

A Christ-Centred Church with a Heart of Compassion

Message Date: 24/05/2026 Lighthouse Meeting Date: 26/05/2026	Message Title: Wholehearted Devotion to God and Genuine Fellowship in the Body of Christ Minister: Pastor Chuka Nwafor
Key Texts: Psalm 92:13, Isaiah 37:31, Deuteronomy 6:4–5, Matthew 6:24, Luke 14:25–27, Genesis 3:17, Exodus 20:3–5, 1 John 5:21, Luke 17:34–35, Ezekiel 14:12–20, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Acts 9:1–5, 1 Timothy 1:13, Matthew 25:31–40, 1 John 1:3, 1 John 4:11–12, Romans 12:10, Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Peter 5:14, 1 Corinthians 13:4–7, Isaiah 11:6–9, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:23, Hebrews 12:29, John 9:25, Psalm 55:12–14.	Sub Text:
<i>Please read the entire document and Bible texts before you begin to discuss and answer the related questions. This will help you grasp the overall context of the message, however, remember the Bible is not a discussion book but a decision book. God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions.</i> <u>INTRODUCTION:</u> I. From the beginning of scripture, God establishes a divine principle that remains eternal and uncompromising: His rightful place in the life of man is exclusive, supreme, and without rival. The Lord declares, “I am the Lord; that is My name! And My glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 42:8, AMPC), revealing that He will never share His throne with idols, ambitions, relationships, or divided affections. II. Long before the prophets proclaimed His word and before the Church emerged through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God embedded this truth within the covenant identity of His people: <i>“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord [the only Lord]. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being and with all your might”</i> (Deuteronomy 6:4–5, AMPC). This is not merely a call to religious observance, but a summons to absolute devotion, a life fully yielded to God without fragmentation, compromise, or divided allegiance. iii. At the heart of this message are two inseparable realities that define authentic Christianity: 1) God must remain preeminent in every dimension of life, because spiritual instability begins wherever loyalty becomes divided; as Scripture warns, <i>“a man of two minds [hesitating, dubious, irresolute] is unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything”</i> (James 1:8, AMPC). 2) The Church is not simply an organisation, gathering, or social institution, but <i>“the body of Christ (the Messiah) and individually you are members of it”</i> (1 Corinthians 12:27, AMPC). Consequently, our treatment of fellow believers becomes a direct reflection of our treatment of Christ Himself. This truth is powerfully unveiled in the encounter between Jesus and Saul on the Damascus road, where the Lord asked, <i>“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”</i> (Acts 9:4–5, AMPC), demonstrating that what is done to His people is done unto Him personally. iv. The teaching therefore exposes the danger of divided loyalty, for <i>“no one can serve two masters”</i> (Matthew 6:24, AMPC), while simultaneously revealing the beauty and strength of a life wholly surrendered to God -	

a life deeply rooted; spiritually planted; and abundantly fruitful, for those *"planted in the house of the Lord... shall flourish in the courts of our God"* (**Psalms 92:13, AMPC**).

- v. Further, this message restores the biblical understanding that Christianity is not an isolated private experience, but a shared spiritual fellowship expressed through covenant relationships within the Body of Christ. As the Apostle John writes, *"this fellowship that we have [which is a distinguishing mark of Christians] is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ the Messiah"* (**1 John 1:3, AMPC**).
- vi. Believers are therefore called to be spiritually planted, accountable, and fruitful in God's house to *"take root downward and bear fruit upward"* (**Isaiah 37:31, AMPC**); to love Christ above every earthly attachment, as Jesus declared, *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his [own] father and mother... he cannot be My disciple"* (**Luke 14:26, AMPC** to honour one another with sincere love and humility, *"giving precedence and showing honour to one another"* (**Romans 12:10, AMPC**); and to walk in genuine unity through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit until the prophetic vision of God's peaceable Kingdom becomes evident among His people: *"the wolf shall dwell with the lamb... they shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain"* (**Isaiah 11:6-9, AMPC**).
- vii. Ultimately, this message confronts every believer with a searching and unavoidable question: Am I truly planted in God, or merely present around spiritual things? It calls us to settle the issue of allegiance once and for all, recognising that true spiritual maturity, lasting fruitfulness, and authentic Christian fellowship can only flourish when God occupies the undisputed centre of the heart.

