

EPHESIANS 1

-Now we will study Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus.

-This letter is not just for Christians in Ephesus, but for all Christians.

-On his first missionary journey, Paul visited Ephesus for a short time.

Let's read Acts 18:19-21

19-They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

20-When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined.

21-But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

-On his third missionary journey, Paul went to Ephesus once again, and stayed for three years.

Let's read Acts 19:1, 8-10

1-While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus.

8-Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

9-But some of them became obstinate; they refused to

believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

10-This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

-Even though Paul suffered persecution at Ephesus, many people believed in Christ, and a church was begun.

-Later, at the end of his third missionary journey, Paul stopped in Miletus on the coast where he called the elders from Ephesus to meet with him.

Let's read Acts 20:17-24

17-From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

18-When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

19-I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.

20-You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

21-I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22-And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

23-I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

24-However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”

-After Paul spoke of himself, he asked the elders to watch over the church at Ephesus.

Let’s read Acts 20:28-38

28-“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

29-I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

30-Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

31-So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32-Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33-I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing.

34-You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.

35-In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind

of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

36-When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.

37-They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him.

38-What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

-After this meeting with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem where he was arrested.

-Paul was in prison in Caesarea for two years before he was sent as a prisoner to Rome.

-While he was a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Ephesus.

-It was God the Holy Spirit who wrote this letter through Paul.

-It is the Word of God to Christians in Ephesus.

-It is the Word of God to Christians everywhere.

Let's read Ephesians 1:1

1-Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ
Jesus:

-What does it mean that Paul was “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God”?

-It means that God Himself chose Paul to be His representative and tell the Good News about Jesus to others.

-Was it Paul’s choice to be an apostle?

-No.

-Did other men make Paul an apostle?

-No.

-It was God alone who chose Paul and sent him out.

-What did God say when He asked Ananias to go to Paul and restore his sight?

Let’s read Acts 9:15

15-But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.

-In Galatians 1:1 this is what Paul said about himself:

-“Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.”

-Just as God alone chose Paul to be an apostle, who alone chooses us to believe in Christ?

-God alone.

-In John 15:16, Jesus said this to His disciples:

-“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit.”

-If God has chosen us to believe, than no one can take us away from God.

-In John 6:37, Jesus said this:

-“All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”

-In John 10:29, Jesus said this:

-“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

-If God has chosen us to believe, can Satan or demons or anyone else take us away from God?

-No.

-In this letter, to whom are God and Paul writing?

-To God’s holy people in Ephesus.

-Another translation says, “To the saints in Ephesus.”

-Who are God’s holy people or saints?

-All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

-What does it mean to be called saints?

-It means that God has called us to be holy.

-It means that God has called us to be of God, and not to be of the world.

-God has called us to be holy, and it is God alone who makes us holy.

-Can anyone make themselves holy?

-No.

-In Leviticus 20:8, God said this to Israel:

-“I am the Lord, who makes you holy.”

-It is God alone who makes us holy.

-What else did Paul call the ones to whom he wrote this letter?

-The “faithful” in Christ Jesus.

-If you left on a long journey, you would entrust your house to your relatives.

-Just as you entrust things to people, the believers at Ephesus had entrusted themselves to Jesus.

-If you believe in Christ, you also have entrusted yourselves to Jesus.

-Is Jesus completely worthy of our trust?

-Yes.

-Will Jesus keep us safe from Satan and take us to live with Him forever in heaven?

-Yes.

-In this letter, Paul speaks about believers as those who are “in Christ Jesus.”

-Before we believed in Christ, we were in Adam, and sin, and death.

-But the moment we believed, the Holy Spirit placed us in Christ.

-Now God accepts us as He accepts Christ and we share everything with Him.

-What does our acceptance by God depend on?

-Does our acceptance by God depend on who we are?

-No.

-Does our acceptance by God depend on what we do?

-No.

-Our acceptance by God depends on belief in Christ alone.

Let's read Ephesians 1:2

2-Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the

Lord Jesus Christ.

-Why does God continue to give us grace and peace?

-If we believe in Christ, has not the grace of God already saved us from the punishment of sin?

-Yes.

-If we believe in Christ, are we not already at peace with God?

-Yes.

-Then why does God continue to give us grace and peace?

-We needed God's grace to save us, but we also need God's grace every day to teach us and to help us to obey His Word.

-And even though we now have peace with God, we also need God's peace every day to help us not to worry, but to depend on God to care for us.

Let's read Ephesians 1:3

3-Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

-If Jesus is God, why is God called His Father?

