

The Epistle of Ephesians

Series Introduction:

- A. Several years ago an elderly couple was found dead in their apartment.
 - 1. Their autopsies revealed that they had both died of severe malnutrition.
 - 2. When authorities searched their home, they found several paper bags filled with cash; some \$40,000.00 in all.
- B. How foolish is it to die of starvation when you have plenty of money to buy food?
- C. In 1916 a woman named Hettie Green died.
 - 1. When she did, it was discovered that she had left an estate valued at 100 million dollars.
 - 2. That is an enormous amount of money today; it was an astronomical amount in those days.
 - 3. Hettie Green may have been wealthy, but she was known as America's greatest miser.
 - 4. She would often eat cold oatmeal because it was too costly to heat the water to cook it.
 - 5. Once, when her son suffered a severe leg injury, she spent so much time looking for a free clinic that the leg had to be amputated.
 - 6. She even hastened her own death by allowing herself to get worked up into a fit of rage in an argument over skim milk, because it was cheaper than whole milk.
 - 7. Hettie Green was a woman who possessed great wealth, but she did not have the ability to tap into it.

D. The book of Ephesians was written to people just like that.

E. The Background:

1. This letter was written sometime around 61-63 AD when Paul was imprisoned in Rome.
2. The city of Ephesus was located at the mouth of the Cayster River, on the east side of the Aegean Sea.
3. It was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia.
4. It was a wealthy city known as a political, commercial and educational center. It was called "***The Queen City of Asia***".
5. A massive temple to Diana was located here.
6. It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
7. In Paul's day, the city boasted a population of around 300,000 people.
8. Yet, it was a city steeped in deep paganism, immorality and wickedness.

F. In **Acts 16:6**, we read that the Apostle Paul was about to start his second missionary journey, he thought about going to Asia (Ephesus), but the Holy Spirit did not allow him to go there.

1. Sometime later, the Gospel made its way to Ephesus, probably taken there by Aquila and Priscilla, **Acts 18:18-19**.
2. Near the end of his second missionary journey, Paul finally made it to Ephesus, spending some three years there preaching the Gospel and helping the new church get on its feet.

- G. Timothy followed Paul as the pastor at Ephesus.
1. Under Timothy, the church was plagued by the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Alexander, I **Timothy 1:20**.
 2. The church also has problems with legalism, false doctrine and foolish arguments among the members.
- H. So, this young church, is full of problems.
1. They are like the elderly couple mentioned earlier.
 2. They are like Hettie Green.
 3. They are rich in the things of God, but they do not know it.
 4. Thus this book was delivered to them to let them know:
 - What they had in the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - Who they were in the Lord,
 - And how to use what they possessed in Christ!
- I. The Purpose of the Letter:
1. In verse 1 we see that this book is addressed to “***the saints which are at Ephesus***”.
 2. While this letter was written to this specific church, it does not mean that it was not shared with other churches in the region about.
 3. And since verse 1 says, “***the faithful in Christ Jesus,***” this book was written for our edification as well!

4. The book of Ephesians was written to teach us about whom we are in Jesus Christ.
 5. What we have because of our relationship with Him.
 6. And how to use what He has given us for the glory of God.
- J. Today, I want to start a series of messages on the book of Ephesians that will take us through the book of Ephesians.
- K. In this first message, I want to continue introducing the book and share some of the great truths we will find in the book.
- L. The book of Ephesians has also been given many lofty titles.
1. It has been called “***The Alps of the New Testament***”
 2. “***The heavenly epistle***”
 3. “***The crown and climax of Pauline theology***”
 4. And “***The divinest composition of man***”.
- M. The book is easy broken down into two sections:
1. **Chapters 1-3** are doctrinal in nature,
 2. **Chapters 4-6** are practical.
 3. Chapters 1-3 tell us what we have
 4. And Chapters 4-6 tell us what to do with that which we have.
 5. Chapters 1-3 reveal our riches in Christ;
 6. Chapters 4-6 tell us how to spend what we have been given in Jesus.

- N. Someone has called Ephesians “***The believer’s checkbook.***”
1. Imagine having an account upon which you could write checks **as often** as you wished – **for any amount** that you wished, and that **account would never diminish.**
 2. That is what the book of Ephesians says that, we as believers, have in Christ.
- O. This book reveals the riches of God’s grace to the believer.
1. It teaches us about what we have because of who we are in Jesus.
 2. Then, Ephesians shows us how to spend what we have been given in Christ.
- P. This is a book about riches.
1. 1:7 – The riches of His grace
 2. 3:8 – The unsearchable riches of Christ
 3. 3:16 – The riches of His glory
- Q. This is also a book about the fullness we enjoy in Jesus.
1. 3:16 – *be filled with the fullness of Christ*
 2. 4:13 – *to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*
 3. 5:18 – *be filled with the Spirit*
- R. These riches and this fullness arise from:
1. 1:2, 6, 7; 2:7 – *His grace*
 2. 1:2 – *His peace*

3. 1:5 – *His will*
4. 1:9 – *His pleasure and his propose*
5. 1:12, 14 – *His glory*
6. 1:18 – *His calling*
7. 1:19, 6:10 – *His power and strength*
8. 2:4 – *His love*
9. 2:10 – *His workmanship*
- 10.3:16 – *His Spirit*
- 11.5:2 – *His offering and sacrifice*
- 12.6:11-13 – *His armor*

S. Ephesians also mentions several keys words”

1. “**Riches**” is mentioned five times.
2. “**Grace**” is mentioned twelve times.
3. “**Glory**” is mentioned eight times.
4. “**Fullness**” or “**filled**” is mentioned six times.
5. “**in Christ**” or “**in Him**” twelve times.
6. The idea of “**in**”, “**with**” or “**through**” Christ is found thirty times.
7. This is a book about the overwhelming, infinite wealth we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Believers are amazingly rich because of their relationship with Jesus (Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 1:4.)

T. Ephesians is a book about riches and fullness, but it is also a book about a **divine mystery**.

1. When the Bible refers to a mystery it is speaking of “***a truth previously hidden, but now revealed***”.
2. When it comes to God, there are **many mysteries**.

U. These mysteries fall into **three primary categories**.

1. First, there are mysteries that no one but God has ever, or will ever, know.
 - These are divine secrets that God reveals to no one, in any place, at any time.
 - Deuteronomy 29:29.

“The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*”

2. The **second type** of mystery includes those things that are hidden from most people, but revealed to a select group.
 - According to Romans 1: 10-20, all men know something about God, but they do not know understand the deeper truths about His Word and His nature.
 - They can’t know these things because they are dead in trespass and sin, and blind to the truths of God (1 Corinthians 2:14.)
 - **The redeemed**, on the other hand, do understand these truths and they know more about God than lost people can ever know.
3. A **third type of mystery** is truth that has been concealed, or hidden, for a time and then revealed to the people of God.

4. This is the kind of mystery we find in the book of Ephesians.
 - The word “**mystery**” is found six times in the book of Ephesians -1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19.
 - The mystery Paul is talking about is revealed in **3:1-6**.
 - It is the **mystery of the church**.

5. However, the ancient Jews were looking for a Messiah (not the church).
 - They were looking for a King Who would come to Israel to reign.
 - They were expecting a King to come who would deliver them from their enemies and establish an eternal kingdom on the earth.
 - However, when their Messiah came, He as not Who they expected Him to be.
 - They rejected Him, John 1:11,
 - They refused to recognize Him as their King.

“When Jesus was before Pilate, they said, “*We have no king but Caesar,*” John 19:15.

- Then the Jews watched as their King was crucified in a Roman cross.
- And today they are still looking for a kingdom and for a King.
- Sadly, they are still looking for Him today.
- Why? Because the Jews failed to see the age (church age) in which we are living today.

- The reality is that the Old Testament prophets did not see this day. The Jewish scribes and scholars never saw this day.
 - We are living in the time of an unknown **divine mystery**.
6. It is certainly a mystery that there would be at over 2,000 years between the birth of Messiah and the coming of His eternal kingdom.
- We are waiting for the Lord Jesus to call out His church and then seven years later to physically and visibly come back to the earth and establish His kingdom.
 - However, today the Lord Jesus Christ rules His kingdom from Heaven.
 - He rules His kingdom **as He lives** through His people.
7. Now we are still talking about the mysteries of God and especially the mystery of the church.
8. In the Old Testament God's people were known by many metaphors.
- They were called a **vine** in Isaiah 5:2,
 - They were called a **bride** in the book of Hosea.
 - They are called a **flock in Isaiah 40**
 - They were also called a **kingdom** in Exodus 19:16.
9. Those same metaphors apply to the people of God today as well.
- The church is a vine - **John 12**.

- The church is His bride, **II Corinthians 11:2**.
- The church is called a flock, **Luke 12:32**.
- The church is also called a kingdom, **Colossians 1:13**.
- However, the church is called something in Ephesians that it was never called before. It is called a **body**.
- Believers are literally the body of Christ according to I Corinthians 12:27.

10. There are also many other things that He does:

- He dwells in us through His Spirit.
- He energizes us with His life.
- As we yield to Him and allow Him to live through us, Jesus Christ is actively seen moving and working in the world today.
- He rises up in us, lives through us, and accomplishes His will in the world.
- It is this mystery of the church as the body of Christ that is revealed in the verses of this wonderful book.

Conclusions:

- A. I trust that the truths we have seen so far – encourage and whet your appetite as we study the mysteries in the Book of Ephesians.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

- B. I pray that the Lord blesses our study of Ephesians.

The Book of Ephesians - #2

Text: Ephesians 1:1-6,

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

- I. Last week I said that the purpose of the Book of Ephesians was three-fold:
 1. First, the book was written to teach us about **who we are in Jesus Christ**.
 2. **What** we have because of our relationship with Him.
 3. And **how** to use what He has given us for the glory of God.
- II. And who better to pen a book of this matter than the Apostle Paul?

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...”

1. The fact is, we can learn from the life of the apostle Paul.
2. Paul was used of the Lord to do extraordinary things for the kingdom of God.

3. The account of Paul's life is a story of redemption in Jesus Christ and a testimony that no one is beyond the saving grace of the Lord.
4. However, before he was "Paul the Apostle of Grace" he was Saul the religious zeal, a brutal and violence man. The relentless persecution of the early church.

III. Paul was:

1. Born as Saul.
2. He was born in the city of Tarsus, in the province of Cilicia, a province in the southeastern corner of modern-day Turkey.
3. He was of Hebrew of the tribe of Benjamin
4. His father was a Pharisees, as was Saul.
5. The Pharisees were fervent Jewish nationalists who adhered strictly to the Law of Moses
6. They sought to protect their children from "contamination" from the Gentiles.
7. Thus, anything Greek would have been despised in Saul's household, yet he could speak Greek and Latin.
8. His parent's household would have spoken Aramaic, a derivative of Hebrew, which was the official language of Judea.
9. As stated above, Saul's family were Hebrew, yet they were Roman citizens. (Paul said that he was free born or born a Roman Citizen.
10. At age thirteen Saul was sent to Judea to learn from a rabbi named Gamaliel.

- Therefore, Saul was educated and under Gamaliel learned Jewish history, the Psalms, and the works of the prophets.
11. It was during this time that he developed a question-and-answer style of teaching known as “diatribe.”
 - Diatribe was a method of articulation that helped rabbis debate the finer points of Jewish law –
 - Either to defend or prosecute those who broke the law.
 12. It seems that Saul became a lawyer.
 13. There is also evidence that he became a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court of 71 men who ruled over Jewish life and religion.
 14. Saul was zealous for his faith, a faith that did not allow for compromise.
 15. It seems that this zeal led Saul down the path of religious extremism.
 16. In Acts 5:27–42, the Apostle Peter delivered a defense of the gospel and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Sanhedrin
 - Saul would have most likely heard Peter.
 - We know that Gamaliel was present and delivered a message to calm the council and prevent them from stoning Peter.
 17. Saul was most likely present at the trial of Stephen.
 18. We know from Acts 7:58 that he was present when they stoned Stephen to death; because

he held the garments of those who did the stoning.

19. From Acts 8:1 it seems that Stephen's death prompted "a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem."

20. Saul became determined to eradicate Christians.

- He became ruthless in his persecution of Christians because he believed he was acting as an agent of God.
- Today, Saul would most likely be considered a religious terrorist.
- Saul was vicious he believed that he was doing the will of God by killing innocent people.

IV. But something miraculous happened in the life of Saul:

1. This event is seen in Acts 9 and tells us of Paul's meet the Lord Jesus Christ on 150 mile journey from Jerusalem to Damascus.
2. Before departing on his journey, he had asked the high priest for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for permission to bring any Christians (followers of "the Way," as they were known) back to Jerusalem to imprison them.
3. On the road Saul was caught in a bright light from heaven that caused him to fall face down on the ground.
4. He heard the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"
5. He replied, "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:

6. From that moment on, Saul's life was changed.
7. Saul, being instructed by the Lord, continued to Damascus and make contact with a man named Ananias, who was hesitant at first to meet Saul because he knew Saul's reputation as an evil man.
8. But the Lord told Ananias that Saul was a "chosen vessel" to carry His name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.
9. He was also told that Paul would suffer for doing so.
10. Ananias followed the Lord's instructions and found Saul, laid hands on him, and told him what the Lord had shown him.
11. Thus, we see that Saul was saved, received the Holy Spirit, regained his sight, and followed the Lord in believers baptism.
12. Immediately he went into the synagogues and proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 9:20).
13. Because of Saul's reputation the people were skeptical
14. Paul boldly joined with the Christians he began to preach that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 9:22).
15. From Damascus Saul went into Arabia where he was given greater insight into the Scriptures.
16. Upon his return from Arabia, he was with Barnabas at the church in Antioch.
17. And from here Paul made his first of three missionary journeys in the late AD 40s.

18. Most theologians agree that Paul wrote Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus.
19. The apostle Paul, from the time of his conversion, spent his life proclaiming the risen Christ Jesus throughout the Roman world, often at great personal risk.
20. We also know that Paul died a martyr's death in the mid-to-late AD 60s in Rome.

V. So, **what made Paul special** and **why did God use Paul**, a man that hated him and his church in such a great way?

1. First, we learn that God can save anyone.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”

- It did not matter who Saul was, or what he had done.
 - God willed that he be saved
 - And according to Paul's doctrine – God choose him and predestinated him to salvation.
2. The remarkable think is that every day sinful, broken people all over the world are transformed by God's saving grace.
 - Some of these people have done despicable things to other human beings, while some just try to live a moral life thinking that God will smile upon them on the day of judgment.
 - When we read Paul's life story we are amazed that God would allow such a religious extremist into heaven.

- After all, he committed great crimes against humanity and would be considered as unworthy of a second chance.
- Yet God granted him mercy.
- The truth is - every person whether average, “good”, “decent,” or “wicked,’ ‘evil,” and degenerate – are the same –

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

- Only God can save can save them!
- There is no one too wicked that God cannot save them.
- Likewise, there is no one good enough that God doesn’t need to save them.

“There is none good, no not one.”

3. From the life of Paul, we also learn that God can make anyone a humble, powerful witness for Jesus Christ.
 - Paul “served the Lord with all humility, with tears, and through the trials that took place in his life.
 - Paul was not afraid to tell others what the Lord had done for him.
 - Paul spent all his days, from conversion to martyrdom, working tirelessly for the glory of God.
4. Next, we learn that anyone can surrender completely to God.
 - Paul was fully committed to God.

Philippians 1:12–14, “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

- Paul understood that his circumstances were ordered of the Lord.
- He understood that living for God in both the good and the bad circumstances of life resulted in a life well lived for Christ.
- Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” Can we make the same claim?

VI. I also want to spend a little time dealing with Paul’s title - “***An apostle of Jesus Christ***”.

1. The word “***apostle***” refers to “***a sent one.***”
2. This title is used in the New Testament to refer to those men who were chosen to be the foundational leaders of the Lord’s church after His ascension.
3. They were the men who received direct revelation from God and gave it to His people.
4. They gave us the apostle’s doctrine.
5. There are only fourteen men in history that qualify for the title of apostle.
 - The original twelve apostles
 - Judas betrayed the Lord and in Acts 1:26 Mathias was chosen to replace him.
 - And lastly Paul became the fourteenth apostle.

6. The qualification for being an Apostle was that one must have seen Jesus, and have been a witness of His resurrection.
7. There are no apostles today! Anyone who calls himself an apostle is a deceiver and a false prophet.
 - Paul's use of the word does not arise out of pride, but out of profound humility that he had been counted worthy to be an apostle.
 - That is certainly not true of those who claim (falsely) to be apostles today.

VII. The last fact concerning the introduction of chapter one is the dual designation concerning the recipients of his letter.

1. First, the apostle calls them "**saints**"
2. And then he calls them "**the faithful in Christ Jesus.**"

VIII. I want to look at these two titles for a moment.

1. We people hear the word "**saints**".
 - Some think of dead religious people who have been exalted by the church of Rome.
 - Some religious backgrounds think of statues to which you pray in times of need.
 - However, these ideas are nowhere close to the Bible meaning of "**saints.**"
2. The word "**saint**" speaks of those:
 - Who have been saved, sanctified, and set apart for God's exclusive use.
 - It speaks of how God sees us!

- Every child of God is a saint.
 - Every person who is saved by the grace of God and washed in the blood of Jesus is “**a holy thing**”, set apart for the glory of God and for His exclusive use in this world.
 - The word “**saint**” describes what the Lord has done for us in Jesus.
 - When we came to the Lord Jesus by faith, God saved our soul and imputed the righteousness of Christ to our account.
3. Then, the Apostle Paul calls the saints “**the faithful in Christ Jesus.**”
- While the word “**saint**” describes our standing before the Lord, the word “**faithful**” describes our activities in the world.
 - Because God has saved us, we are new creatures in Christ Jesus.
 - As a result, we live a distinct, different life than the world around us.
 - In other words, those who know the Lord are His holy saints, who live faithful lives in a world that does not know the Lord.

IX. The **Apostles greeting** to these saints.

“Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. The word “Grace” means, favor.
2. In Christianity it is considered the highest expression of the favor of God.
3. It seems that the Apostle by using the word “grace” is including all the blessings that are applicable to Christians.

4. It expresses an ardent wish that all the mercies and favor of God be theirs.
5. While “peace” expresses his desire that they be at peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. It is the customary form of salutation in nearly all the apostolic epistles.

Conclusions:

- A. the book Of Ephesians was written to teach us about **who we are in the Lord**.
- B. It shows us **What** we have because of our relationship with the Lord.
- C. It shows us that it doesn't matter how good or how vial a person we are – **God can saved the most wretched sinner**.
- D. It also shows us that we belong to the Lord (saints) and, as Paul, and so many others, we are to serve the Lord with all our heart, body, and soul. --- for the glory of God.

The Book of Ephesians #3

Text: Ephesians 1:3-6,

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

Introduction:

- A. It is interesting to notice that verses 3-6 are one sentence.
- B. However, the idea or thought started in verse 3 continues through verse 14.

I. Verse 3:

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

- A. “Blessed” is the lofty term that the Apostle Paul uses to praise God for His grace toward the Ephesians.
- B. Calvin said that the word **blessed** used here can be use in more than one sense.
 - 1. We are said to bless God when we offer praise to him for his goodness.
 - 2. God is said to bless us:
 - When he crowns our undertakings with success,

- In exercising his goodness toward us,
 - We are blessed when the Lord bestows upon us happiness and prosperity;
 - We also see and understand that our enjoyments depend entirely upon his pleasure.
3. Men bless each other by prayer.
 4. Fourthly, Paul therefore blesses God, because **he has blessed us**, that is, He has enriched us with all blessing and grace.
- C. So, God the Father has blessed us through the Lord Jesus Christ, His beloved Son.
- D. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:"
1. God is the author and giver of all blessings!
 2. Furthermore, only God can bless:
 - If He does not bless, then no one can.
 - And if he blesses, those who are blessed are blessed indeed.
 3. The "us" that are blessed are those described in verse 1 as saints and the faithful in Christ Jesus.
 4. This includes both Jews and Gentiles, who are saved by grace.
 5. So what are some of the spiritual blessings?
 - The first I think of is redemption, including pardon, which brings peace.

- Then there is adoption and all its blessings and benefits.
 - And lastly, the earnest of the Spirit, which assures us of our future glorification.
6. "In heavenly *places* in Christ:"
- The phrase, "in heavenly places" is found in this epistle five times and not elsewhere.
 - **(Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; and 6:12)**
 - Christ's ascension is the means of introducing us to the heavenly places, to which we were barred because of our sin.

Colossians 1:20, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Ephesians 1:20, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

- While the Lord Jesus Christ was in the flesh, and in the form of a *servant*, God's people could not realize fully their heavenly privileges as sons.
- However, **now** "our citizenship is in heaven" where our High Priest is.
- Therefore, our "treasures" are there (**Mt 6:20,21**);
- Our aims and affections (Colossians 3:1,2); our hope (Colossians 1:5, Titus 2:13); and our inheritance (I Peter 1:4) are all there as well.