(1) KEY 1: THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST, HOW WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER IS HOW WE TREAT JESUS

- I. On the road to Damascus, the risen Christ did not ask the persecuting Saul, "Why are you troubling My followers?" Instead, He asked, *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is dangerous and it will turn out badly for you to keep kicking against the goad [to offer vain and perilous resistance]"* (**Acts 9:4-5, AMPC**).
- II. That single word "Me" transforms the entire understanding of Christian fellowship and responsibility. The Church is not merely an organisation, denomination, or gathering of like-minded individuals; it is, as the Apostle Paul declares, *"the body of Christ (the Messiah) and individually you are members of it"* (**1 Corinthians 12:27, AMPC**), with Christ Himself as *"the Head of the body, the church"* (**Colossians 1:18, AMPC**).
- III. The Head and the Body are inseparably joined. Consequently, every act of love, honour, compassion, encouragement, or service shown toward a fellow believer is ultimately directed toward Christ Himself, and equally, every act of contempt, neglect, division, bitterness, or betrayal is experienced personally by Him.
- IV. Jesus reinforced this truth with unmistakable clarity when He declared, *"And the King will reply to them, Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least [in the estimation of men] of these My brethren, you did it for Me"* (**Matthew 25:40, AMPC**).
- V. The Apostle John then draws the unavoidable spiritual conclusion: *"Beloved, if God loved us so [very much], we also ought to love one another... if we love one another, God abides (lives and remains) in us and His love... is completed and perfected in us"* (**1 John 4:11-12, AMPC**). He further reveals that our fellowship with one another is, in reality, fellowship *"with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ the Messiah"* (**1 John 1:3, AMPC**).
- VI. For this reason, Paul exhorts believers to *"Love one another with brotherly affection [as members of one family], giving precedence and showing honour to one another"* (**Romans 12:10, AMPC**). The standard of Christian

relationship is therefore far greater than mere human civility or social kindness; it is the manifestation of Christlikeness itself.

- VII. Every interaction within the Body of Christ carries eternal significance, because the true audience behind every conversation, attitude, and action is not merely the person standing before us, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Scripture: *"And the King will reply to them, Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least [in the estimation of men] of these My brethren, you did it for Me" (Matthew 25:40, AMPC)*

Digging Deep/Life Application: *The next time you feel frustration or tension toward a fellow believer, pause and deliberately reframe how you see them, they are a member of the Body of Christ, and how you treat them is precisely how you are treating Jesus Himself.*

(2) KEY 2: HONOUR AND TRUST WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- I. Four times throughout the writings of Paul and Peter, the early Church is instructed to *"greet one another with a holy (consecrated) kiss" (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12, AMPC)*, and again, *"greet one another with a kiss of love [the symbol of mutual affection]. Peace be to all of you who are in Christ Jesus" (1 Peter 5:14, AMPC)*.
- II. The repetition is deliberate and deeply significant.
- III. In the biblical culture of the first century, a kiss was not a casual social gesture; it was a covenant expression of affection, honour, trust, and relational closeness, reserved for those bound together in genuine fellowship and mutual commitment. This is what made Judas' betrayal so horrifying. The tragedy was not merely that he betrayed Christ, but that he used the language of intimacy as the instrument of treachery. He weaponised the very symbol of trust in order to deliver the One he outwardly appeared to honour.
- IV. The lesson is sobering: closeness without sincerity becomes hypocrisy, and outward expressions of affection without inward faithfulness become spiritual deception.
- V. The Church, therefore, is called to something far deeper than superficial politeness or religious cordiality. Believers are summoned into a Spirit-formed community marked by authentic love, mutual honour, and covenantal trust, a fellowship where love, as Scripture declares, *"bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]" (1 Corinthians 13:7, AMPC)*.
- VI. This is not naïve trust rooted in human perfection; rather, it is a deliberate spiritual posture that chooses to honour the Christ at work within fellow believers.
- VII. Paul establishes the foundation of this Kingdom culture with unmistakable clarity: *"Do nothing from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends]... but in the true spirit of humility (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself... let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3–4, AMPC)*.
- VIII. Honour, therefore, is not merely a matter of personality, upbringing, or cultural etiquette; it is a spiritual discipline produced by humility and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Within the Body of Christ, trust is not optional,

nor is genuine brotherly affection an accessory to Christian life. It is evidence of spiritual maturity and a visible manifestation of the indwelling Spirit of God. This is why believers are commanded to be “*kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another [readily and freely], as God in Christ forgave you*” (**Ephesians 4:32, AMPC**), and to “*continue to love each other as brothers*” (**Hebrews 13:1, AMPC**).

