

**One in Christ:
United to each other**

Fourth talk:

**Do not do ill to one another
(Please can we change the subject?)**

The law of God

- **If each of an octopus' tentacles is 'autonomous', it will tear itself apart.**
- **A Brief History of Sin: *Christianity is not an individualistic religion, though it is deeply concerned for individuals... its spiritual teachings locate the well-being of the individual within the well-being of the whole people of God. Paul longs for the new Christian communities he is founding to be harmonious communities, filled with the Holy Spirit, and not a rabble torn apart by rivalry or dissent.***

Five modern myths

- **The myth of freedom without belonging**
- **The myth of rights without responsibilities**
- **The myth that opinions are facts**
- **The myth of us versus them**
- **The myth of free love (Jonestown 1978, Mexico 2022
Lev Tahor – ‘pure of heart’)**
- **The scriptures refute them all!**

The texts

Let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling-block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. [Romans 14.13]

If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. [Galatians 5.15]

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. [Galatians 5.26]

The texts [continued]

- **Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. [Colossians 3.9]**
- **Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. [James 4.11]**
- **Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! [James 5.9]**

The consequences of spiritual autonomy

- **God's displeasure**
 - The grief of God
 - The cross
 - Judgement
 - *The Great Divorce*

The consequences of spiritual autonomy

- **My dis-ease**
 - **Status-seeking**
 - **Self-deception**
 - **The 'if-only' fallacy**
 - **Despair at my failure**

The consequences of spiritual autonomy

- **The church's downfall**
 - **Torn apart**
 - **Self-deluded bubbles of like-minded people (2 Baptist stories)**
 - **Conforming with the local culture, or**
 - **Not mixing with the church on the other side of the tracks**
 - **The staining of the marks of the church**
 - **Worship – thrills and spills (The Church of the Holy Novelty)**
 - **Mission – resounding gongs and clanging cymbals**
 - **Service – or,**
 - **Possibly, the world's destruction, for the fourth D**