- Lastly, We receive the Holy Spirit (our Comforter) because the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven.
- **“In Christ”** - the center and source of all our blessing.

II. Verse 4:

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

A. “He hath chosen us.”

1. This choice cannot be understood as the choice of a nation!
2. Why? Because the people that the apostle is writing to were not a nation;
3. In fact, he does not address all the inhabitants of Ephesus, only the saints and faithful in Christ that resided there.
4. Thus the choosing is of person’s!!!
5. The Greek meaning of “hath chosen us is **“Chose us out for Himself.”**

John 17:24, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me

- Biblical hermeneutics does not allow a doctrinal truth to be established on a single verse. So here is a second.

Ephesians 1:4, “According as he hath **chosen us in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

6. There are those who despise the doctrine of election.
7. Yet I remind you of a true saying:

God said it, that settles it, and I believe it.

8. **“In him”** - The repetition of the idea, "in Christ" demonstrates the importance of the truth that it is **in Him**, and by virtue of our union with Him, the Restorer ordained for us from everlasting, the Head of redeemed humanity, believers have all their blessings (Ephesians 3:11).

B. When did this choosing or electing take place?

1. **“Before the foundation of the world.”**
2. This assumes the eternity of the Son of God as well as the election of believers in Him.
3. So, our election, and salvation is based in the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, on account of the chosen ones.
4. We must remember that God’s decrees are eternal.
 - Therefore, no new will, or act of will, or any decree be made by him, which was not from eternity.
 - God’s foreknowledge is eternal, and so is his decree.

C. **That we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love;**

II Timothy 1:9, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began.**”

2 Thessalonians 2:13, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath **from the beginning** chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

1. The elect are not chosen because they are holy, but that they might be sanctified by him here, and made perfectly holy at His coming.
2. II Peter 3:14 tells us of that glorious day when we shall stand before Christ "without spot and blameless."
3. Thus, the love of God is the source of election; and holiness and happiness the results of it.

III. Verse 5:

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

- I. The word "Predestination" is only found 4 times in the Bible.

Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Romans 8:30, "Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also **called**: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Ephesians 1:5, "Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

Ephesians 1:11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"

- II. The Greek word “proorizo” is translated “predestined.”
- III. The meaning of predestine is “to determine beforehand,” to “ordaining.”
- IV. So, predestination is God determining things to occur ahead of time.
- V. What did God determine ahead of time?
 1. According to Romans 8:29-30, God predetermined that certain individuals would be conformed to the likeness of His Son, be called, justified, and glorified.
 2. Essentially these verses say that God predetermines that certain individuals will be saved.
 3. Numerous scriptures refer to believers in Christ being chosen. A few are Romans 8:33, 9:11, 11:5-7, 28; Ephesians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2:9; 2 Peter 1:10.
 4. Predestination is the biblical doctrine that God in His sovereignty chooses certain individuals to be saved.
 5. The most common objection to the doctrine of predestination is that it is unfair.
 - Why would God choose certain individuals and not others?
 - The important thing to remember is that no one deserves to be saved.
 - We have all sinned and we are all worthy of eternal punishment.
 - The truth is, God would be perfectly just in allowing all of us to spend eternity in hell.

- But graciously God chooses to save some of us for His glory.
- The truth is - He is not being unfair to those who are not chosen, because they are receiving what they deserve.
- No one deserves anything from God; therefore, no one can object if he does not receive anything from God.
- An illustration would be a man randomly handing out money to five people in a crowd of twenty.
- Would the fifteen people who did not receive money be upset?
- Probably so. Do they have a right to be upset?
- No, they do not. Why?
- Because the man did not owe anyone money.
- He simply decided to be gracious to some.
- This is all “according to the good pleasure of his will.”

VI. So in conclusion predestination reveals to us a sovereign God, who is Lord of heaven, and earth, who appoints times and boundaries, who leaves nothing to chance.

VII. “Unto the adoption of children.”

1. Adoption is a New Testament doctrine.
2. There are 5 verses that speak of this consoling, comforting and encouraging truth.

3. While most believers understand that salvation brings God's forgiveness of sins and deliverance from divine condemnation, they do not understand that **adoption**, one of the priceless crown jewels of our "great salvation."
4. **J I Packer** adds that an understanding of our adoption is the foundation of a vibrant, victorious Christian walk.
5. **Spiritual adoption** is:

That act of God whereby men, who were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, and were of the lost and ruined family of Adam, are from no reason in themselves, but entirely of the pure grace of God, translated out of the evil and black family of Satan, and brought actually and virtually into the family of God. They take His name, share the privileges of sorts, and they are to all intents and purposes the actual offspring and children of God!"

6. So, adoption is an act of pure grace. No man can ever have a right, in himself, to become adopted.
 - For if we could, then we would be entitled to receive the inheritance in our own right.
 - But, since we have no right to be a child of God, and can, by no means claim this privilege in ourselves.
 - We receive it, entirely through the pure grace of God.
7. When we think about **adoption** we think about love, grace, compassion and an intimate relationship.
8. In the Greek and Roman culture an adopted person:

- Lost all rights in his old family, gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family and “In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father.

I John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

- In addition, all his debts were legally canceled.

Colossians 2:14, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”

- The adoptees old life was completely erased and he was regarded by the law as a new person according to II Corinthians 5:17.

9. While **adoption** is not the way we get into God’s family, it is the way we come to fully enjoy God’s family.

Spurgeon said, “Adoption gives us the rights of children. Regeneration gives us the nature of children: we are partakers of both of these, for we are sons.”

10. In **regeneration** the Spirit makes us children of God, while in **adoption** He gives us the position, privilege and responsibilities of the “sons of God.”

IV. Verse 6:

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

- A. The glory of God is the supreme end of all that He does.

- B. And when the children of God attribute their salvation, adoption, and blessings to the free grace of God – He is praised, worshipped, and glorified.

The Book of Ephesians # 4

Text: Ephesians 1: 7-14,

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Introduction:

- A. So far we have seen that in verses 3-6, the Apostle Paul praises God the Father for His sovereignty.
- B. Today, we will see the Apostle praising God the Son for His saving work (verses 7-10).
- C. And, in verses 11-14, the Apostle praises God the Holy Spirit for His sharing work.

I. Verses 7:

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

- A. Having completed his presentation of God’s work in the past – the Apostle now moves to His present work.

1. Paul reminds us of how God's plan was formulated in eternity past to how that plan is carried out in the present.
 2. Thus the Apostle moves **from** praising God for His sovereign work in eternity past as He elected, predestinated and formed the body of Christ **to** how He brings that body together in time.
 3. In these verses, the Apostle reveals all the riches of God's grace that are ours in Jesus Christ.
- B. I want for us to look at God's great work in salvation.
- C. The blood of Christ gives us forgiveness and redemption:

Verse 7, "We have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

- D. Redemption is one of the primary themes in the Bible.
1. When we are saved or redeemed, we do not trade one thing for another.
 2. In other words we don't do "good works" so that we can collect enough points to get God to let us off.
 - First, the holiness of God forbids letting us off (just forget about our sins).
 - God holiness requires a payment for sin.
 3. Redemption is a gift – a gift from God.
 4. A gift that God gives to us **based** on nothing we have to offer in return.

- Since Adam fell – people have been trying to do good works and deeds, believing that God will be pleased and let them into Heaven.
- While there are scriptures that encourage people to be less selfish and concentrate on meeting the needs of others, **nowhere is it mentioned that those good deeds will get anyone to Heaven.**
- In fact, the Bible declares that there is nothing we can do but trust Christ as Savior to be saved and have a heavenly home.

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

- Man says, I going to do good things and good deeds – then God will accept me!
- Cain tried that – What happened? – God refused the works of his hands.
- Salvation is by grace through faith – and not of yourself – via good works or deeds.
- God’s way for us to be saved is that innocent blood had be shed to have our sins forgiven.
- The only payment God will accept for all of a sinner’s iniquities is the sacrificial death of God’s only son, Jesus.
- No one can achieve Heaven by what they have done.
- Salvation is the gift of God and achievable only by what Christ had done for us.

John 14:6, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

5. While redemption is a gift to us, redemption was not free.
- The blood of Christ secured our redemption and forgiveness of sin!
 - Since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden the Scripture clearly shows that every person born is born a sinner and a slave to sin.
 - Sin enslaves and demands a high price for their release.
 - It demands death as its price.
 - Death is the price that the Lord Jesus paid when He went to the cross to liberate us from our sins.
 - Jesus gave Himself, the innocent for the guilty, that His Sheep might go free.

Colossians 1:13-14, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

- When Jesus Christ died in our place on the cross, He redeemed us from our sins.
- He shed His blood to satisfy God's just demands for sin.
- He accomplished everything that was necessary to secure our salvation.

Revelation 5:9, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

6. Have you experienced its power in your life?
 - Have you been redeemed?
 - If you have, you have plenty of reason to praise, worship and honor the Lord Who bought you with His blood!

S. J. Henderson wrote,

“Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! Ransomed from sin and a new work begun, Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son, Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!

7. Hebrews 9:26 makes it very clear that it is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that removes the enmity and cleanses our sin, and makes us acceptable to Holy God!
8. “According to the riches of His Grace!”

II. Verse 8:

“Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”

- A. In this verse Paul states the cause.
 1. The preaching of the gospel is the means by which the goodness of God overflows upon us.
 2. It is through faith that we receive Christ, by whom we come to God, and by whom we enjoy the privilege of adoption.
 3. This is why the Apostle Paul gives to the gospel the magnificent compellation of **wisdom and prudence**.
 4. He did this for the purpose of leading the Ephesians to despise all contrary doctrines.

5. The false apostles insinuated that their teaching views superior to the instructions that Paul had conveyed.
6. Believers may rest upon it with unshaken confidence in “All wisdom” which is the full or perfect wisdom of God.

III. Verse 9:

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.”

A. “The mystery of his will”

1. God’s purpose of redemption (His counsels) that were hidden are now being revealed (Eph 6:19 Ro 16:25 Col 1:26, 27) to His saints.
2. The word *mystery* speaks of something that is concealed or hidden being revealed so that it is fully known.
3. The mystery here is a doctrine that had been concealed, not fully revealed, or set forth only in types, figures, or symbols.
4. But now the doctrine is made known, and is as clear and plain as any other doctrine.
5. Such was the truth that God meant to call the Gentiles, which was not known until the Savior came.

Colossians 1:26, “*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”

- B. “**According to his good pleasure**” shows why “He made the mystery know at this particular time.

IV. Verse 10:

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:”

- A. This can be said, “At the time appointed by God, and fixed in the prophets.
- B. The phrase, “gather together in one” can be said “sum up under one head.”
- C. So, the "good pleasure which He purposed," was "to sum up all things in Christ (*Greek, His Christ*).”
- D. In other words, God’s purpose is to sum up the whole creation in Christ.

Colossians 1:20, "By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things in earth or things in heaven."

- 1. The Lord Jesus Christ will be the Head and King.
- 2. He will preside over this United Kingdom as King of kings and Lord of lords.

V. Verse 11:

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

- A. Our inheritance is an eternal inheritance and is the great blessing with which we are blessed in Christ.
- B. The joys of eternity with God are conveyed as an inheritance that is the gift of the heavenly Father to his children.
- C. “If children, then heirs.” -- all the blessings that we have now are small if compared with our eternal inheritance.

- D. "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"
1. Not only are we predestined to son ship we are also predestined to an inheritance.
 2. Not only does it secure the grace of adoption, but prepares and provides a heavenly portion.
- C. After the counsel of his own will.
1. Some of the attributes of God are omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience.
 - So God is everywhere present, all powerful, and all knowing.
 - Therefore, why would an all knowing God that has infinite and perfect wisdom need to consult anyone outside himself?
 - He need not because He is sovereign and as sovereign works after the counsel of His own will.

VI. Verse 12:

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

- A. Praising God is the results of the predestination being spoken of above.
- B. Because of God's grace and goodness that was displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal salvation - we should praise and glorify him.
- C. "**Who before hoped in Christ**" speaks of those who had hope in Christ before the Gentiles did.

1. Many of the Israelites were blind and steeped in the traditions of the elders.
2. But there were some of Israel that had hope in Christ before he came.
 - Why? Because the promises of the Messiah were made to them, and by faith, he was the hope and expectation of those people.
 - And Scripture says that Christ came to them first, and that the Gospel preached to them first.
 - And some of them believed and trusted in Christ rather than their own righteousness.
3. And in the will, time, and purpose of God the Gentiles were likewise included.

VII. Verse 13 – 14:

“In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

A. **In whom ye** (Gentiles) **also** "trusted.

B. Just because the Gospel was preached to the Jews first in no way exclude the Gentiles from sharing in Christ

Acts 13:46-48, Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and

glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

C. **“The word of truth”** - the instrument of the new birth (John 17:17, II Timothy 2:15 James 1:18).

D. At salvation - You were **“sealed.”**

1. God confirms his children by bestowing the Holy Spirit as a seal of the transaction.
2. A seal impressed on a document gives undoubted validity to the contract in it.
3. The Spirit, as a seal, impresses on the soul at regeneration the image of our Father.
4. The "sealing" by the Holy Spirit is the witnessing to our hearts that we are the children of God, and heirs.
5. The Holy Spirit is the "earnest of our coming inheritance."

The Book of Ephesians #5

Text: Ephesians 1: 15-23,

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

I. Verses 15,16:

- A. “**Wherefore**” is the Greek preposition διὰ (dee-ah).
- B. It denotes the channel of an act.
 - 1. By reason of,
 - 2. On account of,
 - 3. Because of for this reason,
 - 4. Therefore,
 - 5. Wherefore,
- C. Thus the “wherefore” is a transition between verses 13, 14 and that which follows.
 - 1. In other words, because ye are saved (in Christ) and sealed by His Spirit. ↓
 - 2. I **heard** of your **faith** in the Lord Jesus.

- A faith that centers on Christ.
- A faith that embraces him, commits all to him.
- A faith that leans on and depends on him, and a living upon him.
- A faith that causes us to walking in the manner prescribed for our Christian walk.

B. And there was further testimony of you “love unto all the saints.

1. In James chapter 2: 2-4, we read about believers being prejudicial toward other believers.

“For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

2. But here the Apostle praises them because it did not matter if a believer was Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, influential or “common” they were all loved in Christ without prejudicious.
3. The graces of faith and love are inseparable.
 - They always go together in a believer.
 - Furthermore, when they are present they cannot be hidden.
 - Their love is demonstrated in their words, actions, and deeds.

C. And because of this the Apostle thanked the Lord for them and prayed for them often.

1. The Apostle Paul started the church at Ephesus.
2. He had went door to door, preached, and labored with these brethren for some time.
3. Now he was a far distant from them (Rome in prison), and really did not expected to see them no more.
4. But he assures them that he is praying for them.

II. Verse 17:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:”

- A. He is also very specific about his prayers for them:
- B. The Apostle uses the title “**The Father of glory**” or the glorious Father.
- C. In this context this is the perfect title:
 1. Because God is glorious in himself,
 2. He is magnificent in the perfections of his nature and the works of his hands.
 3. He is a wonderful father to Christ, as he is to no one else.
 4. He is a fabulous father to the saints -- **to whom** he has shown inexpressible love.
 5. How? By adopting them into his family;
 6. And as a father He takes care of them, protects, and provides for them.
 7. Not only does He give them good things now, but has also prepared an eternal inheritance for them hereafter.

D. What are the “good things that God gives us now?”

“May give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:”

1. I found a saying that says,
“you cannot stay where you are, how you are.
2. That is true in the spiritual sense as well.
3. Spiritual growth is compared to the physical – a babe, a child, the young man, and the mature adult.
4. This process is compared to a race that must be run – with a victory at the finish!
5. Therefore, the Apostle prays that they might increase in divine knowledge.
 - We have the revelation of the Spirit in the word:
 - But that does not avail us, if we do not have the wisdom of the Spirit in the heart!
 - If the Holy Spirit, who caused the Scriptures to be put in writing, does not remove the veil from off our hearts, and enable us to understand we shall be never any better off.
6. Thus the Apostle prays that the Spirit would:
 - Continue to instruct them in the Gospel (the hidden wisdom of God),
 - Lead them unto all truth,
 - And opens to them the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that we might come to a full knowledge of the truth in Christ.

III. Verse 18:

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.”

A. “The eyes of your understanding” is a continuation of the previous thoughts.

1. "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened" is the first result of the Spirit moving in the new birth! Just as “light coming forth) was in the physical creation.
2. John 1:4 tells us that where there is spiritual light there is life.
3. “Harless” said that the heart is "the core of life" and the fountain of the thoughts.
4. In Scripture "the heart" includes the mind, as well as the inclination.
5. Thus the eye is the symbol of intelligence (Ezekiel 1:18).

B. “That ye may know what is the hope of his calling.”

1. The calling spoken of is the effectual calling of the saints.
 - The effectual call is to salvation.
 - It is not a call to an office or ministry.
 - Rather it is the internal, special, powerful, and heavenly calling of God, of which he is the author.
 - And the hope of this calling, is eternal happiness, which is the thing hoped for.

- What is hoped for? Christ!
 - For Christ is the ground and foundation of our eternal hope.
- C. “And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.”
1. When I think of our heavenly inheritance I first think about the fact that **the saints themselves are the Lord’s inheritance.**
 2. And our heavenly inheritance that was spoken of earlier, of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest is again spoken of here.
 3. The phrase “of his” signifies that the glorious inheritance spoken of is **His**.
 4. Men give inheritances that are appropriate to their estate.
 5. And likewise, the God of glory, gives a glorious inheritance to those being heirs of God by virtue of their adoption.
 6. And this inheritance is given to the saints, who are then made perfect through glorification.
 7. However, while the saints possess this inheritance, we are still on this earth have only the hope of it at present.

IV. Verse 19:

“And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power”

- A. By faith, believer gain a practical belief of the all-sufficiency of God, and of the omnipotence of His divine grace.

- B. This belief is necessary in order to have a close and steady walking with the Lord.
- C. For God is, and will continue to work His grace in our lives.
- D. Therefore, it is advantageous to know first-hand the mighty power that God's grace beginning and carrying on in our souls.
- E. The Apostle is expressing the truth that believers should seek to be fully acquainted with the power of God:
1. Not only in the salvation of men.
 2. But also to what the gospel was *able* to accomplish, and what believers are yet to experience.
 3. The "power" referred to here, is referring to all the acts of power demonstrated towards believers.
 - First, there was power exercised to bring forth their conversion.
 - Secondly, power is being put forth in keeping us.
 - God will also exercise power to raise the dead in Christ from the grave; and transform those who are still living at His coming.
 - The point is that God is manifesting His power in every stage of the Christian walk and it will continue until we reach our final inheritance and beyond.

V. Verse 20, 21:

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly

places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:"

- A. Having spoken of the Lord's resurrection, the Apostle Paul now returns to the subject of the Lord's exaltation.
- B. He sits at the Father's right hand in the heaven.
 1. Christ died - He was raised from the dead by the great power of God.
 2. Christ is representative of all his people – He is our surety; because He was raised for our justification, and to great glory in himself.
 3. The Lord Jesus Christ set in authority over all, as all things are made subject to him.
 4. And not He sits at his own right hand in the heavenly places.
 - This is expressive of the great honor conferred upon the human nature of Christ.
 - This honor was never given to any of the angels,
 - And the glory He has been exalted to shows that his work on earth was acceptance, and He is therefore set down at his Father's right hand.
 - It is here that our Lord enjoys rest a his labors, and lives forever, to intercede for his people.
 - And it is from here that He will one day come forth to meet them in the air and bring them where he is.

VI. Verse 22, 23:

“And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

- A. Here we see that God the Father has appointed the Lord Jesus Christ to be the head, the chief, the supreme in and over the church.
- B. Thus no angel or man can justly claim to be the head or rule over the Lord's Church.
- C. The Lord has appointed officers in his Church, but he alone is *head* and *supreme*.
- D. In verse 23 the church is compared to a body.
 1. This comparison of the church with a person or body, of which the Lord Jesus is the head, is not uncommon in the New Testament.
 2. Speaking to the believers in Corinth the Apostle said,

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

3. In other words the Apostle said,

“Now ye. Ye Christians of Corinth, are a part of the whole church that has been redeemed.”

4. “Are the body of Christ” is an allusion to the human body.
5. As all the members of the human body compose one body, having a common head, so it is with all the members and parts of the Lord's church.
6. The idea being conveyed is:
 - That Christ is the head of the whole church (every church).