- IX. A Church devoid of honour and trust may preserve outward structure, but it cannot fully reflect the nature and character of Christ.

Scripture: “*Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]*” (**1 Corinthians 13:7, AMPC**)

Digging Deep/Life Application: Choose this week to extend deliberate, active honour toward someone in your church family whom you have been treating with guardedness or distance — not because they have earned it, but because Christ lives within them and that alone makes them worthy of it.

(3) Key 3: LOVE IS THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF CHRISTIANS

- I. In the upper room, on the night of His betrayal, Jesus did not say that the world would recognise His disciples by the size of their gatherings, the brilliance of their theology, the beauty of their buildings, or the sophistication of their programmes; instead, He declared, “*By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves]*” (**John 13:35, AMPC**).
- II. Love is therefore not merely one Christian virtue among many, but the defining evidence of authentic discipleship and the visible signature of Christ upon His people.
- III. John establishes the foundation of this truth with profound clarity: “*Beloved, if God loved us so [very much], we also ought to love one another*” (**1 John 4:11, AMPC**). The believer’s capacity to love does not originate in human emotion or natural temperament, but in the transforming experience of having first received the love of God.
- IV. Paul then describes the nature of this love in deeply practical terms: “*Love endures long and is patient and kind... it is not self-seeking, it is not touchy or fretful or resentful... Love bears up under anything and everything that comes... and it endures everything [without weakening]*” (**1 Corinthians 13:4–7, AMPC**). Such love is not fragile sentimentality driven by changing emotions or favourable circumstances; it is a steadfast spiritual posture produced and sustained by the indwelling Holy Spirit, for “*the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love*” (**Galatians 5:22, AMPC**).
- V. Paul further declares that “*love is the fulfilling of the Law*” (**Romans 13:10, AMPC**), revealing that every commandment and moral responsibility given to the believer ultimately finds its completion in genuine love.
- VI. The credibility of the Church, therefore, is not ultimately established by eloquent preaching, public influence, or organisational excellence, but by the tangible reality of Christlike love manifested among believers; for where true love abides, Scripture affirms that “*God abides and lives in us*” (**1 John 4:12, AMPC**).

Scripture: **Acts 20:24**, “*By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves]*” (**John 13:35, AMPC**)

Digging Deep/Life Application: Identify one specific, practical expression of love you have been withholding — whether forgiveness overdue, encouragement absent, or service postponed — and give it this week not as a feeling, but as a deliberate, Spirit-led act of obedience.

(4) KEY 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES TRUE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

- I. Everything described in this outline:
- wholehearted devotion to God
 - sacrificial love that places others above self
 - honour freely extended
 - trust genuinely cultivated
 - a community in which former enemies dwell together in peace

is, by every human standard, impossible.

- II. These realities cannot be manufactured through good intentions, sustained by personal discipline, or produced merely through religious structure or church culture.
- III. The prophet Isaiah foresaw the kind of supernatural community God intended to create when he declared that *“the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid... and a little child shall lead them”* (**Isaiah 11:6, AMPC**), portraying a divine order in which natural hostility, fear, and division are overcome by the transforming power of God.
- IV. This vision finds its fulfilment in the Church of Jesus Christ when believers walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. John explains that Christian fellowship is not merely social interaction or human companionship, but participation in divine life itself *“fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ the Messiah”* (**1 John 1:3, AMPC**), and only the Holy Spirit can bring fallen human beings into that sacred communion and sustain them within it.
- V. Paul therefore exhorts believers to be *“eager and strenuous to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace”* (**Ephesians 4:3, AMPC**), emphasising that true unity is not organisational uniformity, but a spiritual reality created and maintained by God Himself.
- VI. The Psalmist likewise recognised the extraordinary power of Spirit-produced unity, declaring that where brethren dwell together in genuine harmony, *“the Lord has commanded the blessing, even life forevermore”* (**Psalms 133:3, AMPC**). The early Church in **Acts 2:42–47** stands as a living demonstration of this truth: when the Holy Spirit moved among believers, they devoted themselves to fellowship, shared their lives and possessions, broke bread together with sincerity of heart, and *“the Lord kept adding [to their number] daily those who were being saved”* (**Acts 2:47, AMPC**).
- VII. Without the Holy Spirit, these truths remain lofty ideals beyond human reach; with Him, they become the living, daily expression of the Body of Christ upon the earth.

