamis (Power) – Is Inherent Power. This is not just raw force or potential energy; but active, effective, miracle-working strength that accomplishes God's purposes. Same word in the N.T. for Miracles, and the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Ready for Level 2...

Dynamis Power is capable of breaking through the hardness of heart, shattering strongholds... and bringing life where there is death.

Christians we must use the Power Christ Gives us in Him to stay Alive in Christ.

I conclude with God's Word... This will make so much more sense to you now:

Galatians 2:20a I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Devotional Questions:

These questions are crafted directly from the sermon's main texts (Ephesians 1, Luke 15, Romans 12:11, Galatians 2:20) and key illustrations.

1.Returning to the Father (Luke 15:17-24)

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father runs to his wayward child while he is "still a long way off," restores him with robe, ring, and sandals, and declares, "this son of mine was dead and is alive again." When have you felt spiritually "dead" or distant like the son? What steps can you take this week to "come to your senses" and experience the Father's compassionate embrace?

2.Identity in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-14)

Paul reminds believers they are blessed, chosen before creation, destined for a purpose, redeemed by Christ's blood, and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Which of these truths from Ephesians 1 resonates most deeply with you right now, and why? How does remembering your identity as "alive in Christ" change how you view your current circumstances?

3.Maintaining Spiritual Fervor (Romans 12:11)

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." The sermon describes zeal as staying focused with speed and eagerness, and fervor as something "bubbling over" like boiling. On a scale of 1–10, how is your spiritual fire burning today? What practical habits (prayer, Scripture, community) help you guard against complacency or the world stealing your joy?

4.Facing Cultural Pressure (Ephesians & Ephesus Context)

The church in Ephesus faced idolatry, imperial cults, and demands for allegiance to Caesar—pressures meant to seduce or intimidate (as noted by theologian Frederick J.). In what ways do modern cultural or spiritual pressures try to pull you away from exclusive faith in Jesus? How does being "alive in Christ" give you strength to stand firm?

5.The Power of Revelation and Enlightened Hearts (Ephesians 1:15-19)

Paul prays for the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" so that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened to know the hope of our calling, the riches of His inheritance, and God's "incomparable great power" for those who believe. What area of your life feels veiled in darkness right now? Pray Paul's prayer over it—how might Christ's illumination bring clarity and hope?

6.Dunamis (Dynamite) Power (Ephesians 1:19)

The Greek word for power (*dunamis*) is explosive, miracle-working strength—the same power behind New Testament miracles and the Holy Spirit's activity. It breaks through hard hearts and brings life where there is death. Share a time when you experienced God's *dunamis* power breaking a stronghold or reviving something dead in your life. How can you rely on this power more intentionally?

7.Crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." How does this verse connect to the Prodigal Son's restoration and to staying "alive in Christ"? What does it look like practically for you to let Christ live through you instead of relying on your own strength?

8.The Gift of Sandals in Restoration

In the parable, the father places new sandals on the returning son's feet—symbolizing full restoration and readiness to walk again in the Father's house. Reflecting on the "Sandals of Jesus" series, how does wearing the sandals of the restored, alive-in-Christ believer change your daily walk? Where is Jesus inviting you to walk this week?

9.Hope, Inheritance, and Power (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Paul highlights three interconnected realities: the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His great power for believers. Which of these three encourages you most amid summer distractions or life's pressures? How can meditating on all three keep your spiritual fervor "bubbling over"?

10.Living Alive in Christ Daily (Synthesis Question)

Drawing from the entire sermon—identity in Ephesians 1, the Prodigal's return, Romans 12:11 zeal, *dunamis* power, and Galatians 2:20—craft a short personal declaration (like "I AM ALIVE IN CHRIST") that you will proclaim this week. How will you use the Holy Spirit's wisdom, revelation, and power to stay alive in Christ rather than drifting into complacency?