- That he presides over every church and all its members sustain, to each other, the relation of fellow-members in the same body, and are subject to the same head.
7. "Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
- The Church is dwelt in and filled by Christ.
 - The church is the receptacle of the abundant gifts and graces of the Lord.
 - Since Christ is said to be "fulness of the Godhead" His "fulness" is imparted to His churches by virtue of their union to Him (Eph 5:18 Col 2:10).

Conclusions:

- A. In this message we have seen several truths.
- B. We were saved by grace through faith.
- C. And because of our salvation we manifest both faith and love to those around us.
- D. Again our glorification and rapture to our heavenly home is sure.
- E. Why? Because Christ our High Priest and Mediator has been exalted to the right hand of the Father – His labors being accepted – And all things, including the church, have been placed under His glorious power.

The Book of Ephesians #6

Text: Ephesians 2: 1-13

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

Introduction:

- A. The purpose in this chapter is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual calling and salvation of sinners, by Christ Jesus.
- B. It begins by describing the sad estate believers were in before their conversion.

- C. Then he speaks of the peace that Christ makes between them and God. Christ is our peacemaker.
- D. Lastly, he describes the various privileges and blessings that we enjoy as a result of salvation.
- E. The question was pose:
1. Since God is Sovereign God “Could He have forgiven mans sin by issuing some sort of divine decree?
 2. The answer is an emphatic No!
 3. God is holy! Therefore, He cannot overlook mans sin.
 - No degree could satisfy God’s holiness,
 - Therefore sin had to be **judged** and a just **payment made** for it.
 4. But since all men are sinners:
 - And are “dead in trespass and sin (Verse 1)
 - And according to Romans 3:23 - ...”all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.
 - There was not one person that was capable of paying man’s sin debt.

I. Thus, only God himself could fulfill the requirements of the needed sacrifice.

- A. Ephesians 1:4 says that ...He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.”
1. Why? “That He would have a people!
 2. And that they would be holy and without blame before him in love.”

3. Verse 5, “Having **predestinated us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will.**”
4. In other words, God chose who He pleased - **(according to the good pleasure of his will) - not** based on anything man does!
5. Verse 7, “**In whom** (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.
6. These verses make it crystal clear that salvation is:
 - The “gift of God.”
 - And “Through His blood.”

Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh **by the blood** of Christ.”

Hebrews 9:12, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **by his own blood he** entered in once into the holy place, having **obtained eternal redemption for us.**”

- Christ completed all that was necessary for our salvation at Calvary.
- This is evidenced in His words, “**It is finished!**”

B. And you hath he **quickened**, who were dead in trespasses and sins (Verse 1).

1. The **need for quickening** (salvation) is seen in chapter 2 verses 2 and 3.

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our

conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

2. Then verse 4 reveals the love, mercy, and grace of God.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).”

3. What does “hath quickened” mean?

- Those who were “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Those pass from Adam as our Federal head and those of our own trespasses).
- Hath “quickened” or “**made to live**” or **made alive spiritually**.
- This quickening is seen in verse 1, verse 5 as well as:

John 5:21, “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”

Romans 4:17, “(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who **quickeneth the dead**, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”

C. Why were we quickened?

In the introduction we said that the design of the apostle in this chapter is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual calling and salvation of sinners, by Christ Jesus.

1. So when we were spiritually dead in sins, God quickened us, saved us, made us alive, that we might see the divine grace of God (Verse 7).

Verse 8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2. Not only is salvation the result of God's love, mercy, and grace --- **it is a gift**
3. salvation is through "by grace through faith."
4. Grace is the sole source of salvation.
5. Faith is **not** the product of man's free will or power, but it is the **free gift** of God.
6. Therefore, salvation does not come from our desiring, deserving, or doing anything (works) for it.
7. Everything connected with our salvation must be ascribed to God as its author.
8. It is the gift of God!!! And for the Glory of God!!!

D. Next, we see the means of salvation:

1. Verse 13 reveals that salvation came by the coming and atonement of the Lord Jesus.
2. This is clearly seen in Ephesians 2:13.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh **by the blood of Christ.**"

I. The Death of Jesus Christ (God the Son) was a "substitutionary" death.

- A. Substitutionary means that the Lord Jesus Christ died in place of the elect sinners.
- B. When Jesus atoned for sin, He stood "in the place of" guilty men and women.

- C. Thus the eternal plan of God was that the Lord Jesus Christ (He who knew no sin) would become a sin offering on for those whom the Father chose before the foundation of the world.

II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

- D. The death of Jesus Christ was **not** the punishment of a criminal; or the death of a martyr, it was a **substitutionary** death.

1. It was,

"The just dying for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

2. The New Testament uses three prepositions when speaking of Christ's death:

- "peri" - for us (used in Matthew 26:28)
- "anti" - in place of us (Matthew 20:28)
- "huper" -- in behalf of us (II Cor. 5:21)

3. These prepositions are used in many other passages of Scripture, including Titus 2: 14, Galatians 2:20, and Hebrews 9:28.

Jesus died for us, in place of us, and in behalf of us. Jesus had no sins of His own, but He died for the sins of the elect, taking the punishment they deserved.

- E. The word "substitutionary" is not found in the Bible, but the concept is found throughout the Bible.

1. But, neither are the words "Trinity," "evangelism," or "missions" found in the Bible either.
2. Yet we accept the teachings concerning these concepts.

- F. Since the beginning of the church, the Apostles, and the faithful brethren have spoke about the atoning blood of Christ.
- G. In the 1700's Alexander Mack's wrote poetry, one of his poems includes the following stanza:

"On Calvary's tree, redemption was purchased with
Christ's blood;
His mercy bought exemption from sin's polluting flood"

- H. In the 1884 edition of Primitive Christianity, Peter Nead spoke of the Son of God "who through the sacrifice of his life and blood on the cross, has found an eternal propitiation for our sins...and by shedding his innocent blood for us, he has procured for us the propitiation and remission of sins."
- I. Otho Winger, President of Manchester College, said, "I believe that man fell through sin and that the only thing that is able to bring him back into full fellowship with God, is the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ".
- J. William Beahm, in the message, The Cross and God's Forgiveness, said: "The fact that we are unable to make atonement adequately for ourselves, and that it is done for us by another, makes it essentially substitutionary."
- K. Elder S. N. McCann wrote: "The sinner needs to be reconciled to God and there is but one way by which this can be done. He must receive Christ as his substitute, the free gift of our dear loving Father."
- L. Many Scripture clearly state that the blood of Christ has power to produce a reconciliation between sinners and God.
- M. That is the Gospel, (the good news) that must be preached to every creature!

N. The Songwriters also speak of Christ our substitute:

“I gave My life for thee, My precious blood I shed, That thou might'st ransomed be, and quickened from the dead...”

“Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! Ransomed from sin and a new work begun, Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son, Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! Saved! Saved! My sins are all pardoned, my guilt is all gone! Saved! Saved! I am saved by the blood of the Crucified One.

O. It is very clear that the one thing that separates man from God is sin.

P. Hebrews 9:26 and many other passages of Scripture tell us that it is the blood that removes the enmity and cleanses our sin and makes acceptable before God!

II. The blood of Christ is a propitiation for our sins

I John 4:10, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

A. We have already spent quite a bite of time showing that before the new birth all men are totally depraved sinners:

Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was **shapen in iniquity**; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Isaiah 64:6, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all **our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

1. Again these two and many more passages clearly show that the natural man is a totally depraved sinner and guilty before God.
2. At the same time the Scripture declares the absolute holiness and righteousness of Almighty God.

B. The Holiness of God:

Psalms 99:9, "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; **for the LORD our God is holy.**"

1 Peter 1:16, "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

C. Because God is holy He hates sin and sinners.

1. Psalm 5:5, and Psalm 11:5, say that God "hatest all workers of iniquity."
2. Then we have, "for there is none righteous no not one."
3. At the moment of death those without Christ shall open their eyes in hell and at the GWTJ shall suffer the judgment and wrath of God

D. While at the same time God's love was shown to his own people before man sinned, and was bestowed upon them in Christ.

1. For in Christ, His elect are always well pleasing to him.
2. And even though they sinned in Adam, and became actual transgressors of His law, yet such was His love for, and to, them that He saves them from their sins by the blood and righteousness of His Son.

D. Not only was the Lord Jesus Christ our **substitution** He was our **propitiation**:

Romans 3:24, 25, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

1 John 4:10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1. In order for sinful men to have eternal life, it is necessary that their sins be atoned for.
2. Christ's was made the propitiation (sacrifice or atonement) for the elect of God.
 - That the justice of God could be satisfied, that the wrath of God, which sin deserved, be appeased.
 - God's wrath for the sins of the sheep was taken out upon Christ that we might have a just pardon!
3. The love of God for His people is from eternity past to eternity future and is everlasting:

Psalms 103:17, "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

- E. The love of God for His people is from everlasting, and is unchangeable; it never alters, nor changes from love to wrath, or from wrath to love.

III. The Blood of Christ provides forgiveness and redemption:

Ephesians 1:7 says, "We have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

- A. Redemption assumes that the sinner is captivity and enslaved to sin.

1. Before their conversion God's elect are in bondage to sin as revealed by the law of God.
 2. The blood of Christ secured our redemption and forgiveness of sin!
- B. By the grace of Christ, God's people are redeemed from all iniquity, and freed the bondage and condemnation of the law.
- C. Because of the blood of Christ we are declared righteous:

Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Those "in Christ Jesus" are declared righteous; therefore, they have no condemnation!

1. Righteous means blameless or justified!
2. The aspects of our justification:
 - The first is forgiveness of sin and the removal of its guilt and punishment.
 - The second is the imputation of divine righteousness.
 - And restoration to a position of favor, because the perfect righteousness of Christ is applied to our account.

Isaiah 61:10a, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath **clothed me** with the **garments of salvation**, he hath **covered me** with the **robe of righteousness**."

Through justification God strips us of the vile, rotten, filthy rages of our sin, and clothes us in the robe of the divine righteousness of Christ.

- C. Christ shed His blood, as the purchase price, of our redemption:

I Corinthians 6:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in **your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.**”

We are no longer slaves to sin, but blood bought servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Since the Lord Jesus Christ bought us with his blood, we belong to Him:

- A. Therefore, I am to strive to be faithful and in totally subjection (in all areas of my life) to the Lord.
- B. We should be much more committed to Christ than we are to anything or anyone else.
- C. Example – commitment to wife - greater to my Lord

V. Through the blood of Christ we have an approach to the Throne of God:

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;” Hebrews 10:19,20

- A. In Tabernacle and Temple worship
 - 1. Every day the priest made sacrifices, entered the Tabernacle and later the Temple to care for the Table of Shew Bread, the Lamp Stand, and offer pray at the Altar of Incents – But only the priest could enter the Tabernacle.
 - 2. **Only** the High Priest was allowed to enter into the holy of holies.

3. He was only allowed to enter only once a year on the Day of Atonement, and then only with the blood.
- B. The “Day of Atonement” teaches three things:
1. It teaches the holiness of Almighty God!
 2. The sinful, or depravity of man.
 3. That sinner’s can have no forgiveness “without the shedding of blood.”

Of course if there is no forgiveness of sin there is no access unto God.

Conclusions:

The Old Testament sacrifices were types and symbols of the true sacrifice Jesus Christ.

- A. Has the Holy Spirit “quickenened” you? Are you saved?
- B. If you are, we like Isaiah can say, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath **clothed me** with the **garments of salvation**, he hath **covered me** with the **robe of righteousness**.”
- C. Because the Lord is our sacrifice, our substitute, our propitiation – our Redeemer - We Sing:

”Redeemed! How I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; Redeemed thro’ His infinite mercy, His child, and forever, I am.

- ▶ Have you been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb?
- ▶ Are you faithful to Him who bought you with His blood?
- ▶ Are you a member of a local church where you can faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Book of Ephesians #7

Christ Our Peace

Text: Ephesians 2:14-22

“For he is our **peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; **Having abolished in his flesh the enmity**, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making **peace**; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached **peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Introduction:

- A. In the **world** that we live in there are wars and rumors of war.
- B. **Politicians** squabble to accomplish their own agenda, **society** may argue over their different agendas, and **homes** may be divided.
- C. On the other hand, the church is a place where unity and peace should prevail.
- D. In Jesus Christ, there is a oneness (a common truth) that brings true believers together - faith in Jesus Christ.
- E. **Verses 1-12** remind us of our loss condition.
- F. **Verse 13** states that we “**who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**”

1. These verses speak of the alienation being removed between redeemed Jews and Gentiles
2. Throughout the Old Testament and the Gospels we read of the division and hatred between the Jews and the Gentiles.
3. They were **avowed enemies** of one another.
4. This is seen in **verses 11, 12.**

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands, That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

5. Then, **verse 13** gives us the glorious news that through His shed blood, the Lord Jesus Christ reconciled the lost sheep who were lost in sin, and has brought them near to God.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

- G. In this passage, the Apostle Paul teaches us that **in Christ**, there is **no more** Jew or Gentile; there is **only Christ and those who are in Him.**
 - H. Hundreds of years ago, Clement of Alexandria, one of the early church fathers said, “**We who worship God in a new way, as the third race, are Christians.**”
 - I. “Paul wants us to know that **in** Jesus, those who were formally at war - are now at peace with God.
 - J. I want preach on the thought **He Is Our Peace.**
- I. First - What the Lord Destroyed - Verses 14-15:**

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

- A. In verses 14, 15, 17, the Word of God tells us that Christ “**is our peace.**”
- B. When the prophet Isaiah spoke of the coming Christ, he called Him, “**the Prince of Peace.**”

Isaiah 9:6, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The **Prince of Peace.**”

1. The phrase “**He is our peace,**” means that the Lord Jesus Christ is the ground of peace for both the Jew and the Gentile.
2. In other words, the Jews could never earn peace with God through their rituals, their sacrifices, or their attempts at keeping the Law.
3. Regardless of what they did, they would still be sinners in His sight.
4. The Gentiles had no hope of securing peace with Him through any means.
 - What the Law could not do;
 - What the sacrifices could not accomplish,
 - What works of the flesh could not make a reality;

- The **Lord** Jesus Christ **accomplished** at Calvary, when He died on the cross.

5. Verse 14 says,

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

- Some think that the phrase, “hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” is an allusion to the wall which separated the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles.
- However, this wall was not broken down till the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. long after the writing of this epistle.
- **Calvin said**, “To understand this passage, two things must be observed. The Jews were separated, for a certain time, from the Gentiles, by the appointment of God; and ceremonial observances were the open and avowed symbols of that separation.”
- So, the ceremonial law, which was made up of hard and intolerable commands, distinguished, divided, and put a division between Jews and Gentiles.
- This is seen in Song of Solomon 8:9 where the law is called a wall,

"If she be a wall"

- So, the law was "a middle wall of partition" that caused a great difference and distance; and between the Jew and Gentile.
- So by virtue of the sacrifice of the Redeemer the Gentiles were admitted to the same privileges and hopes as the Jews.

- So, in dying, the Lord brought several things to an abrupt end.

6. Notice what He destroyed when He died.

C. **First, the Lord Destroyed A Social Wall:**

1. Because of the law - "a middle wall of partition" there was a great social gap between the Jews and the Gentiles.

2. There was no common ground between them.

3. However, the Lord's death dismantled that wall and brought Jew and the Gentile together in Him.

4. For those Jews who do not know the Lord Jesus this wall still exist.

- Those who have visited the Western Wall on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem tell me that the presence of Gentiles is tolerated but not encouraged (strict rules).

- Revealing that in the minds of the faithful Jews this division still exist!

- And it will until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

5. But, for **those who know the Lord**, the wall of division has been torn down forever.

6. **In Christ** Jesus, there are no Jew or Gentile! There are Christians.

Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

7. This does not mean that we lose our nationality, social or sexual identity in Christ.

8. It simply means that no person has any advantage over any other person.
9. In Christ, there are only believers. **All** others are unbeliever!
10. No one of any nationality is better than any other in Christ.
11. Jesus Christ destroyed the social walls!

B. Secondly, **He Destroyed A Spiritual Wall:**

Verses 15, 16, “Having abolish Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

1. The word “**enmity**” means “**hostility or hatred.**”
2. As stated, the source of this “**enmity**” between the Jew and the Gentile rest in “**the law of commandments, contained in the ordinances.**”
3. The Jews despised the Gentiles because they did and do not follow the ceremonial law.
4. The Jews with their strict dietary laws, their laws of dress, and their laws governing every aspect of their social and religious lives hated the Gentiles because they did not follow the ceremonial law and lived as they pleased.
5. Thus the Ceremonial Law stood as a great wall of division between the two groups.
6. While there was hostility between the Jew and the Gentile, the greatest hostility that existed was between God and man.

7. All men (Jews and Gentiles) are sinners and stand guilty before a Holy God.
 - They were all guilty of violating His Law, thus they were all destined to face His wrath!
 - This is seen throughout the Bible but very clearly in Romans 3:10-23.

Romans 6:23, “For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God.”

8. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, not only did He tear down the social walls between the Jews and the Gentiles, and He tore down the spiritual walls between holy God and sinners.
 - In Christ, we are made right with God, apart from the deeds of the Law.
 - In Jesus, everything that stands between sinners and God is destroyed.
9. The Apostle continues by saying that Jesus Christ “**abolished in His flesh the enmity.**”
10. The word “**abolished**” means “to render inoperative; to deprive of force or power; put an end to, do away with.”
11. By fully keeping the Law, the Lord Jesus Christ **fulfilled** the Law of God.

Romans 10:4, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth,”

- Through His death, the ceremonial law holds no claim over us any longer.
- Romans 7:7-9 says that the Law served the purpose of exposing our sin.

- The law serves as a necessary teacher to bring us to Jesus.

Galatians 3:23-27, “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

- However, for those who are in Christ, Romans 8:1 says,

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”

- In Him, we are freed from the ceremonial law!

Romans 6:14, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Illustration:

On August 13, 1961, the Communist government (East Germany) began to build wall between East and West Berlin.

The official purpose of this Berlin Wall was to keep so-called Western “fascists” from entering East Germany and undermining the socialist state, but it primarily served the objective of stemming mass defections from East to West.

Families and friends were separated for a generation by this wall. East German guards patrolled the wall and killed hundreds, including whole families, who tried to cross the wall to freedom in the West.

On Nov. 9, 1989, the East German government announced that East Berliners could cross the border

whenever they pleased. Ecstatic crowds swarmed the wall. Some crossed into West Berlin, while others brought hammers and picks and began to chip away at the wall itself.

Before long, the governments of both East and West Germany dismantled the wall lead to the reunification of Germany in 1990.

If you go on y Tube and watch the videos of the destruction of that wall you will have a small glimpse of what Paul is trying to teach us here.

When the wall fell, the people from both East and West crossed the no-man's land and embraced one another in a spirit of unity.

12. When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross:

- He **“abolished in His flesh the enmity.”**
- Between the Jew and the Gentile.
- They are now one in Christ.
- And between wretched sinners and Holy God.

II. What the Lord Did - Verse 16:

A. Having told us what Jesus destroyed, Paul now tells us how and what the Lord did for us.

B. He Accomplished Our Reconciliation:

1. The word **“reconcile”** means, **“to bring to a state of harmony.”**
2. In His death, the Lord destroyed the walls of separation and brought all the parties together, in Himself, making eternal peace.
3. He has brought man together with man and He

has brought man together with God.

4. The ultimate goal of the Lord Jesus Christ was to reconcile sinners to God.

C. He Accomplished Our Redemption - when He gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross at Calvary.

D. In giving His perfect life for sinner on the cross, Jesus has **“slain the enmity.”**

E. The word **“slain”** means, **“to kill, to utterly abolish.”**

1. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He delivered all those who believe in Him from the power of the Law and from the penalty of sin.’
2. He did this by:

- **By becoming subject to the Law.**

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,” Galatians 4:4-5.

- **By bearing its penalty**

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,” Galatians 3:13.

- **In His Own Body, on the cross:**

I Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

- **By offering Himself in the place of sinners**

II Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

That’s what He did and what it cost Him to do it!

III. What is the outcome of the things that the Lord Jesus Christ did - Verses 17-18

- A. The word “**peace**” appears in this passage three times (Verses 14, 15, 17).
1. Peace between people speaks of **harmony** and **unity**.
 2. Verses 14 and 15 say that is what Jesus accomplished between the Jew and the Gentile.
 3. In verse 17 “**peace**” speaks of the peace between man and God.
 - It refers to “**a tranquil state of the soul assured of its salvation through Christ.**”
 - And because of this peace, he is content with its earthly lot, of whatever it may be.
 4. The word “**preached**” is the same word often translated “**Gospel.**” Literally, it is “**The Good News.**”
 5. Paul is telling us that the Lord Jesus Christ secured peace with God through His death on the cross.
 6. Furthermore, He has gone out to both the Jew and the Gentile declaring the Good News that they both can be saved from their sins.
 7. That Good News still stands today! Those who come to Jesus Christ for salvation always find a willing Savior according to John 6:37.

