

Ephesians

Christ and His Church

Ephesians 2:8-10

March 28, 2020

Today

At the end of his 2nd Missionary Journey – **51-53 AD** – Paul went to Ephesus for a short period of time then left Aquila and Priscilla there while he returned to Antioch – He promised to return **{Acts 18}**.

During his 3rd Missionary Journey – **54-58 AD** – Paul spent several years in Ephesus. God performed many miracles through him and there was much spiritual growth in the lives of both Jewish and Gentile believers. All did not go smoothly, however, and after a riot broke out in the city, it became clear that Paul could no longer stay in Ephesus, so he packed his bags, encouraged the disciples and left for Macedonia **{Acts 19}**.

It's now **61-62 AD** and Paul is a prisoner in Rome. He writes a letter to the believer's in Ephesus encouraging them to seek unity and embrace diversity as they go about the business of being the body of Christ.

- The first 3 chapters are **Theological** - What God has done and is doing for believers through Jesus = The BECAUSE Section.
- The last 3 chapters are **Practical** – The impact of those **truths** on Christian life and community = The THEREFORE Section.

From: Paul – an Apostle of Christ.

To: All the saints in Ephesus who are faithful to Christ.

Grace and peace to you!!

Before it was needed, God put a plan in place to adopt us into His family and make us holy and blameless through Jesus. He did it because of His grace {unearned and undeserved favor}, which He has freely given to us.

Not only have we been adopted but we have also been redeemed through the blood of Jesus and our sins have been forgiven.

You – the people reading this letter have been:

- **Specially Chosen**
- **Intentionally Adopted**
- **Freely Redeemed and Forgiven**

That's the mystery – that we are all forgiven and adopted and can become Holy and blameless through Jesus.

When I pray, I do not stop giving thanks for you because I have heard of your faith in Jesus and your love for fellow believers. I ask:

- That God will give you wisdom and will reveal to you a knowledge of Himself and that you will become spiritually aware so that you will have hope.

Why? Because God has adopted you and given you all the benefits of being a son through His unsurpassed power. This is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, seated Him on the throne in heaven and gave Him authority over everything. He has also been made head of the church.

“Bad News” - We were dead in our trespasses and sins. What a predicament!

- We were unable to relate to God.
- Our natural default position was to indulge in worldly desires {if it feels good do it!} – A lifestyle designed and directed by Satan.

We were trapped and if we had continued on that path things would not have ended well for us.

“Good News” - Because of God's great mercy and love, He rescued us! Even though we were dead because of our sins and wanted nothing to do with Him, He has given us new life in Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God --⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Remember, you were once a long way from God - aliens and strangers. You were ignorant of the Covenant God made with Israel. You had no hope. But because of Jesus' blood you were brought into an intimate relationship with God and you are now included in the Covenant.

The wall that separated Jew and Gentile has been broken down and through Jesus we have been made ONE – all fully sons and daughters of God with full access to Him.

You are no longer strangers!! You are fellow citizens and members of God's family {household}. The foundation of this house rests on the apostles and prophets, but the cornerstone on which the whole building sits is Jesus. Every floor is fitted together and becomes a dwelling place for God.

I told you at the beginning of this letter that God had revealed to me a mystery. This mystery was revealed to the apostles and prophets:

- **Isaiah 56:6-7** - And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant--⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

No one understood what it meant until now..... Gentiles are adopted by God into His family and they share all the promises found in Jesus!!

This "mystery" – a new church made up of Jews and Gentiles was always God's plan and it was accomplished through Jesus.

Ephesians 3:14-21 - For this reason I kneel before the Father, ...¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

With great privilege comes great responsibility, so the next section focuses on how those who have been blessed with adoption and redemption should live = The THEREFORE section.

I beg you to walk in a manner that is worthy of your calling – with Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Tolerance and Love for one another.

Those who have been brought into harmony with God must also be in harmony with each other because God does not consider us to be separate entities, but ONE body through Jesus. Being ONE body, we also have the same:

- SPIRIT --
- HOPE –
- LORD –
- FAITH –
- BAPTISM –
- GOD AND FATHER –

As the body of Christ, we should be unified in our care for each other and in our goal of spreading the Gospel. However, not everyone is a Head or a Foot or an Appendix – there must also be diversity.

- **Ephesians 4:7-13** - But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.....¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. {see 1 Corinthians 12}

We do not all have the same gifts or responsibilities but EVERY Christian has been equipped for the good of the community and for service to others.