-While Jesus will always be God, He humbled Himself to be born as a man as an example to teach us that God is our

Father.

-For all Christians, God is our eternal, heavenly Father.

-Why should we praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

-Because He has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ.

-How many spiritual blessings did God give us?

-Every spiritual blessing.

-Has God withheld some of His spiritual blessings?

-No.

-He has given us all of His blessings.

-How did God give us every spiritual blessing?

-In Christ.

-Could we have these spiritual blessings if Jesus had not come to earth to be our representative?

-No.

-When we were in Adam, our first representative, what did we share with him?

-Sin and death.

-Now that we are in Christ, what do we share with Him?

-All and every one of God's blessings.

-We read this in 2 Peter 1:3:

-“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

-Many people pray for that which God has already given us.

-Some people pray for love, but God has already given us His love.

-In Romans 5:5, we learn that “because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

-Some people pray for peace, but God has already given us His peace.

-In John 14:27, Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.”

-Some people pray for joy, but God has already given us His joy.

-In John 15:11, Jesus said: “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

-Some people pray for strength, but God has already given us His strength.

-In Philippians 4:13, we read, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

-Some people pray for God to be with them, but God is already with all Christians.

-In Matthew 28:20, we read, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

-Because God has already “blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ,” what should we do?

-Understand these blessings, and then, use them.

-Many Christians do not understand all of the blessings that God has given to us.

-If we do not understand all of the blessings that God has given to us, can we use them?

-No.

-Our God wants us to not only understand these blessings, but also to use them.

Let's read Ephesians 1:4

4-For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

-If we believe in Christ, when did God choose us?

-Before the creation of the world.

-Since God has chosen us before the creation of the world, what does this teach us?

-That our salvation began before the creation of the world.

-What does this teach us?

-That God knew us personally and intimately before we were born.

-That God knew us personally and intimately before the creation of the world.

-Did God choose us because we were holy or good?

-No.

-God chose us so that He could make us holy and good.

-What is God's plan for those whom He has chosen?

-That we would be holy and blameless in His sight.

-That we would be set apart only for God and His use.

-Does Ephesians 1:4 say that God chose us "in Adam?"

-No.

-God chose us in Christ.

-Why could God choose us in Christ?

-Because Jesus fully pleased God.

-Before God created the world, He chose us who are in Christ to be set apart for Him to please Him just as Jesus is fully pleasing to Him.

Let's read Ephesians 1:5-6

5-In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will,

6-to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

-Why did God predestine us for adoption as sons?

-Because of His great love for us.

-There is no one who loves us more than God.

-In fact, there has never been a time when God has not loved us.

-In Jeremiah 31:3, God says this: "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

-Do you remember what God said from heaven when Jesus was baptized?

-"And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Mt 3:17).

-Because of Jesus, God loves us, is pleased with us, and has adopted us as His sons and daughters.

-Do you remember the story of the poor man who needed to talk to the president of his country?

-Although he tried to make himself acceptable by working and buying clothes, the guards continually rejected him.

-Why did the guards finally allow him to see the president?

-Because he went with the president's son, dressed in the son's clothes.

-Why does God accept us Christians?

-Because He has clothed us with the righteousness of Christ.

-Because of Jesus, God loves us, is pleased with us, and has adopted us as His sons and daughters.

Let's read Ephesians 1:7-8a

7-In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace,

8-that he lavished on us.

-What does it mean that we have redemption through Jesus' blood?

-Redemption means to pay a ransom to release someone from bondage or slavery.

-Because of Adam and sin, all people have become slaves of sin.

-The price to free anyone from sin is death.

-Jesus paid the price with His blood to free us from both sin and death.

-What does the Bible mean when it says “to forgive?”

-“To forgive” means “to send away.”

-When we ask God to forgive us of our sins, to where does God send our sins?

-To the cross.

-When our sins arrive at the cross, what happens?

-The blood of Jesus completely pays for our sins, and our sins are no more.

-The blood of Jesus on the cross is like a bomb which completely blows up our sins until they are no more.

-What does it mean that we have redemption “in accordance with the riches of God’s grace”?

-Here is an illustration:

-In a village, there was much hunger, and only one rich man had lots of maize.

-The rich man's neighbor was a poor, wicked man who had done many evil things to him.

-The poor, wicked man came to the rich man to beg for forgiveness and for food.

-The rich man could refuse to help him or he could help him a little and send him away.

-Instead, the rich man took him into his home and said, "All my wealth is yours and I forgive all your wrongs."

-He gave the poor, wicked man food, clothes, blankets, and many other things.

-The riches of God's grace are like that.