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

- Those who come to Him will be brought into a state of perpetual peace with Almighty God.
- They experience complete forgiveness of their sin.
- They are reconciled to God and adopted into His family.
- They will experience His power to forgive them, save them, deliver them, secure them and change them forever.
- That is the Good News preached by the Lord Himself.

B. In Verse 18 we have a message of permission.

1. Through the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross, we have “**access**” to God.
2. The word “**access**” means, “**the act of moving to; or of bringing to.**”
 - When we are draw of the Spirit we come to Jesus Christ by faith, we are placed in a position of “**being brought to God.**”
 - This word is used three times in the New Testament in Romans 5:2; Ephesians 3:12.
 - Each time, it refers to the believer’s access to God.
 - The word refers to a court official who was responsible for introducing people to the monarch. That person controlled access to the king.

- Jesus Christ is our access to the Father!

John 14:6, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

- The Lord Jesus Christ is able to take us where we could never take ourselves.
- Our sins stood as an impossibly high barrier between God and us.
- When Jesus died on the cross, He tore the wall down.
- He brought us to God.

Illustration: Many years ago there was a young English boy named William who went to Buckingham Palace. He stood at the gate for most of the day, because he wanted to see the King of England. He didn't want to ask for anything, he merely wanted to meet the King.

There were several obstacles that stood between young William and the King. There was the wall around the palace. There were the gates, the guards, and the police that prevent William from getting to the King.

After a while, a policeman told William to go home. William begged to be allowed to see the King. The policeman told him that it was impossible.

Suddenly the policeman snapped to attention, and the gate swung open. A young man walked by the policeman and took William by the hand; and together they walked through the gate.

The young stranger gave William a tour of the palace. After a while, they walked through a door and William could not believe his eyes! There, right before him, was the King of England.

The young stranger said, “Father, this young boy wants to meet you. Meet my friend William. William, meet the King”

William didn't know it, but his new friend was Edward, the Prince of Wales. **By meeting the son, William had access to the father.**

3. That is exactly what Paul says in Ephesians 2:13.
4. Because of our sin, we could never get to God on our own.
5. Left to ourselves, we would have continued our sin.
6. But, The Lord came to us and took us where we could not go on our own. He brought us to God!
7. Now, He welcomes us at any time we desire to approach.

Conclusion:

1. Thank the Lord - He broke down the wall of partition:
 - Socially and Spiritually.
 - He removed the enmity between man and He brought us to God.
 - We praise Him that He has redeemed us and reconciled us to God and to one another.
2. Christ is our Peace!
3. Do you have the peace of Christ?

The Book of Ephesians #8

Text: Ephesians 3:1-12

Introduction:

- A. This chapter can be divided into four sections.
 - B. The Apostle Paul states that he is a prisoner of the Lord:
 - 1. For the testimony of concerning the knowledge of the truth that had been a mystery throughout the ages,
 - 2. That truth or mystery was that the Gentiles were fellow heirs and of the same body with the Jews, (Verses 1-6).
 - C. Therefore, he was made a minister, that he might declare the unsearchable riches of Christ, and make known this eternal purpose of God, 7-12.
 - D. In verses 14-19:
 - He tells them not to be discouraged because of the trials and tribulations that he is and has faced.
 - His prayer is that they might be filled with all the fullness of God.
 - E. The chapter concludes (Verses 20, 21) with an acknowledgment of praise to God, because of the great goodness that He had manifested, and the glory of the plan of salvation.
- I. Verses 1-6:
- “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace

of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:”

I. Verse 1 - “For this cause.”

1. Paul’s imprisonment certainly served as a confirmation of his apostleship.
2. He was not a prisoner for a crime he committed, or for a financial debt.
3. Nor was he a prisoner of the Law of Moses, or the traditions of the elders as he was at one time.
4. Rather he was a prisoner and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, by redemption through the powerful efficacious grace of God.
5. In reality, he was a prisoner for the cause of Christ and his service to the Redeemer.
6. He points out to the Ephesians that the only reason he was imprisoned was that he had preached the gospel to the Gentiles.

II. Verse 2:

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:”

1. The word “If” can also be “Indeed” or “Inasmuch.”

2. This is important because indicative in the Greek does not imply “doubt” on the Ephesians part.
3. Paul is saying, "Knowing that you have heard," from Paul himself and from others the dispensation of the grace of God being spoken of.
7. The “dispensation” – Paul, as a steward of God dispenses or declares the free grace of God in salvation to the Jew and Gentile alike.
8. This he does for the sake of others, especially the Gentiles, and particularly the Ephesians.

III. Verse 3 - 8:

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,”

1. Verse 3 - **Revelation:**

- Revelation is a **disclosure** of unknown truth.
- Speaking of Paul, The Lord said in Acts 9:15,

“Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”

- God used the Apostle Paul to disclose truth that was not known previously (the mystery that is seen in verses 4-5).

IV. Verses 4&5 – **Mystery:**

“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;”

1. The word mystery means the hidden secret things, something that is not obvious.
2. Certainly Christ is not very obvious to many people it takes a diving revealing of Christ to see him...
3. Note to whom it was revealed "Apostles and Prophets."
4. Paul is saying that God has sent him to preach these wonderful truths of Christ (that which was hidden) to the Gentiles.

V. Verse 6-8 - **Unsearchable:**

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;”

1. **Unsearchable** is the Greek word anexichniastos (an-ex-ikh-nee'-as-tos).
2. It is a negative particle that **means**: past finding out, unsearchable, that which cannot be searched out or comprehended.
3. It seems very strange that Paul would say that he was commissioned of the Lord to preach among the Gentiles that which cannot be found out!
4. **Explanation:**
 - There are things that even the children of God do not completely understand:

- For example - holiness, perfection, the works of His hands, his dominion and power over all, these are inconceivable things.
 - (Explain the Trinity, or sinlessness, or absolute holiness.) These things we accept by faith.
5. Then there is the grace that is laid up for us in Him, the inheritance He possesses for us. These things are called the riches of glory; and these rich things are communicable, as well as solid, satisfying, and lasting.
 6. But **these things** are unsearchable, or uncomprehendable to the natural man!

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned."

- What is necessary to understand the wonderful unsearchable riches of Christ?

7. Verse 8 – "HUMILITY."

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints..."

- Before his conversion I think that Paul (or Saul) being a Pharisee, was probably proud, self righteous, maybe self-centered, arrogant and egotistic!
- But now he considers himself "less than the least of all saints."
- In other words, he was saying, I am incomparably the least of all the saints;
- Or I am not worthy to be reckoned among the saints."

- Even though he understood that God had completely forgiven him - Paul never forget the guilt of persecuting the church of God.

VI. Verse 9:

“And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”

1. The publication of the gospel is called a fellowship, because it is the will of God that his purpose, which had formerly been hidden, shall now be shared with people.
 - There is also a metaphor in the words “To make all men see.”
 - This phrase conveys the thought that, in his apostleship, the grace of God shines with the brightness of noon-day.
2. The phrase, “Which hath been hid in God” shows the foolishness of men, who thought that they were not ignorant of anything concerning God.
3. In fact, there were those who irrationally questioned if God had the right to keep his purposes concealed, until he was pleased to communicate them to men.
 - What presumption, what foolishness, not to admit that God is wiser than we are, and that this subject, exceeds our capacity,
 - Furthermore, we should study this subject with reverence and admiration.
4. Who created all things by Jesus Christ.

John 1:3, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

VII. Verses 10-11:

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:”

1. Calvin said,

“There can be no doubt that the apostle labors to place in the strongest light the mercy of God toward the Gentiles, and the high value of the gospel.

For this purpose he declares, that the preaching of the gospel exhibits the manifold grace of God, with which, till now, the heavenly angels themselves were unacquainted.

The wisdom of God, therefore, which was manifested by uniting Jews and Gentiles in the fellowship of the gospel, ought to be regarded by men with the highest admiration.”

2. And this is done, by means of, or “through the church” which is a display of God’s manifold wisdom according to Luke 15:10 and I Corinthians 4:9.

3. “According to the eternal purpose” (Verse 11).

- Salvation is according to the eternal purpose of God.
- In God’s great wisdom the way and purpose of salvation was decreed before the foundation of the world.

John 17:24, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

Ephesians 1:4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

- While the preceding verses speak of those who will believe, the following speak of Christ himself.

1 Peter 1:20, “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

- In these last times brings us to:

John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- And He came into this world to:

Ephesians 1:7, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

- And since God does not change His eternal divine purpose will not change.
- A great truth – No new will, no new purpose, resolution, or decree can be made by him that was not made from everlasting.
- Hence, His purpose concerning the salvation of men is eternal and unchangeable.
- In the covenant of Grace, a promise of life was given,
- Certain people predestinated to be saved, a Savior was appointed for them,
- And grace and the blessings of this salvation were put into his hands before the world began.

4. Which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- In him are all the promises, and blessings of grace designed and provided for God's people.
- And, at Calvary, the execution of this purpose was carried out in Christ.
- The church was a mystery as well.
- There is no mention of the church until the Lord spoke of establishing it in Matthew 16:18,

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

- The Lord established His church while He was still upon the earth.
- And He states its purpose in Matthew 28: 19,20,

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

- All this He purposed in Christ Jesus.

VIII. Verses 12,13:

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.”

1. “In whom we have boldness and access.”

Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

- Christ is our way of access to the Father.
 - And through his mediation we can have an audience with the Father.
2. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.”
- The apostle Paul was a man that had faced many tribulations, and great afflictions in his ministry.
 - However, since he did not suffer them as an evildoer, he was not ashamed of them, but gloried in them. Why?
 - First, they did not come unexpected.
 - Secondly, God allowed him to see the glory that would follow them, which greatly supported him while he was suffering under them.
 - And furthermore, these tribulations were endured for the sake of the elect, the church, which included the Ephesians to whom he was writing.

Conclusions:

- A. The Lord told Paul at the time of his conversion that he was to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles.
- B. This did not set well with the Jews – therefore he and Christianity as a hold were persecuted because of it.
- C. But the Lord blessed the preaching of the Gospel and the church grew and multiplied.
- D. In chapter 3 the apostle encourages the believers at Ephesus to rejoice in God mysterious decree

and praise and glorify Him for their salvation and inclusion into the family of God.

- E. And not to feel sorry for him – because he understood that it was necessary for him to be present – but to be with the Lord was to be desired and looked forward to.

The Book of Ephesians # 9

Text: Ephesians 3:14-21,

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

Introduction:

- A. As stated in the introduction this chapter can be divided into four sections.
 - 1. In verses 1-6, the apostle speaks about the truth or mystery of the Gentiles being fellow heirs and of the same body with the Jews.
 - 2. In verses 7-12 Paul declares that he was made a minister charged with declaring the eternal purpose and unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles.
- B. Now we come to the end of chapter 3:
 - 1. In verses 14-19, Paul tells them not to be discouraged because of the trials and tribulations that he is and has faced.
 - 2. His prayer is that they might be filled with all the fullness of God.
 - 3. The chapter concludes (Verses 20, 21) with an

acknowledgment of praise to God, because of the great goodness that He had manifested, and the glory of the plan of salvation.

4. What better way of concluding the chapter than praising the God of Heaven Who makes all these things possible!

C. The last two verses of this chapter are a “doxology.”

1. The word “doxology” comes from the Greek words “doxa” and “logos.”
 - The word “doxa” refers to “the kingly majesty which belongs to God as supreme ruler.
 - The majesty in the sense of God’s absolute perfection.
 - It speaks of “splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace, and majesty.”
 - It is usually translated “glory” in the New Testament.
2. The word “logos” means, “collection.”
 - It is often translated “word” in the New Testament.
 - Why? Because it speaks of the process of collecting thoughts in the mind, then expressing those thoughts through words.”
3. Thus, a “doxology” is “a word of glory.”
 - It is simply a statement of praise that honors the Lord’s majesty, that ascribes glory to Him, that exalts His.

- Therefore a "**doxology**" is an oral expression of praise and glorification toward God.
 - That is what Paul does in verse 21.
4. Twice the Apostle Paul says, "Unto Him."
- I want to examine these verses and share some of the Apostles statements that exalt the majesty of our glorious God.
 - These statements teach even more about what we have in Jesus Christ.
 - Let us consider the thought, "Unto him *be* glory in the church."

I. Our text, especially verses 20, 21 speak about God's Greatness:

- A. The Apostle Paul has spent considerable time describing the enjoyable condition of the church.
1. He reminds us that we are not saved by chance!
 2. Instead, we are saved because of the decree, plan, and action of God.
 3. I want to quickly review some of the truths that we find in the first three chapters of Ephesians:
 - We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world - 1:4.
 - We are predestined to salvation and therefore predestined to be eternal life with the Lord in Heaven when this life ends - 1:11.
 - We are secure in our salvation, because the Holy Spirit has been given to us as the

earnest or guarantee that the Lord has purchase us - 1:14.

- We were dead in our trespasses and sins, but we have been brought out of death into life by the amazing grace of God - 2:1-4.
- We are saved by His grace and seated with Him in heavenly places - 2:5-7.
- All that we have in Christ Jesus is not because we deserve it, but because He extends grace unto us - 2:8-9.
- We are a people made useful and usable to God through grace and power of God - 2:10.
- We are a people who were separated from God because of depravity and sin, yet we have been brought near to Him by the precious blood of Jesus Christ - 2:12-18.
- Now, we fellow citizens - 2:19.
- Now, we are a part of His family - 2:19.
- We are His Temple - 2:20-21.
- We are His body - 2:22.

B. There are also other truths in these chapters.

1. However, the ones we mentioned should cause every saint of God to seek to glorify and praise God for His grace and mercy toward them.
2. He is worthy of our love, our devotion and our praise. Let us glorify Him in our lives and in the church!
3. May we praise the Lord from our hearts.

Hebrews 13:15, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

Psalm 113:1-3, "Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised."

Psalm 135:1-6, "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD. Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant. For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure. For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

- C. One of the many joys of the saints is praising and glorifying our God.

Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath **blessed us** with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."

- D. Having told us about the glory of God in saving us, Paul prays for the church.
 1. He prays for three specific things to happen.
 2. He prays that they will be filled with the power of God - 3:16.
 3. He prays that they will both know and live out the awesome love of God - 3:17-19a.
 - His prayer is that they would love God, and one another, completely and without reservation.

- He also prayed that they would come to the full understanding of just how much they were loved by the Lord God.
4. He prays that they will be able to experience the very fullness of God Himself - 3:19b.
- First, the fullness of good things, which they may receive from God in this life.
 - Secondly, to be filled with a sense of the love and grace of God.
 - Then to have an interest in the righteousness of Christ
 - As well as the gifts and graces of the Spirit.
 - Then full provisions of the spiritual food needed for their souls;
 - As well as spiritual peace, joy, and comfort.
 - Next, the Apostle prays that these believers will acquire knowledge of divine things, of God, of Christ, of the Gospel, and of the will of God.
 - And lastly, for them to be fully aware of Who God is and all that He has done for them.
5. In reality, these things should be on our own hearts and lips at all times.
- Nevertheless, it is impossible for us to accomplish these things in our own power.
 - We must accomplish them in His power.
 - We could never understand the even the smallest truth about God unless He opened our eyes and revealed it to us.

- E. So, as part of his doxology of praise to the Lord, Paul lets us know that we have help!
1. Thank God, there is help for those who desire His power.
 2. There is help for those who want to know His amazing love.
 3. There is help for those who want to show that same love to others.
 4. There is help for all those who desire to know the Lord in His fullness!

F. The **Greatness Of His Ability:**

1. While we are unable to do any of the things Paul mentioned on our own; He is able!
2. The word “able” means, “to be capable, strong and powerful.”
3. Our God is a God Who according to Matthew 28:18 possesses “All powerin heaven and in earth.”

G. Our God is the **God of Creation:**

Colossians 1:16-17 “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

H. Our God is the **God of Revelation:**

Ephesians 1:9, “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.”

I. Our God is the **God of Salvation:**

Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

J. Our God is the God of Resurrection:

Revelation 1:18, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

K. Our God is the God of Manifestation:

"Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee," Jeremiah 32:17.

He spread His fingers and made the universe, Isaiah 40:12.

He said, "Light be," and there was light, Genesis 1:3.

1. Many times we see God moving in power on behalf of His people.
2. Moses, Noah, David, Elijah, the widow, three Hebrews, Daniel, the 5,000, Disciples on the sea, and US!
3. Paul's point is that our God is "able" to do all these marvelous things and much more.
 - And if He can do all that, then He is more than "able" to give us the great blessings Paul prayed for in Ephesians 3:16-19.
 - He is "able" to empower us, Acts 1:8.
 - He is "able" to enable us to know His love, Ephesians 3:19, and to show that same love to others, Romans 5:5.

- He is “able” to enable us to grasp Who He Is and all that He has done for us in Jesus Christ.
- Our God is “capable, powerful and strong!”
- **We should praise Him for Who He is!**

L. The Greatness Of His Abundance:

1. Paul says that God is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.”
2. The phrase “exceeding abundantly above” had the idea of, “going above and beyond.”
3. God’s ability exceeds the lengths to which our minds can think.
4. His ability goes beyond the limits of what we can ask.
5. In verse 20 the Apostle Paul breaks out in praise and thanksgiving to God:
 - Not only does this verse praise God, it also serves the purpose of exhorting the Ephesians to maintain "good hope through grace," (II Thessalonians 2:16).
 - And to endeavor constantly seek after a more adequate conception of the value of the grace of God.
 - This verse also refers to the future ability and power of God.
 - Why? Because it agrees with what we are taught concerning the hope that we have in Christ Jesus.
 - We cannot offer God proper or sincere thanksgivings for grace received - **unless**

we are **convinced** that his **goodness to us will be without end!**

- Thus, God is able (He is all powerful) to do!
 - And because He is omnipotent, He is that which He does - exceeding abundantly – or beyond all that we ask.
 - Sadly many believers fail to enjoy the privilege of seeing Him do these things because we fail to walk in His power.
6. When we walk in His power, (Verse 16); when we are walking in His love (Verse 17-19); and when we walking filled with the fullness of the Lord (Verse 19b) we are able to tap into the power of God that we might walking pleasing to the Lord.
 7. When we are walking in Him, He works in us and through us to accomplish the things He desires in our lives.
 8. When we yield to Him, His powers transcend our weakness and enable us to live for the Lord, and to accomplish those things that glorify Him.
 9. Every true believer wants a closer relationship with the Lord.
 - We all want to live cleaner, more holy lives.
 - We all want to honor God and serve him faithfully.
 - We pray for that.
 - Yet, so often, we think we will never achieve our spiritual goals, and we can't in ourselves.
 - But thank the Lord that His power exceeds the limits of our weakness and He is able to

help us achieve holiness and godliness in our lives.

10. Thank God, there are no limits to His power!

- He can move mountains, change lives, lift burdens, meet needs.
- He can change the lives of imperfect saints and transform them into vessels of honor for His glory.
- That is just a small glimpse of how great our Lord is.

II. There is also a statement about God's Amazing Grace found in verse 20:

A. The grace of God is the **ground of our salvation**.

1. The Lord extended His grace toward us is a sign of His love for us.
2. Before the foundation of the world, He made us a part of His eternal plan.
 - He predestinated us to salvation.
 - He sent His Son to die for us on the cross.
 - He sent the Gospel message to us. He sent the Spirit of God to convict us and give us faith to believe.
 - He saved us when we believed and called upon Him.
3. And, His grace continues to sustain us day by day and moment by moment.
4. This we see in the life of the Apostle Paul.

II Corinthians 12:9, “And he said unto me (**Paul**), My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

- B. The grace of God also works in our lives to help us accomplish His will in our lives.
- C. Paul gives us some insights into the way the grace of God works in our lives.
- D. **His Grace Empowers Us:**

1. Paul tells us that the Lord is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”
 - This phrase simply reiterates what I have already said, God empowers His people to live for Him.
 - Before the Day of Pentecost, the Lord made this promise to His disciples.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth,” Acts 1:8.

- The word “power” in that verse and in Ephesians 3:20 is the same word.
- It refers to “inherent power, or the power that resides in a thing because of its nature.”
- When the Lord moved saved you, He did so by His power.
- And at that moment, He indwelt you with the Spirit of God, which enabled you to love and live for Him.

- Saul hated Christ and Christians until that day on the road to Damascus when God overpowered and saved him.
- The Lord then called him to be an Apostle, personally taught him, and lastly enabled Paul to live and preach for His glory: “

I Corinthians 2:4-5, “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

- The Lord likewise enabled Paul to live for the Lord day by day.

II Corinthians 6:3-10. “Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things,”

2. The truth seen here!

- God's grace is sufficient for you too.
- He is able to empower you for service.
- He is able to empower you to live for Him every day you spend in this world.
- His grace empowers us!