Scripture: *“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but ever be filled and stimulated with the [Holy] Spirit”* (**Ephesians 5:18, AMPC**)

Digging Deep/Life Application: Make a daily, deliberate practice of yielding to the Holy Spirit before you engage with people asking Him specifically to govern your tongue, your reactions, and your attitudes because the unity and love cannot be manufactured by effort alone, only produced by His presence.

(5) CONCLUDING REMARKS: PROMISES OF GOD FROM THE OUTLINE

- I. The unifying thread woven throughout this message is the call to singular devotion "one God, one allegiance, one Body, and one Lord" summoning every believer back to the foundation upon which true fruitfulness and authentic fellowship are built.
- II. From Genesis to Revelation, God has never spoken ambiguously concerning His rightful place in the life of His people: *"I am the Lord; that is My name! And My glory I will not give to another"* (**Isaiah 42:8, AMPC**).
- III. From the thunder of Sinai to the intimacy of the upper room, His command has remained unchanged: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being and with all your might"* (**Deuteronomy 6:5, AMPC**). This is not a call to partial obedience, seasonal commitment, or divided affection, but to complete, undistracted, and uncompromising devotion.
- IV. Scripture describes Him as *"a jealous God"* (**Exodus 20:5, AMPC**), not because of insecurity, but because He alone is worthy to occupy the throne of the human heart, and only when He is enthroned there can every other relationship function in its proper order.
- V. The Church, therefore, is far more than an institution, an event, or a collection of like-minded individuals; it is *"the body of Christ"* (**1 Corinthians 12:27, AMPC**), the visible expression of Jesus Christ upon the earth, with Christ Himself as *"the Head of [His] body, the church"* (**Colossians 1:18, AMPC**).
- VI. Thereupon, every act of love, honour, forgiveness, encouragement, and service directed toward fellow believers becomes an act directed toward Christ Himself, *for "whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for Me"* (**Matthew 25:40, AMPC**).
- VII. John therefore concludes with unavoidable clarity: *"If God loved us so [very much], we also ought to love one another... if we love one another, God abides and lives in us and His love... is completed and perfected in us"* (**1 John 4:11–12, AMPC**), while Paul commands believers to cultivate the practical outworking of that love by *"giving precedence and showing honour to one another"* (**Romans 12:10, AMPC**).
- VIII. Yet none of these realities "not wholehearted devotion, sacrificial love, enduring unity, radical trust, or genuine fellowship" can be produced through human determination alone. They are the evidence of the Holy Spirit actively at work among God's people, fulfilling Isaiah's prophetic vision where *"the wolf shall dwell with the lamb... and a little child shall lead them"* (**Isaiah 11:6, AMPC**).
- IX. A fruitful Christian life begins the moment God is restored to His rightful place at the centre. Self is surrendered, love becomes the governing law, and the Holy Spirit is given full authority over every dimension of life and relationship.
- X. For *"the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control"* (**Galatians 5:22–23, AMPC**), and wherever He reigns, the Church becomes what it was always intended to be: *"the fullness of Him Who fills all in all"* (**Ephesians 1:23, AMPC**).
- XI. Every believer must therefore settle this matter personally, decisively, and permanently not because God merely seeks first place among many competitors, but because He alone is worthy of absolute supremacy, and only under His rule do life, relationships, purpose, and fellowship find their truest order, deepest peace, and fullest expression.

XII. May our lives continually reflect the love we have first received from Him.

Amen.