-We were poor in spirit, and sinned greatly against God.

-Yet the riches of God's grace are greater than all of our poverty, and all of our sin.

-It is sad that some people think that their sins are too many for God to forgive.

-If you have asked God to forgive your sins, God has already sent them to the cross, and they are no more.

-Psalm 103:12 says this:

-“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

-Isaiah 43:25 says this:

-“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

-In the verse above, we learn that God takes away our sin not just for our sake, but for His sake as well.

-What do we learn when we understand that God takes away our sin not just for our sake, but for His sake as well?

-We learn how much sin hurts God and us, and how much God wants to completely destroy sin in our lives.

Let's read Ephesians 1:8b-10

8-With all wisdom and understanding,

9-he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

10-to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

-Why is it that some people do not understand God?

-Because they do not have wisdom and understanding from God.

-Because people do not have the wisdom and understanding from God, they are fearful of spirits, and do not know what will happen to them in the future.

-For the Christian, however, God has given us wisdom and understanding that helps us to know God.

-Because of the wisdom and understanding that God gives, we also know the meaning and purpose of life.

-What is the mystery of God's will?

-That one day in the future, God will bring Jew and Gentile together.

-There has always been division and fighting and war in this world.

-Yet, one day in the future, God will unify all people under Christ.

-One day in the future, Jesus will destroy Satan and his demons, and then, God will unify heaven and earth under Christ.

-If God is in control, then why are Satan and his demons still

on earth?

-Because God is not finished using them.

-Because God is using them to bring people to Christ.

Let's read Ephesians 1:11-12

11-In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.

12-in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

-If you are a believer, then you are Christ's inheritance.

-Similarly, if you are a believer, then you have also gained the inheritance of Christ.

-As we learned in Ephesians 1:3, our inheritance is "in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

-In Jesus Christ, all Christians inherit every promise that God has ever made.

-In Jesus Christ, we have peace, love, grace, wisdom, eternal life, joy, victory, strength, guidance, power, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, truth, fellowship with God, heaven, eternal riches, glory, and everything else that comes from God.

-If you are a Christian, then God has also predestined you.

-To be predestined means that God has determined and planned your life for you before the creation of the world.

-According to whose purpose has God predestined us?

-According to the purpose of God Himself.

-What is God's purpose for us?

-That we would be clothed with His image to His glory.

-Our salvation and our blessings are designed to be for God's glory.

-What should be our response to God's purpose for us?

-That we would have a strong faith in our God.

-How is God's purpose for us accomplished?

-It is God alone who accomplishes His purpose in us.

-It is not only God who makes His plan for us, but it is also God who brings His plan to completion in our lives.

Let's read Ephesians 1:13-14

13-And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

14-who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until

the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

-If we believe in Christ, God has marked us with a seal.

-Who is this marking with a seal?

-God the Holy Spirit.

-What does it mean that God has marked us with the seal of the Holy Spirit?

-Just as people put marks on their cattle to show that they own them, and so that no one can steal them, God has marked us Christians with the seal of the Holy Spirit.

-How is the Holy Spirit a mark of ownership?

-The Holy Spirit shows everyone that God owns us.

-The Holy Spirit also shows Satan that he can no longer own us.

-God also gave us the Holy Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance with Christ.

-What does it mean that God gave us the Holy Spirit as a deposit?

-It is like the man who wants to buy a cow from someone who lives in another village.

-First, the man gives the owner of the cow all of the money that he has in his pocket as a promise that he will return to pay the rest of the money, and take the cow home.

-How is the Holy Spirit a guarantee of our inheritance until our redemption?

-While we are still on earth, our redemption is not complete.

-This is because we wait for the “redemption of our body” which we studied in Romans 8:23.

-And because we do not yet have full possession of our inheritance, we may question whether God’s promise is true.

-But God has given us the Holy Spirit as our guarantee.

-The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that Jesus will return to save our bodies from sin, sickness, and death

-The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that Jesus will make our bodies new like His wonderful body.

-The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that Jesus will take us home to heaven to be with Him forever.

-A theme for Ephesians is as follows:

-What Christ has done for us Individually & As a Church

-Here is an outline for the book of Ephesians:

I. What Christ has done for us Individually (Chs 1-3)

- 1) What Christ has done for us (1)
- 2) What Christ has done in us (2:1-10)
- 3) What Christ has done among us (2:11-3:21)

II. What Christ has done for us as a Church (Chs 4-6)

- 1) Our unity as a Church (4:1-16)
- 2) Our walk as a Church (4:17-6:9)
- 3) Our strength as a Church (6:10-20)