His Grace Enlivens Us:

1. Paul says, “according to the power that worketh in us.”
2. The power to live for the Lord comes from Him, Who lives in us.
3. When He saved us, the Holy Spirit of God came into us with power for Gods glory.
4. He empowers us by enlivening us. He empowers us by imparting His life and power to us.
5. The Apostle Paul said it this way in Galatians 2:20:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

6. When we yield to Him, He in essence is living through us, thus we will live lives that are empowered by Him.
7. Therefore, it is a life that is pleasing to the Lord.
8. Hence, we glorify God will in our lives.
9. That is what the Apostle means when he says that His “power worth in us.”
 - The word “worketh” means - “To be at work, to put forth power, to be operative.”
 - When we are yielded to Him, He is operative in our lives.
 - This empowers us and allows us to bear fruit for His glory.

John 15:5, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

10. His grace empowers us for service. His grace empowers us for living. Thank God for grace!

III. There is a statement about God’s Glory:

- A. In verse 21 the Apostle Paul makes a splendid statement about the glory of God.

“Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

- B. First, we see the **Place of His Glory**.

1. “To Him be glory **in the church**.”
2. This phrase reminds us that the church exists for the purpose of bringing glory to God.
3. He is glorified in the church, because the church is made of sinners who have been saved by His grace.
4. He loved us when we deserved to be cast into Hell.
5. He reached out to us in love and grace and drew us to Himself.
6. He saved us when we by faith believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. And lastly, He drastically changed our lives.
8. And because of that change, we live for Him and honor His Word. And He receives glory in the church.
9. As we love Him and love one another, He is glorified.

10. As we gather together to sing hymns of praise, preach the Gospel, and worship, He is glorified.
11. As we serve in the church, He is glorified.
12. The Lord's church exists to bring glory to His name, and when we function as we should, that is exactly what we do!
13. Everything we do at the church should be done with a view to bringing glory to the Lord.
14. Every decision we make, every dollar we spent, every missionary we support, every job we assign, should all be for His glory and for no other reason.
15. Every person who serves here in any capacity should perform his or her job to the best of their ability for the glory of God alone.
 - We must not work for the applause of men.
 - We must not work to make a name for ourselves.
 - We must work for the glory of God.

I Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

B. The Person of His Glory:

1. Nowhere is God more glorified than in the person of His Son, "Jesus Christ."
2. The Lord Jesus Christ always has been and always will be His "beloved Son in Whom" He is "well pleased."
3. Since God is glorified in His Son, we should be in the business of magnifying Him.

4. We need to examine our music, our preaching, our service, and our motives and be sure that everything we do serves to magnify the name of the One Who brings the ultimate glory to God.
5. When we honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ - God will be glorified by our lives.
6. The same is true in our church - If we come to church to glorify the Lord, God will be glorified by our church.

C. The Permanence of His Glory:

1. This glory that God receives through the church, and through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a fleeting glory.
2. Paul says that it will last “**throughout all ages, world without end.**”
 - That phrase literally means: “Through all succeeding generations.”
 - Or while the human race continues to exist on the face of the earth God will be glorified.
3. Then one day, the Lord Jesus will come for His church.
 - He will take his bride home to Heaven to live in the Father’s house forever.
 - Then the redeemed of all the ages that are now in Heaven will continually glorify God forever.
 - We are given a glimpse of the amazing future in Revelation chapters 4-5.
 - Even with this glimpse we will never grasp all that He is and all He has done for us.

- Nor will we grasp the fullness of His glory and grace in this life.
 - One day, however, our bodies and our minds will be glorified.
 - When that happens, we will understand Him.
 - We will “know even as we are known,” I Corinthians 13:12.
 - Then, we will glorify Him throughout the ages for His grace in our lives.
4. Even though we can't fully understand it all right now, we should glorify Him concerning what we do know.
 5. So we should give Him glory in the church, because that is the business of Heaven.

Conclusions:

- I. Johann Sebastian Bach said, “All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub.”
- II. At the top of every composition, he wrote the letters: “J.J.” Those initials stand for “Jesus Juva,” which means “Jesus help me.” Bach ended every composition with the letters “S.D.G.” Those letters stand for “Soli Dei gratia” which means “To God alone the praise.”
- III. Bach served faithfully in many churches and always had the glory of God at the heart of every piece of he authored. **That same desire should dwell each of our hearts.**
- IV. Every Christian should attempt to glorify God in everything that they do.

- V. Likewise, today the day and time that we as a church should seek to glorify God in this church.
- VI. Are you glorifying Him for His gracious work in your life?
- VII. We need His power for service, to walk and faithfully live for Him day by day.

The Book of Ephesians #10

Text: Ephesians 4:1– 32

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *here is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are 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. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) **And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”**

Introduction:

- A. In the first three chapters the apostle Paul has dealt with doctrine, particularly the doctrines of grace.
- B. Here in chapter four he proceeds with the duties of the believer.
- C. He continues by saying that they were called with a holy calling and as a result they should walk worthy of that calling (Ephesians 4:1).
- D. The phrase, “the prisoner of the Lord” adds incentive because they knew Paul faithfulness.

- E. Verses 2, 3 say that they should act in a manner becoming their calling.
1. There should be humility, patience, patience, and love.
 2. Furthermore they should seek to preserve spiritual harmony, unity, and peace among the brethren.
- F. Verses 4-6 give various arguments from the unity of the body to show that because all the members of the church are saved and guided by the same Spirit.
1. Furthermore, all believers have the same hope of eternal happiness.
 2. Verse 5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism,"
 - The church(s) and all believers have one Lord (Christ) over them.
 - While there are many types of faith (faith in miracles, or history) there is only one saving faith.
 - Thus all believers have the same like precious faith in Christ.
 - They are also baptized with the same baptism --- true baptism!
- G. Verses 4-7, says that all of them have spiritual gifts:
1. They are different, but useful and necessary.
 2. They are gifts given to each believer by , Christ.
- H. Then in **verses 11-13** the Apostle expands and expounds God gifts to each church.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”

1. **“The perfecting of the saints”** or advance spiritual growth within the members of the body.

Why?

- I. The Bible is clear when it tells us that every Christian is a new believer or babe in Christ when they are saved.

I Peter 1; 23, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

I Peter 2:2, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

1. Thus the reason why growth is needed is obvious. (**Newborn babes**).
2. The process starts with the “*The New Birth*,”

John 3:3 – 7, “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

3. The Growth Process continues through the process of Sanctification:

J. Spiritual Growth pleases our Lord:

1. Parents (and Grandparents) love to tell us (in detail) all the new things their children are doing.
2. This **joy** and **delight** is true in **every step** of development (infancy, toddler, terrible two's, starting school, junior high, senior high, college graduation, job promotions, etc.
3. Our Heavenly Father, and Lord Jesus Christ are likewise pleased when we grow spiritually from the "new birth" into adulthood.

K. **The Law of Nature:**

1. Every newborn child grows and goes through the growth cycles that take them from infancy to adulthood.
2. The same is true in the Spiritual realm. God wants us to move from the spiritual nursery to the spiritual battlefield.
3. He wants us to leave the realm of ***milk, bibs and diapers*** and He wants us to enter the realm of ***meat, battles and devotion - Verse 13.***

II Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore **leaving the principles** (infancy) of the doctrine of Christ, let us **go on unto perfection** (Spiritual adulthood); not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God."

- L. The Word of God teaches us that everyone of God's children are to seek spiritual maturity!
1. So, why do some Christians not do so?

2. While we are to grow and mature we will never be perfect this side of heaven!
3. We **won't** be **perfect** until we are **glorified!**
4. **If you are saved, you cannot stay where you are like you are!**
5. If the Lord Jesus Christ is your Saviour then He must also be your Lord for the two are inseparable.

M. So this message is for those believers that are genuinely saved by grace and desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. As Christians we understand that we are far from what we should be.
2. But, there is a genuine desire in your heart to be all that the Lord has saved you to be.
3. Your life is filled with ups and downs, with the struggles of the flesh and the spirit.
4. Christians are not self-righteous, nor are they self-confident.
5. Rather, they trust in the Lord to help them grow spiritually!
6. The Apostle Paul gives us some helps because we all fight the same battles.

I. First, we see a calm steadfastness:

Verses 14- 16, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined

together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

These verses point out three areas where the growing believer is found to be steadfast and stable.

A. Verse 14 – Growing Christians Are Steadfast In Their Doctrine

1. They are not constantly being taken in by the false teachings in the world around them.
2. The maturing believer is one who knows what they believe and why they believe.
3. The growing Christian spends time in the Word of God and is not deceived by the lies, tricks and traps of the enemy!

II Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

II Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

B. Verse 15 – The Growing Christian is Steadfast In Their Development

1. They are constantly adapting their lives to the teachings of the Bible.
2. They take the time to find out what God wants from their lives and they change whatever it takes to line up with His will.

1 John 2:3-4, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I

know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

1 John 5:2-4, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

3. Obedience to the Word of God produces genuine Christ-likeness in their lives!

Children want to grow up to be like mom or dad, the growing believer wants to grow to a place where they are the image of their Lord.

The growing believer is steadily progressing in his growth relationship!

C. Verse 16 - They Are Steadfast In Their Devotion

1. Just as our human bodies are knitted together in a wonderful way, so the body of Christ has been carefully "**compacted**" together.
2. Each member in the place that pleased the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12 deals compares the member of the physical body to those of the spiritual body. And in summary says that every body part has a function and so does every member in the church.

3. The growing believer wants to find his place in the body and fulfill that place to the best of his ability.
4. It is a sign of spiritual maturity when a believer does his/her best to carry out the assignments they have been given by the Father above.

When a part of these physical bodies doesn't live up to its assignment, it causes problems for the whole body. When one part fails, the whole body suffers!

The same is true in the church. When every person does what the Lord assigns them to do, things function smoothly when they do not do what they are supposed to do, the whole church suffers as a result!

You can count on a maturing believer!

II. Their separation is obvious:

Verses 17 - 24, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; **21**If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

A maturing believer is easily identified because they are different from the world around them.

A. Verses 17-19, They Are Separated From The Works Of Darkness

1. Paul makes a distinction between how the lost man lives and how the saved man lives.
 - When God saves a person they become a new person.
 - They can no longer live as they once lived.

2. In verse 18, The Apostle Paul says that a lost man lives like he does because he is blind to the reason and consequences of his actions.
 - He doesn't understand that for every action there is a consequence, and the end result of sin is death and separation from God.
3. However, the maturing believer is no longer in darkness.
 - Verse 21, the believer has the guiding light of the Holy Spirit. They are "taught by him."
 - Now there is a desire to walk pleasing to the Lord.
 - Verse 19 - Life has ceased to be about "**self & self-will**" and has become all about "**God's will.**"

B. Verses 20-24, **They Are Separated From A Walk Of Darkness**

The believer has received a change of life that results in a change in his walk.

1. The word "conversation" is the Greek word "anastrophe."
 - This word is never used in Scripture in the sense of verbal communication.
 - It always speaks about a person's manner of life, their social behavior.
2. The word "corrupt" to defile, to destroy, to perish or waste away.

We are called upon to "**put off**" the ways of the old man who is growing worse day by day.

3. Then we are told to "**put on**" the new man; who had been created in righteousness and holiness.
4. God puts a new desire within His children that makes them want to live differently than they used to live!
 - **Our want to changes**
 - The bottom line is this: the maturing believer looks different, acts different, walks different and thinks different than he did before!

III. Christians live by Christ-like principles:

Verses 25 – 32, “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

- A. Paul begins to talk about the believer's day-to-day walk.
 1. Paul focuses on **how** the believer acts, reacts and interacts with others around him.
 2. There is a change from “self” toward “others.”
- B. Verse 19 says that lost people have a problem – “pleonexia” or “greediness.”

1. There have always been covetous people that have covetous practices! But it seems **worse today**.
2. They are greedy and always desire to have more.

In other words, the lost man lives like he does because he is selfish!

3. A new Christian may also have a self-centered, selfish existence attitude. And that is to be expected!
4. But, the maturing Christian works at overcoming that attitude day-by-day.
5. Pretty soon they show genuine care and interest in those around him, especially other believers!

In John 13:35, Our Lord said that His people would have one trait that would easily identify them. That characteristic is **“love.”**

C. Verse 28 - **They are Christ-like in how they Act**

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

1. The maturing Christian is one who has begun to look beyond self, to see the needs of others.

Philippians 2:4, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

2. Instead of being greedy and covetous, the believer finds joy in helping others.

The whole point here is that “self” ceases to be a great motivator in life, while others grow in their importance to us.

B. They Are Christ-like In How They React:

Verses 26, 27, “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.”

Verses 31,32, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

These four verses all talk about the same thing.

1. They speak of learning to control your anger when you are offended.
2. And learning to forgive when you have been hurt!
3. The maturing believer does not allow the hurts they suffer at the hands of others to cause them spiritual problems!
4. Verse 26, tells us to be angry without sinning. How is this possible?
 - It can only happen when you are angry because of true zeal or enthusiasm for the things of God!

For example: David showed righteous indignation when Goliath cursed and blasphemed God.

- But be very careful for any other kind of anger gives the devil an opening from which he can attack you (Verse 28).
5. **Verses 31 & 32** teach us that we are to refrain from getting even and lashing out at others.

“Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Matthew 18: 21-22, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

6. We are to forgive to the same extent that we have been forgiven!
7. We are to do so even if they don't make it right with us!

C. Believers are to be **Christ-like in our Interactions**

Verses 29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

1. This speaks about controlling the tongue.
2. **James says much about this subject in James 1: 26 and James 3: 1-12.**
3. A word spoken can never be recalled.

Conclusion:

- A. Every saved person ought to be moving steadily toward maturity in the Lord – day-by-day.
- B. Are the evidence of maturity visible in your life?
- C. **The first step is the new birth** - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.

The Book of Ephesians #11

Text: Ephesians 5:1-7,

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”

Introduction:

- A. In chapter five, the apostle Paul continues his exhortations to believers relating to their duties in relation to uncleanness and purity of life.
 - B. In the latter part of chapter 4, the Apostle had exhorted believers to love, kindness, and tenderness, which he insists is obligatory.
 - C. The he uses God himself as our standard and example.
 - D. In verses 1, 2 the apostle uses the example of Christ loving his people, and giving himself for them a propitiatory sacrifice, acceptable to God.
 - E. He follows with an exhortation to reframe from vices that are not to be done by the saints in verses 3-7.
- I. Be ye therefore followers.**

A. This phrase sets forth a principle:

1. Children ought to be like their father.
 - On the human level this may not be true.
 - While most dads are great men and dearly love their families and are worthy to be followed – sadly, there are some that are not!
2. But our heavenly Father sets the perfect example.
3. Thus the apostle reminds us that we are the children of God, and that therefore we ought, as far as possible, to resemble Him in acts of kindness.
4. If, we are the children of God - we are to be **followers of God.**

B. In our study of this 5th chapter we are confronted with a passage that demands that which is humanly impossible.

1. We are called to be like God.
2. We are called to love like He loves.
3. It sounds like an impossible task.
4. How can we, sinful, human, frail, failing people ever be like Him or love like He loves?

II. There is a person to imitate – Verse 1:

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”

A. The word “therefore” refers to the last verses of chapter 4.

1. We are reminded that as the saints of God we have been:
 - Saved by the grace of God,
 - And because we have been saved we are to be different in the way we walk, talk, and the way we think.
2. We are to be different in every area of life.
 - The “**old man**” of sin, with all his evil desires and appetites is to be “put off,” Ephesians 4:22.
 - The “**new man**,” created in righteousness, with his appetite for righteousness and the glory of God, is to be “put on,” Ephesians 4:24.
 - Since we have been made a new creature in Jesus, we are to live as new creatures in our daily lives, 1 John 2:6.
- B. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul has challenged us to bring our tongues, our anger, our bitterness, as well as our work ethic under the control of God
- C. He has also challenged us to be kind, forgiving, and compassion toward one another.
- D. Ephesians 5:1 gives us another challenge:
- E. First, There Is a Command - “Be ye followers of God.”
 1. The word “followers” means to “mimic” or to “imitate.”
 2. The command here is for the people of God to imitate God.

3. We are to learn all we can about God, and then imitate or mimic His characteristics.
4. When we examine this command, we understand that we can never imitate God in all ways.
5. We can never truly imitate God in His essential essence.
 - God is perfect; we have flaws.
 - God is omnipotent; we are weak in comparison.
 - God is omniscient; we are not.
 - God is omnipresent; we can only be in one place at a time.
 - God is wholly good --- And until He saves us, we are wholly evil – and all our righteousness is the imputed righteousness of Christ.
 - God is Spirit; we are flesh.
 - God is eternal; this body is temporal.
 - God is heavenly; we are earthly.
 - God is infinitely holy; we fall short of God's holiness.
6. We are to learn everything we can about the Lord from His Word and put it into practice.
7. We are to be like God in every respect.
8. In reality, God is commanding us to do something that is impossible within ourselves.

9. Left to ourselves we could never be imitators of God.
- F. There Is A Condition - We are told to imitate God, but we are told to do so as “dear children.”
1. It is natural for children to imitate their parents.
 2. Children often have their parent’s nature, their behavior, and their actions.
 3. When you are around a child - you can see their parents in them – in the way they look, the way they walk, the way they talk, and in the things they do.
 4. While that is true in our earthly families, it is even truer in our heavenly families.
 - Like beloved children, who are near the parent, learning, observing, and growing,
 - We are brought near to our Heavenly Father so that we might learn His ways and become more like Him.
 5. When the Lord saved us, He did so on purpose.
 - God’s purpose in redemption is to make us more like Him.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren,” Romans 8:29.

- To be conformed to the image of Christ is to become holy like God is holy.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” Matthew 5:48.

- That is God’s plan for each one of His redeemed children.

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy,” 1 Peter 1:14–16.

- Ultimately we will become that described in 1 John 3:2.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,” 1 John 3:2.

6. We are unable to imitate God through our own power.

- While we can't be holy on our own, as redeemed children of God, we have been empowered to live like, act like, and talk like our Heavenly Father.
- He has empowered us and enabled us to live holy lives for His glory.

7. We are not mere slaves following in the footsteps of a demanding master.

- We are the sons and daughters of God.
- Redeemed by His grace. Adopted into His family. Partakers of His very nature,

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,” II Peter 1:4.

8. We are the temples of God, indwelt by His Spirit, and made able to walk in imitation of our Father.

- He is holy; we are to be holy.

- He is loving; we are to be loving.
- He forgives; we are to be forgiving.
- He is truthful; we are to be truthful.
- He is patient; we are to be patient.
- He is kind; we are to be kind.
- He is compassionate; we are to be compassionate.
- Everything God is; we are to be.

9. Where do we learn these things?

- We learn them from His Word.
- We learn them from observing Him as He works in the lives of others.
- We learn them from walking with Him.

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:8.

10. Therefore we are to walk with Him, learn from Him, and be like Him.

III. In verse 2 we see an obligation:

- A. In verse 1 we are told to be an “imitator” of God.
- B. In verse 2a, we are told to imitate, mimic, or copy His “love.”
 1. 1 John 4:8b says that God is love.
 2. God’s very nature is defined by His love.

- Everything God does, He does out of love.
 - The overriding characteristic of God's Person is His love.
 - His people have experience that love.
3. Since He is love, and seeing as He has placed His love within us, Romans 5:5, we are to walk in love as well.
- The word "walk" means "to regulate one's life."
 - Our very lives are to be controlled, to be driven, to be defined by love.
 - The word "love" here is the Greek word "agape"; to love with one's whole heart.
 - This verse says that the saints are obligated to love God as He loves them (with an agape love) that puts His glory as the chief aim and purpose of their lives.
4. This kind of love arises out of **God grace**.
- This is a love that is shown to those who are undeserving.
 - It is a love that cannot be bought or turned away.
 - It is a love that is powerful, eternal, redemptive, and undeserved.
 - It is a love that has no counterpart in the universe.
 - **Yet**, it is a love that we are commanded to imitate.

- And a love that can **only** be **accomplished** through the power of God abiding in us.

C. The “Law of Love”, or God’s expectation of His people, is seen in Matthew 22:37-40,

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

1. We are to love God supremely:
2. We are told to love Him with all out “heart...soul...and mind.”
 - The “heart” refers to “the core of our beings.”
 - The “soul” to “the emotions.”
 - The “mind” to “our intelligence, our will, our determination.”
3. We are to love Him with our whole person.
4. Our love for Him should be all-consuming.
5. It should be a love based on the knowledge of Who God is.
6. It should be a willful love, in which we are determined to love Him no matter what.
7. Genuine love is intelligent, feeling, willing and serving and is a love that will demonstrated in every area of our lives.
8. This is not a new command! Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11, 13-21 and Numbers 15:37-40 both declare the obligation for the people of God to love the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

- The Jews recited this text twice every day.
- This is the same command Jesus gave to His people in the New Testament.
- God has always wanted His people to love Him.

