



A  
FINAL CHARGE  
TO THE CHURCH

PASTOR ADRIAN ROGERS'  
LAST WORDS FROM THE PULPIT

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FROM THE MESSAGES  
ADRIAN ROGERS



## **A Final Charge to the Church**

From the Messages of Adrian Rogers

Published by Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.  
Memphis, Tennessee

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Printed in the United States of America  
July 2024

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# INTRODUCTION

## A FINAL CHARGE TO THE CHURCH

Pastor Adrian Rogers, one of the most recognized and trusted voices of his generation, was known for preaching timeless truths straight from the Word of God. Prior to his retirement, he introduced his final message series with the following words:

***“I’m beginning a series of messages that I’m going to be preaching, God willing, all this month and next month, that is going to be a distillation of things that I want you to remember—things that I have tried to teach you for more than 32 blessed years.”***

The messages were delivered in 2005 to the congregation of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, but the content is as relevant today as it was then and is applicable to all churches seeking to live by the Gospel of Jesus Christ—because, of course, the teaching comes directly from Scripture.

Love Worth Finding, the ministry Pastor Rogers founded to share God’s love, is privileged to bring you in this book the content derived directly from transcripts of these messages. Some references applicable only to Pastor Rogers’ specific

church have been edited so that you, the reader, can digest the material personally and apply it to your own church. Our prayer is that every church, and the Church as a whole, would embrace the characteristics fleshed out in Pastor Rogers' final charge to his church, because these are the characteristics God's Word defines.

May our churches become more unified, steadfast, Spirit-filled, prayerful, worshipful, Bible-centered, and caring. And may we go forward together to conquer new ground for Jesus Christ.

# A UNIFIED CHURCH

want to tell you a story about a man who was shipwrecked. He was on a desert island, and he was there all alone. He had to forage for himself.

Finally, after years, someone came to rescue him.

He had taken care of things pretty well. He had built a nice house, almost a mansion. Next to the house he had constructed a church, and he even put a steeple on top of it. Next to that was another magnificent building.

Those who came to rescue him said, “What is that big place there?”

He said, “That’s my house, where I live.”

“What is that next door? It looks like a church.”

He said, “It is. I built myself a church.”

They said, “Well, what is that other building?”

“Oh,” he said, “that’s another church. I had an argument in the old one and moved my membership.”

So many times, the problem is on the inside, is it not?

My prayer for our churches is that we will continue to be a unified Church.

I want you to look at a particular passage of Scripture, where Paul says we are to be “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). Is that not a beautiful concept? This is the desire of God for His Church: that we have

the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. The Bible says God hates “one who sows discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:19b).

***Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalm 133:1)!***

We do not produce this unity. It is called the unity of the Spirit. But while we do not produce it, we are to preserve it.

This unity is based on three basic concepts.

## **THE GROUND OF OUR UNITY**

The ground of our unity is truth.

There are seven basic truths found in Ephesians 4 that hold up the entire spiritual enterprise of the Church. No one can call himself a Bible-believing Christian who does not believe these seven basic truths, which are the foundation of our unity.

***There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4-6).***

Do not let anybody tell you that doctrine does not matter. If our churches cease to hold these great truths, they will lose their unity.

### **WHAT DO I MEAN BY UNITY?**

By unity, I do not mean unison. Unison may be all right if you are in the choir, but not everybody in a church has to sing the



same note...that would be boring. We can sing in harmony without singing in unison.

I am not talking about uniformity. We do not have to be congregations of clones. We do not all have to look and dress alike. Uniformity comes from without; unity comes from within.

Even union and unity are not necessarily the same. You can be in the same church and not be in unity. You can take two tom cats, tie their tails together, and hang them over a clothesline—you will have union, but you will not have unity!

So, what do we mean by unity? Unity is doctrinal, and it is spiritual.

Let's think about these seven truths that are foundational to unity. Churches, I want you to get a bulldog grip on these truths.

## **SEVEN FOUNDATIONS FOR UNITY**

### **ONE BODY**

***There is one body... (Ephesians 4:4a).***

That one body is the Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It does not say “one congregation.” The body of Christ is bigger than your home church.

The Church is not a corporation with Jesus as the president; the Church is a body with Jesus as the Head. That is all the difference in the world.

The Church is not one denomination. Somebody asked me, “Are you one of those narrow-minded Baptists who think only

Baptists are going to Heaven?” I am more narrow-minded than that; I think a lot of Baptists are not going to make it. But whether you are a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, etc., if you have given your heart to Jesus Christ, if you have been twice-born, you are a part of the mystical body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There is a local expression of that body. The Bible speaks of the Church here and the Church there, because not only is there that great *universal* Church, but there is also that *local* New Testament body. Every twice-born person ought to be a member of a local New Testament congregation. That is the plan of God.

A man once came to a minister of music and said, “I’d like to sing in your choir.”

The minister said, “Are you a member of this church?”

He said, “No, sir.”

“Well, what church are you a member of?”

He said, “I’m a member of the invisible church.”

The minister said, “I have a suggestion for you: you sing in the invisible choir.”

A church is a unified body, *here*, with pastor and deacons and servants, and you need to be a part of that body.

There is one Church. That brings unity. And if you are a dis-unified person, if you sow discord in the Church, one: you dishonor the Head, who is Jesus; two, you wound and mutilate yourself—because we are members of the same body.

## **ONE SPIRIT**

***There is one body and one Spirit... (Ephesians 4:4a).***

Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit, who is the substance of our life, the secret of our strength, and the source of our

unity. The Holy Spirit is the one who binds us together, who tells us we belong one to another.

No Christian knows every other Christian's name. No one does, except God. But we know the one dear Holy Spirit who dwells in each of us, and that is the source of our unity. Sometimes people cannot understand it: how can the Church be so big and yet have a spirit of unity? Because the Holy Spirit that is in me is in you. God's Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God and that we belong to one another.

I once sat down in an airplane. A man sat down beside me. I made up my mind that I was going to witness to him, so I turned to him and raised the subject of spiritual things.

"Oh," he said. "You're a believer, aren't you?"

I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "So am I. Mister, I want to tell you something strange: I felt your spirit when I sat down beside you. Something in me said, 'He's one of us. He is a believer.'"

## **ONE HOPE**

***There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling... (Ephesians 4:4).***

What is that one hope? It is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The Bible refers to "the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). All true believers in Christ are waiting for Jesus Christ to come again. You cannot call yourself a Bible-believing Christian if you do not believe in this one hope, the Second Coming of our Lord.

People have different views of the Second Coming of Jesus. They have technical terms—amillennial, premillennial,

**“A Final Charge to the Church”** is based on the final series of messages Pastor Rogers preached before retiring in 2005. Pastor Rogers wanted to prepare the congregation for the future. In doing so, he provided a biblically sound blueprint that applies to all Christians on topics including unity among believers, the power of the Holy Spirit to change lives, faithfulness to God’s Word, kingdom authority given to believers in Jesus Christ, and much more. The book is a great read for all believers who want to become better prepared, as the bride of Christ, to be radiant, pure, and faithful to Jesus, the living Word of God.



In today’s fast-paced, self-focused world, it’s difficult to find quality biblical teaching, let alone teaching that simplifies profound truth so it can be applied to everyday lives. At **LOVE WORTH FINDING**, we understand that struggle and seek to help Christians grow deeper in their faith through the timeless teachings of pastor, teacher, and author **ADRIAN ROGERS**.



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ISBN 978-0-9859406-8-3



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