(6) PRAYERS: PRAYER POINTS OF GOD FROM THE MESSAGE

1. Surrendering First Place to God

Lord, I surrender every competing affection, ambition, and loyalty before You today. I declare that You alone are the Alpha and Omega of my life, first in my time, my gifts, my resources, my decisions, and every relationship I hold dear. Teach me to live with wholehearted devotion, not merely in words, but through daily obedience, genuine surrender, and unwavering allegiance to Your will.

Deuteronomy 6:5 · Matthew 22:37

2. For Spiritual Rootedness in God's House

Father, establish me firmly in Your house and deliver me from instability, inconsistency, and divided commitment. Cause me to be spiritually planted, deeply rooted, accountable, and fruitful within the community You have called me to. Remove every wandering and double-minded tendency that hinders maturity, faithfulness, and lasting spiritual fruit.

Psalms 92:13 · Isaiah 37:31

3. For Personal Assurance of Salvation

Lord Jesus, let my walk with You be personal, genuine, and deeply rooted in truth. Preserve me from living on borrowed convictions or relying upon the faith of others. Teach me to stand before You with a sincere heart, clothed in Your righteousness alone, fully assured in my relationship with You and steadfast in my obedience to Your Word.

Ezekiel 14:14 · Romans 14:12 · Philippians 2:12

4. For Loved Ones to Encounter Christ Personally

Father, I lift before You every member of my family, every friend, and every loved one who has not yet come into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Reveal Yourself to them personally and powerfully. Let their hearts be awakened to the truth of the Gospel and let my life become a faithful witness that points them toward You. May they come to know You for themselves and walk in the reality of salvation.

Acts 16:31 · Romans 10:1

5. For Grace to See Christ in Fellow Believers

Lord, open my eyes to recognise Your presence within Your people. Forgive me for every careless word, dismissive attitude, or act of dishonour shown toward others within the Body of Christ. Fill my heart with humility, compassion, reverence, and genuine love, so that I may treat every believer with the honour due to those who belong to You.

Matthew 25:40 · Acts 9:5 · 1 John 4:11–12

6. For the Holy Spirit to Build Authentic Christian Fellowship

Holy Spirit, we acknowledge that true unity, love, honour, and trust cannot be produced through human effort alone. Come and fill Your Church afresh. Knit our hearts together in sincerity, purity, and peace. Remove division, suspicion, pride, and selfishness from among us, and make our fellowship a living testimony of the nature and character of Jesus Christ upon the earth.

Isaiah 11:6–9 · 1 John 1:3 · Romans 5:5

Closing Prayer: Lord, teach me to live from the endless supply of Your love and grace. Let my worship be alive, my service joyful, my heart pure, and my relationships healthy and Christlike. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

**POINTS
TO
PONDER**

What did you hear?

What point in this message was most impactful for you?

What do you think?

How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?

What will you do?

How will you put into practice what you have learned today?

Please note that the Bible is not a discussion book but a decision book.

God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions.

This is the most important part of tonight's meeting The Holy Spirit awaits your decisions.

From this day forth:

(1) I will....

(2) I can.....

(3) I must.....

General Prayer points:

- ✚ Prayer regarding Lessons learnt today
- ✚ Pray for special needs of LightHouse Care Group Members
- ✚ Pray for your Pastors, Leaders and Workers in God's vineyard
- ✚ Pray for increase and the ability to reach your neighbours and winning of new Disciples for Christ through the Lighthouse Fellowship

Seven things we must seek whenever we come to the presence of God - Lighthouse Meeting:

- (1) The knowledge of God, Jesus Christ & the Holy Spirit through the Word.
- (2) Is there any sin, transgression or iniquity (habit/attitude/ mind-set or behaviour) that needs to be repented of, confessed and forsaken?
- (3) Is there any promise to be claimed, any inheritance to be possessed?
- (4) Is there any instruction to be obeyed, direction to be received, and guidance to be followed?
- (5) Is there any example to be followed/emulated or any example to be weary of and discontinued?
- (6) Is there any battle against the enemy to be fought and won?
- (7) Is there any relationship that needs to be healed and restored, or any that needs to be terminated and separated from?

For further information please contact the admin office or visit (admin@rccg-iccuk.org / 07514 011221)