9. How do we know that we are walking in love? The Bible is clear about this too.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments," John 14:15.

John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

10. When we love Him, we will be like Him. When we are like Him, we will love like He loves.

11. The Apostle Paul illustrates the genuine love of God by reminding the Ephesians about the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for His people on the cross.

IV. Those things that are to be detested – Verses 3-7:

Verse 3, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;"

A. This chapter and the Colossians 3 contain many parallel passages.

- B. However, verse 3 – list three things which the apostle desires Christians to loathe - **fornication**, and all **uncleanness**, or **covetousness**.

1. **Fornication:**

- This sin is committed between single or unmarried persons;
- It is contrary to the law of God, and is a work of the flesh.

2. "**All uncleanness**" takes in adultery, incest, sodomy, and every unnatural lust;

Verse 5 says these sins render a person unfit for church membership or the kingdom of God if they do not repent.

3. "**Covetousness**" is nothing more than an excessive desire of gain.

- Another definition of "covetousness" is "a greedy desire to have more"
- **Or** a excessive desire for wealth or possessions.
- The online dictionary added this phrase,

"Social media so often encourages us to compare ourselves to others, inspiring covetousness and insecurity."

C. Verses 6,7 give us the conclusion:

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

1. Verse 6 continues the warning that God's wrath will come upon those who commit these things.
2. Follow the Lord, walk in love, abstain for sin.

The Book of Ephesians #12

Walking as Children of Light

Text: Ephesians 5:8-14,

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Introduction:

- A. This entire chapter deals with the do's and don't for one living for Christ.
- B. It clearly teaches us:
 1. That, as believers, we are different from the unsaved in the world in which we live.
 2. And since we are different, we should live lives differently (Verses 8-10).
 - “For ye were sometimes darkness,
 - but now *are ye* light in the Lord:
 - walk as children of light:
 - (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
 - Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

3. The truth is that believers should be a marked difference between those that know the Lord and those that don't.
4. Since our text is a continuation of verses 1-7 I want to review them very quickly.
 - In verse 1, we are commanded to live like God.
 - In verse 2, we are commanded to love like God.
 - Verses 3-7 tell us must live godly lives in this evil world.
5. In verse 8, the Apostle tells us why we are to be different.
 - I Peter 2:11 reminds us that we are "strangers and pilgrims" just passing through this world.
 - So it is not our home.
 - Our home is "in the Father's house."
6. The Apostle Paul reminds us that even though we are "strangers and pilgrims" there was a time when we were "darkness."
 - Our names were written in the Lambs Book of Life before the foundation of the world.
 - However, we were physically born blind and in spiritual darkness.
 - Therefore we were partakers and enjoyed the world and the things of the world.
 - In our darkness, we thought like they think.

- We lived like they live.
 - We participated and fit in with those of the world.
7. But, when we were saved by the grace of God:
- We were delivered from darkness and our old life of sin.
 - We were given a new life, and thus became “Light.”
 - We are to walk as children of light, not in sin or the works of darkness, but in faith, truth, and holiness.
 - While we were delivered from the world, we still possess a deep familiarity with the world and its ways.
8. However, because of the carnal nature, there is still a part of us that desires the things of the world we left behind when we were saved.
9. There is subtle pressure from people we love who would like to see us behave a little more like they do.
- I think they want this because our lifestyle makes them feel guilty about the way they are living.
 - Not only is there pressure from without, there is pressure from within.
 - The flesh reaches out for the things that are now forbidden to it.
 - Even though we are saved there is still a part of us that loves sin and hates the rigors of seeking to live a holy life.

10. While there is pressure to go back, there is also a great desire to go forward.

- Just as the flesh and the world want us to follow its ways,
- the Spirit of God want us to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord.

11. Here a few verses that make this clearer.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,” Romans 12:1–2.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would,” Galatians 5:17.

Verse 7, said, “Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”

12. The verses before us today teach us how to make that a reality in our lives.

- We live in a hard, dark world, a world that is dominated and driven by sin.
- In the midst of that darkness and depravity, God has redeemed a people.
- A people that He expects to be different.
- In truth, He has empowered us so that we can be different.
- The rest of our text tells us how to make that a reality in our lives as we walk as children of Light.

I. How We are Changed – Verse 8:

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

A. **What We Were** - We “were sometimes darkness.”

1. This means that we were lost and in the darkness of sin and depravity.
2. We were blinded by the god of this world – II Corinthians 4:4.
3. We lived like every other lost person, and we enjoyed it - Ephesians 2:1-3.
4. The sins listed in verses 4-5 reveal who we were and what we did.
5. We were enslaved to sin.
6. We knew nothing else, nor did we want anything else.

B. **What We Are Now** - We “are light in the Lord.”

1. When the Lord saved us, He delivered us from darkness.

Colossians 1:13, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

2. When the Lord delivered us from darkness, He set us free from the power of sin.
3. He has changed and made us children of the light.
4. Since we have been changed, we are to walk in light and no longer in the darkness that once characterized us.

5. Consider Romans 13:12-14,

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

6. Our lives once manifested the works of the world, the flesh and the devil.
7. Sin was a way of life for us.
8. Darkness was where we lived, and what we loved.
9. By the power of grace, the Lord has touched us, saved us, delivered us and changed us.
10. He has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

I Peter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

C. Since that is true, we are to “walk as children of light.”

D. How do we do that?

1. We do that by avoiding sinful thinking and sinful living.
2. We do it by surrendering our all to the Spirit of God, Who will produce within us the “peaceable fruit of righteousness.”
3. We have been changed, and we should live different lives.

4. If we are truly saved then holiness should be a way of life for us!

II. How We are Characterized - Verses 9-10

“(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”

- A. These two verses deal with the reality of our spiritual walk.
- B. Those who are truly saved, and walking in the light, it will be clear demonstrated in our lifestyle.
- C. Paul says the “fruit of the Spirit” is seen in three ways.
 1. It is seen in Goodness:
 - This refers to “uprightness of heart and life, goodness, and kindness.”
 - It speaks of goodness and kindness in our motives, thoughts, and actions.
 - It is the quality of godliness in us.
 - It speaks of how we treat others.
 - When we practice “goodness,” we are walking in love to those around us.
 - We are being God-like toward them, as we treat them like God treats us.
 2. It is seen in Righteousness:
 - Righteousness refers to our standing before the Lord.
 - When He saved us, God declared us righteous. He took away all our guilt,

imputed the righteousness of Christ to us, and made us holy in His sight.

- Righteousness is revealed in our lives through integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and actions.

3. It is seen in Truth:

- Truth speaks of honesty, fidelity, and trustworthiness.
- When this quality is seen in the life of a believer, it stands in stark contrast to the hypocritical, deceptive and false ways of the world.

“Goodness” deals with our relationship with others.

“Righteousness” deals with our relationship with God.

“Truth” deals with the personal integrity of our own lives.

D. These **three characteristics** are called **“fruit.”**

1. Fruit is the unfolding of the spiritual life.
2. The “Fruit of the Spirit” is the proof that the Lord is living in us.
3. None of these “fruits” will reach their perfect fulfillment until we are glorified.
4. Because we know Him, we are to seek to be like Him!
5. It is also very important that we notice that:
 - Being baptized, joining the church, being a good person, or doing good works for salvation are **not** mentioned.

- All of these things are good things!
 - But they are works that are easily accomplished in the flesh.
 - Anyone can do them, even someone who has never been saved.
6. However, the three characteristics Paul list, “goodness, righteousness and truth,” are **only possible** through the work of the Spirit in the life of a redeemed believer.

III. How We are Charged – Verse 11

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

- A. We are charged to “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”
1. That means “Do not be a partaker of them.”
 2. Those who know the Lord should not be a partaker of or associated with people and things that are evil (works of darkness).
 3. This does not mean that we cannot fellowship with them in a civil way, for we live among them.
 - There are many occasions where we much socialize (example: a ball game, school activity, etc.)
 - However, we must abstain from and not consent to their wrongful lifestyles.
 4. We are to endeavor to avoid everything that is evil.
 5. And according to I Thessalonians 5:22 we are to avoid even the **appearance** of evil.

6. We have to be in the world because God has a purpose for our life.

- You and I have an idea where our life is going right now.
- But in reality, a change, a sharp right turn, a new job, an unknown event future may come into our lives unexpectedly.
- Examples: unknown sickness diagnosed, a car wreck, unexpected change at work, etc.

7. In all the activities of life - we are to be a separated, holy people for the glory of the Lord.

B. The kind of sins we are to avoid are seen in Ephesians 4:25-31; 5:4-6.

1. However, this is not all the sins we are to avoid.
2. It is impossible to list every sin --- We are to avoid all sin!

C. How we are to live is revealed in verse 15,

“See then that ye **walk circumspectly**, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

D. Circumspectly means “to walk discreet, cautiously, carefully, to be on one's guard.”

1. The believer's walk is both inward and outward.
 - His inward walk is by faith in Christ.
 - His outward walk is his conversation among men.
2. The circumspect walk requires strength and prudence.

3. It indicate continuance and progression; with patience and courage.
 4. The circumspect walk requires diligence, caution, wisdom and prudence.
 5. It requires that the believer rely on the Lord for strength and power to accomplish the goal.
- E. We are to guard our hearts, our minds and our bodies that we might live lives that are holy and pleasing to Him.

IV. Our Charge – Verses 11-13

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.”

- A. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
1. As "the children of light" we dwell amidst the darkness, or, in other words, in the midst of "a perverse and crooked generation," (Deuteronomy 32:5).
 2. So, there is very good reason for warning Christians to keep themselves apart from wicked actions and events.
 3. Not only are we to avoid that which is wicked or sinful.
 4. We must beware not to join, give our consent, or assist those who do wrong.
 5. Instead believers are to reprove those who committee offenses against God.

6. The Greek word “elegcho” which is translated reprove.
- It refers to the “darkness” and literally signifies to drag forth to the light what was formerly unknown.
 - Psalm 36:2 says that the ungodly like to brag about their sin, as if they were virtues.
 - Paul says that instead of condoning their sin the believer is to reprove them.
 - This means that we are to “expose” evil for what it is.
 - When we are silent about sin, we are guilty of encouraging it.
 - So, there are times when we must deal with those who are involved in sinful activities.
 - However, you don’t have to be hateful or speak down to the person – reprove them in the right attitude.
 - At other times, our reproof of wickedness will be indirect.
 - Simply living for the Lord is a powerful testimony in the face of evil.

B. Verse 12:

“For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”

1. This verse tells us that it is a shame to talk about the things the world does.
 - Those of the world love to brag or even gloat about their sin! **Sin is no laughing matter.**

2. I am old enough to remember a time when certain subjects were just not spoken of.
3. So, just because something exist – just because people do it – doesn't mean that we as Christians should talk about it.

C. Verse 13 tells us how to handle sin.

“But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.”

1. We handle sin by taking action and exposing it to the light of the Word of God.
2. We are to hold it up to the Bible, and if the Bible is against it, we are to be against it too.
3. If the Bible is for it, we are to be for it.

D. The Word of God alone is to be the standard for our lives.

1. Light “manifest,” or makes things “easy to see.”
2. When we walk in the light, it makes the evil of the world around us easy to see.
3. The children of God should walk so holy, so clean, and so close to God that we stand out as beacons of light in a dark world.
4. As we lift up truth and expose sin, not everyone will be happy.
5. But we are to seek to please the Lord – not man.

Matthew 5:14-16, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may

see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

6. We are called, saved, commanded, and commissioned to be different.
7. When we act differently - sin is exposed, the Gospel is magnified, and God is glorified.

V. Our Call - Verse 14

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

- A. Scholars and commentators have searched to find the passage from which this verse is taken.
 1. First, it is not a direct quote from any passage.
 2. Thus, I find no problem in believing that the Holy Spirit gave Paul these words to conclude the subject he was discussing.
- B. I believe that the Apostle Paul speaks to two distinct groups: Those who are spiritually asleep and those who are spiritually dead in trespass and sin.
- C. First, there is a call for believers to wake from slumber.
 1. “Awake” speaks of “Rousing up” and is used to stir people to activity.
 2. We should be about the master’s business.
 3. When we do, the Lord promises to give us “light” that we might have a positive effect in the world in which we live.
 4. Paul also speaks of this in Romans 13:11–14.

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

5. The Lord's people and His church need to arise and shine forth the Light.

D. These is also a call to the dead.

1. This is an invitation for the lost to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. The call is very simple - wake up, and come to the Lord and He will save them and give them light.
3. Paul was speaking to the lost people who were in that congregation.
4. This invitation still goes out today.
5. If you are lost, you can be saved.
6. The Lord will change your life, deliver you from, darkness and fill you with His light.

Conclusions:

- A. The believer's walk is both inward and outward; his inward walk is by faith on Christ; his outward walk is his conversation among men.
- B. Life requires strength and good sense. The Lord gives us both power and light that His children may be shining lights in a dark world.
- C. Let us “Walk as Children of Light.”

The Book of Ephesians #13

Live Wisely and Redeem the Time!

Text: Ephesians 5: 15-18:

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

Introduction:

- A. Think for a moment about the things you value most in life. What would be on that list?
- B. Certainly, God, Church, and family would be at the top of the list. But did you list on of the things spoken of in the verses we read? Did you think about "**Time!**"
- C. Ephesians 5:15-16 speaks of **Time Management!**
 1. In these passages Paul commands all believers walk (live) “Circumspectly.”
 2. The word “circumspectly” means,
 - To walk cautiously, watchfully, with vigilance, guarding against evil from every quarter.
 - They are not to walk as unwise men ("fools"), but as wise people.
 - Instead believers are to **Redeem** or make the most of our **Time**.
 - It also reminds us that we are not to squander away time because it cannot be recalled.

- Thus we are take advantage of every opportunity that we are given that we might fulfill our duty to God and man.
3. **Why? Because the days are evil** and iniquity (sin) abounds.
 4. We certainly live in evil times among wicked men!
 5. I never thought that mankind could have such disregard for life, property, rights, values, or others as we see today.
 6. It is a world where Scriptural error and heresy prevail.
 7. The evil of our day should motivate us to redeem the time!

The Apostle Paul uses three Greek words or very instructive phrases that help us to understand more fully.

I. The first is the command to walk circumspectly or walk carefully.

- A. This phrase is in the present imperative.
- B. As we said above, it is a command to continually take heed, be alert and vigilant of our surroundings.
- C. We are to continually depend on the leading of the Holy Spirit that we may live our life wisely.

C H Spurgeon paraphrases it "See then that ye walk circumspectly (being careful to consider all circumstances and all possible consequences), not carelessly, not thinking that it is of no importance how you live; but looking all round you, "walk circumspectly," watching lest even in seeking one good thing you spoil another." In other words, if we walk wisely, we will be careful not to let the good steal God's best!

Another wrote: our "greatest danger is letting the urgent (secular) things crowd out the important (divine things)." Our problem is that too often we live by life's demands, instead of by God's priorities. Remember that life is too short for us to do everything we want to do, but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do.

II. The second word is "Redeem."

A. Redeem is the Greek word "exagorazo" which literally means to "buy up."

1. It means:
 - To by payment of a price to buy something from the power of another.
 - To redeem
 - To make wise and sacred use of every opportunity to do good.
2. Redeem, is also in the present tense, and commands us to make it our practice, redeem or take advantage of the strategic opportunities that God providentially places in our path.
3. If we are walking wisely filled with God's Spirit we will be spiritually alert to those divine opportunities.
4. We will begin to view people and circumstances not just as encounters (or irritations) in time but as opportunities to impact eternity.
5. Each new day brings us new opportunities.
6. As God's stewards we are to be mindful that one day we must give an account for how we spent the time God loaned us.
7. How effectively we "bought up" the opportunities He provided.

8. If someone gave us \$1000.00 each day and said spend it or lose it, how diligent would we be to comply?
- B. Yesterday is but a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is all of the cash that you have.
1. Spend it wisely.

As someone has well said:

I have only just a minute, only 60 seconds in it;
forced upon me; can't refuse it;
didn't seek it, didn't chose it.
But it's up to me just how I use it.
I must suffer if I lose it, give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute, but eternity is in it.

2. When we visited the brethren in Cuba we found that a doctor/dentist made \$30.00 and a specialist made \$35.00.
 - We asked, why do you spend years becoming a doctor/dentist?
 - Their answer, "A better day is coming?"
 - I thought that day had come in 2016 but it hasn't. In fact right now it's worse.
- C. A survey asked people the question, "What do you have to live for?"
1. 94% answered they were just enduring today and living for tomorrow.
 2. According to Ephesians 5:15 that not wise living.
 3. Too many people miss happiness today because they are worrying about tomorrow.
 4. The Lord said,

Matthew 6:34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof."

5. Worry does not make us ready but unready to redeem the time.

Adrian Rogers, in a sermon on "Redeeming the Time" said "We face the future out of breath, because we have been fighting tomorrow's battles today!"

D. **Wisdom** is taking every opportunity today and fully using the time granted us.

1. We all have been given the same amount of time:
 - 24 hours a day!
 - That's 1440 minutes
 - Or 83,000 seconds a day
2. The difference is how we redeem this divine gift. Instead of killing time, redeem it.
 - I watched a movie once where a man was so rich that he had everyone come to him (the barber, the doctor, all meetings were in his office, etc.)
 - They were compensated well as well.
 - The reason – Time was the most important thing he had.
3. Instead of counting the days, make your days and your time count for the Lord.
4. The Redemption of time, in the present, is in all reality preparation for eternity.

Spurgeon said, "**Now** is the watchword of the wise." **Later** may be too late! Right Now counts for ever. How goes your preparation for the future dear saint? It's now or never. "Time is the seed of eternity." To make our life count for eternity, we must be wise in how we spend our time today. What will your eternal harvest be?

Psalm 107: 2, "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

5. We should redeem the time because we are redeemed with a price and for specific purpose!

III. The Third word is "Time."

A. Time is the Greek word "kairos.

1. It is used as "time," "season," "opportunity."
2. Time speaks of "a measure of time", "a larger or smaller portion of time."
3. So it can be a fixed and definite time:
 - The seasonable time
 - The right time
 - A limited period of time
4. It refers to a fixed and definite period of time during which something can be accomplished that cannot be accomplished after the time has passed.
5. **Example** – Space program – re-entry problem.
 - The calculations were wrong – could not get the astronauts home.
 - They were reminded of the times the earth stood still in the Bible – when they included those the time work out perfect for re-entry.

- To re-enter the time had to be exact.

B. Concerning this verse Wuest said,

1. That Paul's "idea is not to make best use of time as such, which is what we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of the **opportunities**" that present themselves.
2. The time or opportunity for bringing forth fruit is the spring season in which the tree bears fruit, in contrast to late autumn, when there is no fruit.
3. So "kairos" is the time which God allots to each believer to bring forth for themselves "spiritual fruit."
4. Time (kairos) represents the best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable.
5. Kairos can be a moment or a season, but always refers to specific times in which opportunity is "ripe", so that when the time passes, so does the opportunity - "Opportunity only knocks once." (end of quote)

C. The word **Opportunity** is derived from the Latin "ob portu."

1. In ancient times before modern harbors, ships had to wait for the timing of the tide before they could make it safely into port.
2. Thus "ob portu," described the ship waiting "For Port," ready to seize the crucial moment when it could ride the tide into safe harbor.
3. The captain knew that if he missed the passing tide, the ship would have to wait for another tide to come in.

4. God gives each of us many "ob portu's", but we must be spiritually wise in order to see and take hold of them.

Charles Swindoll said "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities (ob portu's) brilliantly disguised as impossible situations."

- D. In short, kairos conveys the sense of an "opportune time," a "window of opportunity".
- E. **John Broadus** said "Opportunity is like a fleet horse that pauses for a moment at one's side. If you fail to mount him in that moment, you can hear the clatter of his hoofs down the corridors of time. That opportunity is gone forever."
- F. **Jonathan Edwards** America's greatest theologian understood Paul's charge to REDEEM THE TIME and as a young man wrote "Resolved:
 1. Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.
 2. Resolved: to live with all my might while I do live." "Time that is past you can never recall, Of time to come, you are not sure at all; Only the present is now in your power, Therefore, redeem and improve every hour."
 3. **Time** is a strange commodity - we can't save it, retrieve it, relive it, stretch it, borrow it, loan it, stop it or store it , but can only use it or lose it.
 4. We can't call time out in the game of life. Indeed, there is no such thing as a literal "instant replay." That appears only on film.
 5. "When as a child I laughed and wept, **time crept**. When as a youth I dreamed and talked, **time walked**. When I became a full grown man, **time ran**. When older still I daily grew, **time**

flew. Soon I shall find in traveling on, **time gone.**"

G. Robert Moffatt, said, "We shall have all eternity in which to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before the sunset in which to win them."