A Pastor's job is NOT to do everything in the church - be on every board, preach every sermon, visit every shut-in or pray over every hospital bed, while the members sit on the sidelines and complain. The Pastor's job is to encourage the members to discover and develop their Spiritual Gifts and then equip and train them for ministry and service. When this happens, individual members mature in faith and the community grows.

What is the result of this maturing process? We are no longer immature children who get confused by every “new” doctrine that comes along. Instead we speak the truth in love and are transformed into the image of Jesus who is the head of the church.

It is Jesus who built the body and it is Jesus who holds it together and causes to grow.

Don't live like people who don't know Jesus!!

Put aside your old life and embrace a transformed life which has been given to you by God --- a life of **righteousness, holiness and truth.**

- Speak truth – not lies.
- In your anger don't sin – don't give Satan a chance to trip you up.
- If you are a thief, stop stealing and get a job.
- Speak words that encourage and uplift people - not words that tear down.
- Don't grieve the Holy Spirit.
- Do away with bitterness, anger, yelling, slander and malice.
- Be kind and tender-hearted toward each other.
- Forgive each other because God has forgiven you through the blood of Jesus.
- Walk in love – Imitate God in everything you do.

Here are some things that people who claim to be followers of God are NOT:

- Sexually immoral {porneia}
- Impure
- Covetous or greedy
- Obscene or use shameful / foolish / crude language

Because --- anyone who is immoral or impure or covetous or an idol worshipper will not be included in God's kingdom.

Instead, practice gratitude and give thanks in all circumstances and **submit to one another** out of reverence for Christ – this is what mutual submission looks like:

- **Wives:** Submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church = Christ sets the example {**Philippians 2:5-8**}. This is a freely chosen and voluntary submission and should not be demanded or coerced.
- **Husbands:** Love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and died for her. Again, Christ sets the example. The kind of love that Paul is talking about is more than mere passion or family affection. He is talking about the kind of love that causes the God of the universe to get off His throne to save humanity. It's the kind of love that is self-sacrificing and concerns itself with the well-being of another. A husband is to cherish and value his wife **more** than he cherishes and values his own life.

Both Paul and Peter {**1 Peter 3:1-2**} place a far weightier responsibility on husbands.

- **Children:** It is the right thing to obey your parents.
- **Fathers:** Do not be overbearing or rigid with your children because it causes discouragement. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

While Paul is telling children that it is right to obey, he is also telling fathers to be worthy of that obedience. Paul is encouraging fathers to play an active and intentional role in the lives of their children. Don't be the guy whose only role is to discipline and punish. Be proactive = Teach them, play with them, point them to Jesus.

Lord, I want to be just like you cause he wants to be like me..... Dan Dean {"Just Like You" = Phillips, Craig and Dean}

- **Slaves:** Obey and respect your earthly masters just as you would obey Christ.
- **Masters:** Treat your slaves well because you both have the same Master in heaven.

Finally,

Ephesians 6:10-13 - Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground... A soldier in Christ's army wears:

- The **BELT** of Truth.
- The **BREASTPLATE** of Righteousness.
- The **SHOES** of Gospel Peace.
- The **SHIELD** of Faith - to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
- The **HELMET** of Salvation.
- The **WORD** of the Spirit - the WORD of God.

Ephesians 6:24 - Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Take Aways

Paul told the members of the Ephesian church that they were:

- Specially Chosen
- Intentionally Adopted
- Freely Redeemed and Forgiven

Ephesians 2:8 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God –

God has done it all - our **Adoption, Redemption and Forgiveness** - through Jesus!

Then he told them to “live worthy of their adoption”:

- Don't live like people who don't know Jesus!! Put aside your old life and embrace a transformed life which has been given to you by God --- a life of humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, mutual submission, righteousness, holiness and truth. A life rooted and grounded in the love of Jesus.

Paul left the church in good hands. They were strong and spiritually sound... However, just about 60 years later... John writes the Ephesians a postcard:

- **Revelation 2:1-7** - To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: ² I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. **4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.** ⁵ Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Something has happened ... the Ephesians were still working, still zealous for the truth, still faithful... **but they were no longer a church that loved.** The religious fog had descended upon them. Their love had faded and had been replaced by lifeless legalism.... Hmmm!

- **Ellen White {AA 9.1}** - The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.
- **Ellen White {AA 12.1}** - During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.