H. Jesus said "I must work the works of Him Who sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work."

I. Bonar said,

"We cannot afford to be idle; neither do we desire it. The call is, Redeem the time. Be always doing something that will last; be always stretching forward to the prize... Work on, work on, till the day of recompense arrives." "The time is short! If thou wouldst work for God, it must be now; If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow, Redeem the time. With His reward He comes; He tarries not; His day is near; When men least look for Him will He be here; Prepare for Him!"

J. **Adrian Rogers** offers some other practical thoughts on redeeming the time:

1. Learn to live in the eternal now. Today is the only day you have. Redeem the time.
2. Stop worrying about tomorrow, and stop waiting for tomorrow. Give God today, and He will take care of tomorrow.

Micah 7:18,19, "18 Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

3. If you have not accepted Christ, now is the time. The Lord said,

"I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2.

Conclusions:

Psalm 90:12, "So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom."

- A. To redeem the time is to intentionally walk in wisdom and in submission to God, seeking His will.
- B. Redeeming the time includes staying away from the sinful things of the world and instead walking in the ways of God.
- C. To make the most use of the time is to understand that the time we have is a gift from God and to steward it accordingly.
 1. We should start every morning by committing our day to the Lord and asking Him to help us do something that day that has eternal significance.
 2. By beginning our day with eternity in mind, we become more aware of spiritual nudgings in our hearts.
 3. We look for ways we can honor the Lord, help someone else, or utilize our time in productive ways.
 - Sitting at a red light, we can pray for our neighbor.
 - Doing daily task, we can worship in song.
 - At a restaurant, we can leave a tip along with a gospel tract inviting the waiter to church.

- These are a few ways we can redeem the time.

4. May God guide each of us to so order our steps that when that great day comes we might hear those glorious words of Matthew 25:21,

"His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

5. The song, "When It's All Been Said and Done"

When It's All Been Said and Done
There is just one thing that matters.
Did I do my best to live for Truth?
Did I live my life for You?

When It's All Been Said and Done
All my treasures will mean nothing.
Only what I've done for love's reward,
Will stand the test of time.

Lord Your mercy is so great
That You look beyond our weakness
And find purest gold in miry clay
Making sinners into saints

I will always sing Your praise
Here on earth and ever after
For You've shown me Heaven's my true home
When it's all been said and done
You're my life when life is gone.

The Book of Ephesians #14

The Lord's Type of Church

Text: Ephesians 5:23-27, Matthew 16:18, Acts 2:42-47

Ephesians 5:23-27, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Acts 2: 42-47, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Introduction:

- A. When I talk to people about this church I use the phrase "my church."
 - 1. I do not mean that I own the church, but that I am the "pastor" or under shepherd of this church.

2. Likewise, when you say “my church” speaking of LBC that is a true statement, because you are a member of, and attend, this local church.
- B. However, when our Lord speaks of “My Church” in Matthew 16, we understand that He is speaking of “His church.”
1. the “Rock” and foundation on which He is building **His** church in the most absolute sense!
- C. A reading of the Ephesians passage clearly shows that our Lord is:
1. The founder and head of the church (His church).
 2. That He loves the church
 3. That He is the Savior of the body.”
 4. That the church is subject unto Him.
 5. Today, He is sanctifying and cleansing His church through the Word,
 6. So that, He might present it to himself a glorious church, a holy church without blemish.
- D. In the Acts passage we see the church growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord and busy about the Master’s business.
- E. In this message I want us to consider several things concerning the Lord’s church.

I. The church’s one foundation:

- I. Not only is the Lord Jesus Christ the foundation, Cornerstone, and He is the builder.
- II. The Hymnist said it very well in the hymn, “The church’s one foundation:

“The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the Word.
From heav'n he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth;
her charter of salvation:
one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.

The Church shall never perish.
Her dear Lord to defend,
to guide, sustain, and cherish,
is with her to the end.
Tho' there be those that hate her
and strive to see her fail,
against both foe and traitor
she ever shall prevail.”

III. The Bible speaks of the Lord's church as:

1. God's building.
2. A body - fitly put together
3. A Bride – preparing herself for the coming Bridegroom.
4. A brotherhood

Ephesians 2:19-22, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the

building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

IV. In Ephesians 2 the church is also seen as:

1. Verse 19 - The household (family) of God.
2. Verse 21 – a holy temple
3. Verse 22 – the habitation of God.
4. Our being the temple and habitation of God is seen in the following verses as well.

I Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the **temple** of God, and *that* the Spirit of God **dwelleth** in you?”

I Corinthians 6:19, “What? know ye not that your body is the **temple** of the Holy Ghost *which is in you*, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

II Corinthians 6:16, “And what agreement hath the **temple** of God with idols? for ye are the **temple** of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

V. The qualifying and commission of the Lord’s church.

John 20:21,22, “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

1. The phrase, “he breathed on them” alludes to the Holy Spirit, who is the breath of God, and breathes both upon a person in regeneration, and in qualifying them for ministerial service.
2. “And saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost;”

- This is not the grace of regeneration. The disciples had already received that.
- Instead, it is the gifts of the Spirit, to qualify them for the work that the Lord was not sending them to do.
- So why did they not immediately go forth preaching?
- Because this was symbolic, a promise, a confirmation of what they were to receive on the day of Pentecost.
- Therefore it is the Spirit of God, who, by his gifts and grace, makes and qualifies men to be ministers of the Gospel.
- This action and these words are proof of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Catholic Popes show their insolence, wickedness, and blasphemy in imitating Christ by breathing on men; pretending thereby to convey the Holy Spirit to them.

VI. Next we see the manifestation of the Lord church.

Acts 2:1-4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all

these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

1. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came as the Lord told His disciples in John 20.
2. Immediately the church began to preach the gospel.
 - What did they preach?

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- All those present were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke out for the Lord.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- What they said came from the Holy Spirit and not themselves.
- They spoke those things that the Holy Spirit put into their minds.
- They delivered the wonderful truths of God.
- They shared the Gospel in different languages, in a very orderly manner, so as to be heard and understood by the people.

"Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that **every man heard them speak in his own language**. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? **And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**"

VII. Thus we see the foundation and the qualifying of the Lord's church.

II. The Commission of the church:

- A. Everything that the Lord created was created for a purpose:
 1. The sun, moon, stars. The seas, the mountains, the trees, animals, insects, and man were created for a reason.
 2. The Lord's church is no exception!
- B. The church has one supreme mission – to carry out the commission that it was given by the Lord Jesus Christ its Founder and Head.

Matthew 28:19, 20, “Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

1. Teach:
 - The word “matheteuo” (math-ayt-yoo’-o) not the normal word (didasko) is used here.
 - Didasko means “to instruct” where “matheteuo” means “disciple, or make disciples.”
 - This “teaching” is often called “Evangelism.”
 - Since “worship” and “witness” are the two main functions of the Lord's church it is a good work – but it must be done in the right way.
 - Our witnessing or evangelism must have the right **aim** and **purpose** --- The glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

- It must also be done for the **motive** – love to God and concern for His glory – and love for man and concern for his eternal soul.
- Thus, evangelism is the communication of a divinely inspired message – the Gospel.

2. Baptize:

- The second command is “Baptize.”
- Baptism follows an individual’s trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.
- Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ that **follows** an individual's acceptance of salvation by God's grace alone.
- Baptism **does not provide** salvation for an individual, but rather publicly identify the individual as a follower of Christ.
- In order to be scriptural baptism four conditions must be met.
 - There must be a scriptural subject, baptized in the scriptural method, by a scriptural authority (one authorized by one of the Lord’s churches), and for a scriptural purpose.
- Initially a believer is added to the church through baptism.

3. Teach:

- Here teach is translated from the Greek work “Didasko.”
- As stated above “Didasko” means “to instruct” that believers (members) will grow

in grace, knowledge, and service, of their Lord and Savior

C. Thoughts:

1. The church is divine in its origin.
2. The church is divine in its ownership.
3. The church is divine in its mission
4. The church was designed by a Divine Architect.
5. A Divine Builder is building it
6. A Divine Purchaser bought it
7. A Divine Lord commissioned it.

III. The Characteristics of the Lord's Church

A. The Lord's church is to be a spiritual church!

1. What do we mean by a "Spiritual Church?"
2. What qualifies a church to be a "Spiritual Church?"
 - There are thousands of churches in America today.
 - If you ask the pastor of most of them they would say that they are spiritual churches.
 - Some would say that they are spiritual because they have a large membership.
 - Others would say they are spiritual because of their "wonderful programs."
 - Another would claim to be spiritual because of the wonderful praise and worship service they conduct each week. Etc, etc.

- But, the reality is, that having a large memberships, programs, or lively services to be a spiritual church!!!

B. A Spiritual church has spiritual people.

1. First, they are born of the Spirit – Saved

John 1:12,13, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

2. Secondly, a spiritual church has people that know the Holy Spirit.

- People who know and are filled with the Holy Spirit.
- People who know the difference between the Spirit of God and the spirit of anti-Christ.

I John 4:1-3, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

3. Thirdly, spiritual people are those who are led by the Holy Spirit and walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

C. A spiritual church has a spiritual program.

1. We live in an age where churches are using every imaginable worldly method and program to entice people to come in.

2. God clearly sets forth the spiritual program in the Word of God.

- The Bible is the church's authority for faith and practice.
- The spiritual church has no substitute for the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

1 Corinthians 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

- That is one of the great problems in the time in which we live.
- Churches are replacing the preaching of the Word with praise and worship.
- I don't know how it can be worship when there is no preaching.
- All praise and worship does is work people into an emotional high with little or no presentation of the Gospel.

3. Not only must the Gospel be preached that by the foolishness of preaching people are convicted of their sin and need of salvation there must also be the **teaching** or instructing of those the Lord saves.

D. Customs, traditions, rituals, emotional stirrings cannot replace the Word of God or the Preaching of the Gospel.

II Corinthians 7:9, 10, "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might

receive damage by us in nothing. **For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

Christ is the only way of salvation!

IV. A Spiritual Church must have a spiritual Purpose:

A. The church is to reflect Christ

1. Every church has a testimony among churches of like faith, but more importantly is the testimony within the community.

B. The church is to be the outlet for the good news to be expressed.

1. The purpose of the church’s existence was given in the introduction.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

C. Therefore, a spiritual church is a witness in faith.

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

1. The faith spoken of here is not faith in our ability to present the gospel and do the work of the ministry.
2. Rather, it faith that God will empower us to live, serve, and glorify Him.
3. It also is faith in the message – That God will fulfill His promise that His Word will not return void, but will accomplish its intended purpose.

Conclusions:

- A. The Lord established His church, for a specific purpose, in a specific way, through a specific people.
- B. Let each of us examine our lives to see if we meet the qualifications and have the characteristics of a spiritual person.
- C. Remember our church is as spiritual as it's members.
- D. Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.

The Book of Ephesians #15

Text: Ephesians 5: 28 - 6:4,

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.”

Introduction:

- A. In verse 22 the Apostle Paul starts a comparison between husbands and wives and Christ and the Church.
- B. In verse 23, he **reminds** those to whom he is speaking (Church at Ephesus – God’s people today) of God’s established order.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church...”

IX. This truth is not new - God established it in Genesis 3:16.

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, **and he shall rule over thee.**”

- A. We read in the **Old Testament** where Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac.
 - 1. It was by culture and custom an “Arranged Marriage.”

2. However, we also read that Rebecca was not forced to marry Isaac against her will.

Genesis 24: 57, “And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.”

3. The point I’m trying to make is Rebecca knew what was ahead and was willing to marry Isaac.
4. She trusted the Lord that she and Isaac would fall in love and have a happy marriage.

B. Now we come to the New Testament.

1. The practice of arranged marriages had changed some to some extent.
 - To some degree that had become “Arranged – love marriages.”
 - The young couple had some input in the marriage arrangement.
2. Most marriages matured into happy marriages.
3. However, it seems to me that there were some marriages that were self centered marriages.
4. The reason I say that is because of the attitude of many of the men.
 - There are some cultures where women are 2nd/3rd class citizens and are considered a possession rather than a helpmeet.
 - Some of the Jewish leaders questioned the Lord about the “rite of divorce” that Moses gave them centuries ago.
 - I also pick up that sentiment from verse 28.

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”

- We certainly have those that hold this self first attitude in the entitled world in which we live today.
- So many people (even some Christians) feel very self entitled.
- The problem is so much of the time they have problems loving anyone like they love themselves (even their spouse).
- Everything centers around them, their desires, their wants.
- Maggie and I, Lord willing, will celebrate our 55th anniversary September 29th.
- When someone ask me what is the secret to longevity in marriage.
- My standard answer is something my mother told me just before Maggie and I were married. She said,

“Son you have to get up every morning and work on being married.”

- You can’t do that with a self entitled attitude.
5. While this attitude existed then as it does today, there is a Jewish saying that the Apostle was alluding to.
- Speaking of, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies” It says,

A man’s wife is "as his own body."

- And one of the precepts of their wise men is, a man should honor his wife more than his body, and "love her as his body."Because, “they are but one body.

And lastly, “He that loveth his wife loveth himself; because she is one body and flesh with him.”

Verse 31, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”

6. This truth that husbands and wives are to love each other unconditionally is seen in I Corinthians 7:3.

“1 Corinthians 7:3, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”

C. With this thought in mind let’s go back to verse 22.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

1. The Apostle Paul gives the reasons why wives should submit to their husbands.
2. First, a wife should submit to her husband *because* God has placed the husband in a role of authority over his wife.

Verse 23, “For the husband is the head of the wife.”

- In verse 22, “Head” clearly represents “authority over” and not “source.”
- It is important that we see that the Apostle Paul does not base his argument on culture or societal norms.
- Instead, he bases it on the God-appointed leadership role given to the husband in our text, I Corinthians 11:3–12, and I Timothy 2:11-13.

- It is also important to understand that “Submission” does not imply an inherent inferiority.
 - Christ is equal in status to the Father but willingly submits himself to his Father’s will.
 - In Luke 22:42 the Lord said, “Not my will, but thine, be done.
 - In the same way, women are equal in value and worth as men, since both are created in God’s image.
 - But, based on God’s design, men and women assume different roles in the marriage relationship.
 - Then the Apostle Paul makes a comparison: “As Christ is the head of the church.”
 - Christ is the head of the church in a way comparable to the husband’s being the head of his wife.
 - Paul also clarifies that the church is Christ’s “body,” an image used earlier in Ephesians 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16.
 - Christ relates to the church as “its Savior,” as he redeemed her to be His bride.
3. Somewhere along the line, people started believing the lie that submission means becoming a second-class citizen.
- Biblical submission has **never** implied that!
 - When you work for someone it is understood that you are to listen to and obeying your boss. (That is submission)

- There are people in authoritative positions, police, fire fighters, etc. that are to be obeyed (or suffer the consequences), even if we don't like it.
 - I saw a video of woman whose car was blocked by ambulance because they were treating a person that had been stabbed.
 - She was abusive to the first responders, insisting that they move the ambulance immediately so she could get out of her parking spot.
4. Verse 24 clearly states that wives should freely and willingly submit to their husbands "In everything".
- Here I would point out that the prepositional phrase "in everything" should not be taken absolutely.
 - A wife is not required to submit to her husband in matters that are sinful, harmful, or contrary to God's commands (Acts 5:29).
- D. A woman doesn't have any problems submitting to her husband when he is in obedience to verse 25.
1. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
 2. This is a "Self-Sacrificial Love."
 3. After commanding wives to submit to their husbands, Paul turns his attention to the husbands by commanding them to love their wives.
 4. Here the Apostle Paul command is to follow Christ in the way of love.

5. This exhortation is repeated in verse 33 and Colossians 3:19 showing its importance.
6. The Apostle goes on to explain that the manner in which husbands are to love their wives is compared to the way “Christ loved the church” (Ephesians 5:25).
7. Christ’s love for his bride (the church) becomes the standard by which a husband should love his bride.
8. Specifically, Christ’s love is most clearly demonstrated in how he “gave himself up for her.”
9. His love was self-initiated and self-sacrificial.
10. However, the parallel, cannot be fully hard-pressed.
 - While a husband should be like Christ with his self-sacrificing love ---,
 - He does not die in her place, nor does he sanctify or cleanse her.
 - **However**, he should be willing to sacrifice everything to protect and care for his wife.
 - And I would add “his children.”

Verse 33, “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.”

E. Concluding remarks on submission:

1. We live in an ordered universe in which there is authority and submission to authority everywhere (cf. Romans 13:1).

- Authority and submission relationships are natural and necessary to maintain order.
- God has authority over man (James 4:5).
- Man has authority over nature (Gen.1:28).
- Husbands have authority over their wives (Ephesians 5:22).
- Parents have authority over their children (Ephesians 6:1).
- Governors have authority over those they govern (I Peter 2:13-14).
- Employers have authority over their employees (I Peter 2:18).
- Spiritual leaders have authority over those they lead spiritually (I Peter 5:2).
- As the old saying say,

“Anything that has more than one head is a freak.”

II. The Family Unit:

Ephesians 8: 1-4, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

- A. Chapter 8 continues the subject of submission and obedience.
- B. The first four verses speak about parenting:

1. The first three verses are an exhortation to children to obey their parents, with a promise of the blessing that would follow from obedience.
2. Verse 4 is an exhortation to fathers display the proper character and attitude toward their children so that they desire to honor and obey them.
3. Every parent wants the very best for their children.
4. As a result, we should encourage them, motivate them, and persuade them to do certain things.
5. Then there are times that we have to make them do certain things.
6. However the Scripture tells us that we are not to “provoke” our children.
7. Provoke carries the idea “to exasperate by putting unreasonable demands on a child in everyday life.”
 - For example – some parents shame or talk down and chide their children publically, then wonder why their children are disrespectful.
 - Another example – “Unreasonable demands,
 - “You must play sports” when they are not athletic, “You must get A’s and punishing them when they don’t – and in reality they are trying their best and can’t make “A’s”.
 - However, it **does not mean** that you are not to discipline your children (that is against the Scripture).

- “Children will get angry when you cross their will and enforce obedience as they are growing up.
- **Discipline is not provoking.”**

5. Set **reachable** goals for your children.

Athletic parents and their goals for their children.
Phil Mickelson (golfer) son (little league).

6. The most important instruction we give our children is instruction and guidance in how to find and do God’s will.

Conclusion:

- A. God is not a big ogre sitting in heaven desiring to make life as miserable as possible for women and children while men do what they want.
- B. God is loving, compassionate, caring and desire the best for us by putting order in our lives.
- C. The family is a masterpiece of our Omniscient God's Creation.
 1. Marriage and parenthood reveal God’s character.
 2. God put children in families so they can experience His love and learn how to love others.
 3. The truth is that these two essential elements of family — marriage and parenthood — reveal God’s character like nothing else in Creation.
 4. The love between a husband and wife provides a glimpse of Christ’s passionate devotion to us as His bride.

5. In the same way, the ups and downs of parenthood offer a compelling picture of God's tenderness and patience toward us as His children.
6. And family does more than reflect God's character. It provides a safe place where children can experience God's love (through their parents) and learn how to love other people.
7. Even Christ himself was born and became a part of a family.
8. "God in the flesh" submitted to an earthly dad and mom to model what it means to honor parents and to benefit from their loving direction.
9. It was within the nurturing care of His earthly family that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).
10. God's children and the Lord's church are precious to Him.
11. President Harry S. Truman had a sign on his desk that said, "The Buck Stops Here!"
12. Father's we have that responsibility in our family.

The Book of Ephesians #16

Text: Ephesians 6: 5-13,

“Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he* be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Introduction:

- A. In verses 5-8 the Apostle continues the subject of subjection.
- B. In verse 9 he speaks to those who own slaves.
- C. And in verses 10-13 he begins to speak to all believers.

I. Verses 5-8 - “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters.”

- A. During this time slavery was a common thing in everyday life.

1. Throughout human history slavery has been an accepted feature of society. It has been in existence for thousands of years.
 2. All of the ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Ancient Greeks, Aztecs, Assyrians, Persians, Babylonians and Romans were economically dependent on the institution of slavery.
- B. It is important that the Apostle Paul exhortations are to "servants."
1. It doesn't matter if they are "bond servants" "indentured servants," or a hired servants.
 2. Neither did it matter if their master was a believer or unbeliever, or whether he was good or bad humored, gentle or stern.
 3. He tells them that they are to be subject to, and obey their "masters."
- C. The question is why?
1. It is important to remember that Paul was writing to people where slavery was a part of the culture and legally enforced by the Roman government.
 2. When the Apostle wrote the Church in Corinth, he said:

1 Corinthians 7:21, "Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather."
 3. While there was a possibility that servants could secure their freedom; slaves had no option but to obey their masters.
 4. To disobey could result in a beating or even death.

5. Paul said, yes obey your masters but do so in sincerity in the same way that you would obey your spiritual master, Jesus Christ.
 - In Philemon we read where Onesimus, a runaway slave was saved. The Apostle sent him back to his owner and ask grace be extended to him.
 - I also think of Joseph. His brothers sold him into slavery.
 - We see that he had and did what the Apostle is telling slaves to do.
 - Understand that in God's providence you are who you are and are where you are at for a purpose (probably known only to God) and are to live your life for the glory of God.
6. While, slavery does not exist today the Scripture tells us that we are to be good employees.
 - As an employee we have the option of leaving our place of employment for other employment.
 - But while we are employed, we can interpret this verse as, "Do what your boss tells you to do."
 - Be the best employee that you can. And in so doing you glorify the Lord and have a good Christian testimony.

D. Verse 9,

"And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

1. Then he speaks to those believers who are slave owners.
2. Treat them as human beings – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
3. “Forbearing threatening” or don’t be abusive.
4. Why? Because you’re Lord and Master is in heaven and you, as his servant, are to live a life that is well pleasing unto your Lord and Master.
5. In the end it does not matter whether you are rich or poor, bond or free, every person shall give an account to God.
6. When I think of this truth I think of Joseph.
 - If any man had the right to hate his brothers Joseph did.
 - When we look at Joseph’s circumstances of life we see that if anyone had a right to be mad at God it would be Joseph.
 - But Joseph said,

“Genesis 50:20, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

- When we consider that He is the Potter and we are the clay and He has the right to do as He pleases with us – we have no basis to complain – instead we are to live our lot – for His glory.

II. Verses 10:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

- A. Verse 10 brings the previous verses to a conclusion.
 - 1. The Apostle speaks to them as brethren or as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. And as believers they are of the family of God as he was – this he says as proof of his affection to them, and his desire to encourage them in the Lord.
- B. “Be Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.”
 - 1. This exhortation is given - because they could not carry out the things previously spoken of, nor the duties that he is about to exhort them to do in their own strength.
 - 2. He says that in order to overcome their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world --- They would have to depend on the Lord to give them the strength, power, and might needed for the inward man to be victorious.

III. Verses 11-18:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

- A. In verses 10-12 the Apostle Paul reminds the Ephesian believers (us as well) that they are in a continual war and must constantly be prepared for an attack from the enemy.

- B. I was drafted into the U.S. Army in July 1969.
 - 1. Our 8 weeks of **basic training** centered on preparing us to be warriors.
 - 2. We were prepared mentally and physically to perform our duties without hesitation.
 - 3. We were taught the importance of having our equipment readily available at any moment.
 - 4. When I graduated from basic training I was ready and prepared to go to battle.

- C. When I reached my permanent duty station in Furth Nuremburg:
 - 1. We were reminded very often that we were only 50k (31.6 miles) from the Czech border and that war could break out at any given moment.
 - 2. While I was stationed there we were put on different levels of alert depending on what the Czech's were doing.
 - 3. The First Sergeant always ask us if we had **all of our armament!**

- D. Leroy Eims serving in the Marines in the South Pacific during World War II:
 - 1. He said, "Shortly after we hit the beach, our armored amphibious tank was hit by two artillery shells broadside.
 - 2. We immediately evacuated our disabled vehicle and darted from hole to hole toward the enemy airstrip, which we were to take.

3. "The sergeant began to check on us to make sure that we were OK. He crawled over to me and asked, `You all right, Eims?'
 - "I answered, `Yeah, I'm OK, Sarge.'
 - He looked at me and asked, "Eims, where is your helmet?"
 - "I felt the top of my head and answered, `Must be in the tank, Sarge."
 - "Where's your duty belt?' Our duty belts carried ammunition for our rifles, a canteen of water, and a bayonet. "'Must be in the tank, Sarge."
 - "As a matter of fact, Eims, where's your rifle?"
 - Then he said, "He looked at me with disgust and pity."
4. Because of our hasty departure I was dressed about the same way that I would be dressed for a game of volleyball. And there I was, hopping from hole to hole."
5. The point of this story is -- this soldier had absolutely no **armament** and was completely defenseless.

E. This story reveals the truth about the modern church.

1. Many Christians have forgotten that the Christian life is not a playground, but a battlefield.
2. As a result, very few of the Lord's people are armed, equipped and ready to wage spiritual battle.

3. We must remember (And be constantly reminded - as our First Sergeant reminded us) that we are engaged in spiritual warfare.
4. If we are to be successful in our walk and work for the Lord Jesus, we must be prepared for that battle and be ready to go to war.
5. In this passage, we are given insight into the battle we are engaged in and into the weapons with which we are to fight this battle.
6. When the enemy attacks we must do what the Scriptures say and "**Stand**" (Verses 11, 13-14).
7. The following are some of the aspects of this fight.

IV. Our Enemy:

- A. In verse 11 we are given the **name** of our enemy and adversary!
 1. He is the "diabolos" the Devil!
 2. He is known as the "false accuser," or the "slanderer."
 3. Satan the prince of the demons, the persecutor of man, who constantly seeks to estrange mankind from God, and entices them to sin.
 4. Since his first appearance in the Bible, the devil has been in the business of lying, slandering and accusing the people of God.
- B. Secondly we see our **Enemy's Nature:**
 1. Verse 11 reveals that he is a Shrewd enemy;
 2. The word "**wiles**" is the same word from which we get our English word "**method**".
 - It refers to craftiness and trickery.

- In **Ephesians 4:14**, it is translated "lie in wait."
 - Thus it gives the image of a hunter camouflaging himself in order to capture his prey.
3. Verse 12 says that he is a **Spiritual Enemy**.
 4. He is a master at sowing discord among the brethren.
 5. We need to remember that our fight is a spiritual battle.
 6. Our battle is with an unseen army of spiritual enemies lead by the devil himself.)
- C. Since our enemy is a spiritual enemy, how we know how to fight him?
- D. This story from WWII concerning General George Patton will help us see it a little more clearly.

Patton's troops and tanks were engaged in a successful counterattack of German forces under General Erwin Rommel. Patton is reported to have shouted in the thick of the battle, "I read your book, Rommel! I read your book!" And that he did.

In Rommel's book *Infantry Attacks*, the famed "Desert Fox" carefully detailed his military strategy. And **Patton, having read it and knowing what to expect, planned his moves accordingly.**

1. Satan has authored no book, but God has fully exposed our enemy's tactics in His Holy Word.
2. Study it and plan your defense.
3. The key to defeating the devil is understanding how he works – So read about him in the Word of God.

V. Our Power and Energy in this Battle:

A. Verse 10, tells us the Source of our Power:

1. We are told that the source of our energy is not within ourselves.
2. That is good to know, because there are times when our energy runs low.
3. We are told, however, that we are to **"be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."**
 - The word "**might**" means **"force, strength and ability."**
 - The word "**power**" refers to God's "dominion and sovereign ability to exercise His power."
 - Then it is easy to see how the Lord can strengthen and energize those who place their trust in Him.

Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"

Mark 11:22, 23, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Mark 9:23, "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

C. The Strength of Our Power

1. There is no power greater than the power of God!
2. I Corinthians 15:58 assures us that God's power **will** enables us to stand!
3. So that when all our battles are over and we go home to be with the Lord in His heaven, we can leave this world like Paul.

II Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

4. We all know many people aren't standing for the Lord. Instead they are falling by the wayside!

"During the Civil war a Union soldier was shot in the arm during the battle of Shiloh. His captain seeing that he was wounded said, 'Gimme your weapon private and get to the rear!

"The private handed over his rifle and ran toward the north, seeking safety. But after covering two or three hundred yards, he came upon another skirmish. Then he ran to the east and into another part of the battle. Then he ran west but encountered more fighting there.

"Finally, he ran back to where he had left and said, 'Gimme back my gun, cap'n. There ain't no rear to this battle!"

5. When it comes to spiritual warfare, "there is nowhere to run! The battle rages all around us.
6. The best thing to do is place our faith in the awesome power of God and stand!

The Book of Ephesians #17

Text: Ephesians 6: 11-24,

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts. Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Introduction:

- A. We concluded the last message with the facts:
 1. We have an enemy – Satan – and he guides and directs the world and unbelievers in spiritual battle against Christians and Christianity.

2. Secondly, we are not powerful enough to overcome the enemy in our own power and thus must fight in the power and strength of the Lord.
3. As soldiers of the cross we are given armament in order to wage war against the enemy.

I. Our Armament in this War:

- A. Our equipment is listed in verses 13-18.
- B. It has been said that a soldier is no better than his equipment.
 1. In these verses the Apostle Paul explains our enemy and our power.
 2. Now, he takes the time to speak concerning our **armament**.
 - Which world country has the largest military? **China!**
 - Which world country has the **best equipped** military? The **United States!** Followed by Russia
 3. Yet none of these armies have the armament that is necessary to fight the spiritual war that we fight often on a daily basis.
 4. Only God can provide that!

C. The Armor of God:

1. The armor that the Apostle describes here was familiar to every person in the Ephesian church.
2. Why? Because Paul is describing the armor of the average Roman soldier.
3. For these soldiers to be effective in battle, they need to be protected on the battlefield.

4. Paul uses their armor to teach us about how we need to dress up for the day of battle.

D. The Girdle Of Truth:

1. The belt of a Roman soldier in Paul's day was not a simple leather strap such as we wear today. It was a thick, heavy leather and metal band with a protective piece hanging down from the front of it.
2. It is fitting that the belt of truth is the first piece of the whole armor of God.
 - Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), and it is only through Him that we come to God.
 - Therefore, truth is of the utmost importance in the life of a Christian.
 - Without truth, the rest of the armor would be of no use to us because we would not have the Spirit of truth (John 15:26).
 - The belt held the soldier's sword and other weapons. - - The belt of truth of the spiritual armor holds the sword of the Spirit, linking truth and the Word of God (cf. John 17:17).
 - The Word of God *is* truth.

E. The Breastplate Of Righteousness:

1. Every Roman soldier wore a breastplate made of bronze or chain mail.
 - It covered the vital organs, namely, the heart, and was fitted with loops or buckles that attached it to a thick belt.

- If the belt was loosened, the breastplate slipped right off.
2. When Paul compares the armor of God with military gear, each piece represents a part of God's strength that He extends to us when we become His children.
 3. The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).
 4. At salvation, a "breastplate" is issued to each repentant sinner. It is specially designed by God to protect our heart and soul from evil and deception.
 5. Our own righteous acts are no match for Satan's attacks (Isaiah 64:6). The breastplate of righteousness has Christ's name stamped on it, as though He said, "Your righteousness isn't sufficient to protect you. Wear mine."

F. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace:

1. The gospel of peace is the message that Jesus gave to those who trust in Him.
2. It comes with the assurance from God that we are His children and nothing can snatch us out of His hands.
3. The word preparation implies readiness or constant vigilance.
4. In order to be victorious a soldier had to be prepared for battle.
5. He had to have studied his enemy's strategy, be confident in his own strategy, and have his feet firmly planted so that he could hold his ground when the attacks came.

6. A soldier's battle shoes were studded with nails or spikes, like cleats, to help him keep his balance in combat.
7. He knew that, if he lost his footing and went down, it wouldn't matter how great the rest of his armor was; the enemy had him.
8. When we are ready with the gospel of peace, we live with the understanding that we are continually under attack from Satan.
9. Second Timothy 4:2 says to "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season."
10. The "peace shoes" that God supplies His soldiers have two purposes: defensive and offensive.
 - In order to defend ourselves against the "flaming arrows of the evil one" we must have confidence of our position in Christ.
 - We must stand firm in the truth of God's Word, regardless of how terrifying the circumstances may be (1 John 5:14).
 - We must understand grace remembering that our position in Christ is not based on our own abilities or worthiness.
 - When Satan attacks with a fiery dart of doubt, such as "If God really loved you, He wouldn't have let this happen," we dig our peace shoes into the turf of God's Word and reply, "It is written: All things work together for the good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).
 - When Satan stabs with "Remember what you did?" we stand fast and reply, "It is written: If we confess our sins He is faithful

and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

- In addition to standing our ground, shoes are also for moving. God expects us to go on the offensive and take the gospel of peace to others.
- First Peter 3:15 says, that we should “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”
- Sharing our faith is one of the best ways to maintain our own sure footing. God knows that, when we are active in speaking of Him to others, we not only charge into Satan’s territory, but we dig our shoes more deeply into truth.

G. The Shield Of Faith:

1. The Roman shield of the time was called a scutum.
 - This type of shield was as large as a door and would cover the warrior entirely.
 - This shield was just defensive - it could also be used to push opponents.
 - When fighting as a group of soldiers could position their shields so as to form an enclosure around themselves, called a *testudo* (“tortoise”).
 - This was especially helpful to protect against arrows launched from the walls of cities they were attacking.
 - Shields, often made of wood and then covered in hide, when wet, could extinguish flaming arrows.

2. Clearly, a shield is vitally important to a soldier as it provides a wall of protection.
 - It is the first barrier against the enemy's attack.
 - A Christian who takes up the shield of faith identifies himself as a foot soldier who serves the Commander of the Lord's army.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

3. Verse 6, stresses the importance of faith:

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."

4. Satan's attacks can sometimes cause us to doubt God. Faith prompts us to believe God. We give in to temptation when we believe what it has to offer is better than what God has promised.
5. Faith reminds us that, though fulfillment of God's promise may not be readily visible to us, but that God is always true to His Word.
6. All believers have this promise: "Everyone born of God overcomes the world."
7. Faith is a protective barrier between us and the schemes of Satan.
 - When we believe God we remain grounded in truth.
 - Therefore, in this sense, faith is our shield.

H. The Helmet Of Salvation:

1. The helmet was given to the Roman soldier to protect his brain.

2. Regardless of how well the rest of him was protected, a blow to the brain rendered the entire soldier ineffective.
3. The assurance of salvation is our impenetrable defense against anything the enemy throws at us.

Matthew 10:28, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

- The idea in this verse is that, as we prepare for Satan’s attacks, we must have the helmet and buckle it on tightly.
 - Salvation is not limited to a one-time act of the past.
 - God’s salvation is an ongoing, eternal state that His children enjoy in the present.
 - It is daily protection and deliverance from our sin nature and Satan’s schemes.
- I. There are several actions a believer can take to keep this helmet fastened and functioning:
 1. **Renew our minds.** Our minds are battlefields.
 - We are instructed to renew our minds by allowing the truth of God’s Word to wipe out anything contrary to it.
 - We must allow God’s truth to continually wash away the world’s filth, lies, and confusion from our minds and adopt God’s perspective.
 2. **Reject doubts that arise from circumstances.**

- Human beings are sensory creatures. What we cannot fathom with our five senses, we tend to disregard.
- If we allow them to, circumstances may convince us that God does not really love us or that His Word is not true.
- It is impossible to have faith and doubt at the same time.
- God rewards our faith.
- With the helmet of salvation firmly in place, we can choose to believe what appears impossible (Hebrews 11:6; 1 Peter 1:8–9).

3. **Keep an eternal perspective.**

- When life crashes in around us, we must remember to look up.
- Our salvation is the most precious gift we have received. Keeping our eyes on that can help us weather life's storms. We can choose to live our lives by the motto "If it doesn't have eternal significance, it's not important."

4. **Remember that victory is already accomplished.**

- When we consider ourselves "dead to sin but alive to God" (Romans 6:11), we eliminate many of the opportunities Satan uses to entrap us.

5. **Find all our hope in Him.**

Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*"

- Our helmet is most effective when we treasure what it represents - The salvation Jesus purchased for us.
- When pleasing the Lord is our supreme delight, we eliminate many of Satan's lures and render his evil suggestions powerless.

J. Not all the armor was designed to protect the soldier.

1. Soldiers are also required to take the battle to the enemy.
2. Therefore, the soldier possessed two offensive weapons that allowed him to strike back when he was attacked.

K. **The Sword Of The Spirit :**

1. Paul was referring to the short, straight sword carried by every Roman soldier.
2. The sword is both an offensive and defensive weapon used by soldiers or warriors.
3. In this case it is a weapon belonging to the Holy Spirit.
4. Swords were used to protect oneself from harm or to attack the enemy to overcome or kill him.
5. In both cases it was necessary for a soldier to get rigid training on the proper use of the sword to get maximum protection.
6. All Christian soldiers need the same rigid training to know how to properly handle the Sword of the Spirit, "which is the word of God."
7. The sword that Paul refers to here is the Holy Scriptures. We know from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that the word of God is from the Holy Spirit and written by men.

8. Since every Christian is on the spiritual battle with the satanic and evil forces of this world, we need to know how to handle the Word properly.
9. Only then will it be an effective defense against evil, but it will also be an offensive weapon we use to “demolish strongholds” of error and falsehood (2 Corinthians 10:4–5).
10. God refers to His Word as a sword in Hebrews 4:12 as living and active and sharper than a double-edged sword.
11. The Roman sword was commonly made in this manner. The fact that it had two edges made it easier to penetrate, as well as to cut in every way.
12. The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; the Word of God reaches the “heart,” the very center of action, and lays open the motives and feelings of those it touches.
13. The purpose of the sword of the Spirit—the Bible—is to make us strong and able to withstand the evil onslaughts of Satan, our enemy (Psalm 119:11, 33–40, 99–105).
14. The Holy Spirit uses the power of the Word to save souls and then to give them spiritual strength to be mature soldiers for the Lord in fighting this corrupt and evil world we live in.
15. The more we know and understand the Word of God, the more useful we will be in doing the will of God and the more effective we will be in standing against the enemy of our souls.

L. The last weapon is prayer – Verse 18.

1. Another advantage that we have is the ability to communication with our Commander in Chief at all times.

2. This has always been a problem on the battlefield.
3. This has never been a problem in the spiritual realm.
4. The greatest offensive weapon we have is the ability to call on the Lord our God when we are in the thick of the battle.
5. He is able to communicate His orders to us on the spot and we can implement them immediately. This gives us a decided advantage over the devil!
6. Never be guilty of neglecting the awesome power of prayer!
7. The Lord said that pray moves mountains.
8. Paul emphasizes the power and importance of pray in verse 18.
9. There are many types of prayer:
 - There is mental, or silent prayer, there is vocal, or audible prayer, then there is public and private.
 - There is pray for self, family, friends, other brethren.
 - There is prayer for petitions for good things, and pray of thanksgiving for God's mercies.
 - We should pray as often as we possibly can.
 - And we should pray from the heart with the right spirit being influenced and assisted by the Holy Spirit of God.
 - We also see that the Apostle ask for specific prayer in verse 19.

II. Verses 19-24:

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- A. He asked them to pray specifically that the Lord would give him understanding of the Scripture.
- B. And the words he should speak and that he might preach in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C. In verse 21-23 the Apostle tells the church that he will keep them updated concerning him and his labors in Rome.

“But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.”

1. At this time Paul was living in Rome under house.
2. He had some freedom, but was limited in what he could and could not do.
3. Thus, he wanted to keep the church informed about his activity:
 - First that they would be comforted that he was doing well.
 - Secondly, that they might know his specific needs both physical and spiritual in order to pray for him.
 - And lastly, that they might know about the blessing of the Lord upon his ministry.
4. And in order to do this he was sending Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister

in the Lord to report to them that they might hear it directly from the source instead of through rumors.

D. Verses 23-24:

“Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”

1. The Apostle closes the epistle with a prayer for God to bless physically and spiritually.
2. And they that might have peace of mind because of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. And lastly, he asks that they might increase in the graces of God.

Conclusion:

- A. We clearly see that “**doctrine**” occupies the greatest portion of the Book of Ephesians.
- B. Half, or better, of the teaching in this epistle relates to our standing in Christ, and the remainder of it affects our condition.
- C. So many preachers and teachers bypass all the foundational instruction and go directly to chapter 6.
- D. As we have seen in this sermon chapter 6 emphasizes the warfare and the struggles of the saints.
- E. However, in order to get the fully benefit from this epistle, one must begin at the beginning.
- F. As Christ followers, we must fully understand who God declares us to be, and God’s working among humanity.

- G. Then we learn that our present existence and walk must become exercised and strengthened.
- H. This must continue until we mature to the point that we no longer flounder back and forth between Biblical truth or teaching and the subtlety of men.
- I. The Book of Ephesians, more than any other book of the Bible, emphasizes the connection between sound doctrine and right practice in the Christian life.
- J. Far too many people ignore "theology" and instead want to only discuss things that are "practical."
- K. Paul argues that theology is practical. In order to live out God's will for us in our lives practically, we must first understand who we are in Christ doctrinally.
- L. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are engaged in spiritual warfare with unseen wicked forces.
- M. In order to overcome our enemy – we must do battle in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- N. We must avail ourselves of the tools we have been given.
- O. We are in continual spiritual battles, but the Lord promised that the victory is ours.

I Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."