

The Believer's Riches in Christ

Ephesians 1:1-14

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context--

1. The book of Ephesians is Paul's essay on the church belonging to Jesus Christ, the glorious bride of Christ, the most precious institution on earth today.
2. The word "church" occurs nine times in the letter (1:22; 3:10,21; 5:23,24,25,27,29,32). The term "body" (referring to the church) occurs nine more times (1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16 (twice); 5:23, 30).
3. Concerning the church, the book reveals that:
 - a. Christ is the head of the church, 1:22; 5:23.
 - b. The church is the fullness of Christ, 1:22, 23.
 - c. God's manifold wisdom is demonstrated by the church, 3:10.
 - d. God is glorified in the church by Christ, 3:21.
 - e. There is one body or church, 4:4.
 - f. Christ loves His church, 5:23.
 - g. Christ is the savior of the body, the church, 5:23.
 - h. Christ gave himself for it, 5:25.
 - i. It is to be holy and without blemish, 5:27.
 - j. It shall be presented to Christ, 5:27.
 - k. The church is the beloved bride of Christ, 5:31, 32.

B. "The Blessing Chapter"

1. Chapter one of the book has been called the "blessing chapter" of the Bible, and rightly so.
 - a. Introduces us to the "eternal purpose" of God, 1:9-11; cf. 3:9-11, which specifically mentions "the eternal purpose" in connection with the same thoughts discussed in 1:9-11.
 - b. Furnishes clear cut, simple answers to any questions one might have as to the wonderful blessings of Christianity, or about Christ and his church as the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.
2. To help us see and better appreciate this, we shall divide the chapter into two sections and emphasize what is taught or what is to be learned from each, taking note of how the second is related to the first.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Marvelous List Of Spiritual Blessings God Has Given Us, (Vv. 3-14):

1. God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” v.3.
 - a. “Blessed us...the saints...and...the faithful in Christ Jesus”, 1:1.
 - (1) “Saints” – set apart, consecrated, holy ones.
 - (2) “Faithful” – those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ, 1:13.
 - b. “With all spiritual blessings in Christ.”
 - (1) “Spiritual,” not material blessings.
 - (2) “All” of these are “in Christ”; “All” – of every kind – are in Christ.
 - (3) To experience or obtain even one of these, one must be “in Christ.”
 - c. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed...”
 - (1) That is, “praised be God”
 - (2) Truly God deserves to be praised for so blessings us.
 - (3) Do we really praise him for this as we should?
 - d. The Ephesians are reminded “**ALL**” spiritual blessings are “**in Christ**” and come “**through Christ**,” not through “*the goddess Diana of the Ephesians*,” or the *Law of Moses*.
 - e. “In Christ”
 - (1) Used in an instrumental sense – through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ; Jesus is the cause, 1:3-11.
 - (2) It denotes union, a vital spiritual union with him, having been by faith baptized into this spiritual relationship with him, Rom. 6:3-6; Gal.1:26,27; Mt.28:18,19.
 - (3) To be in fellowship with him, 1 Jno.1:3; Jno.15:1-8.
 - f. “In heavenly *places* in Christ”
 - (1) “*Places*” is in *italics*, not in the original text.
 - (2) Thus just “the heavenlies,” or where all Christian have citizenship. Cf. Phil.3:20.
 - (3) “Heavenlies” or heavenly habitation, and identifies the realm of spiritual reality.
 - (a) *Spiritual things are as real (enduring) as material things (temporal).*
 - (b) *Furthermore, these blessings originate in and emanate from heaven.*
 - g. He is here declared to be “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - (1) Jesus often said God is his Father and He is God’s Son.
 - h. The purposes of the spiritual blessings:
 - (1) “That we should be holy and without blemish before God,” 1:4 (cf. 5:27).
 - (2) “That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace,” 1:6,12.

- (3) "That...he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," 1:10.
2. These spiritual blessings as listed in vv. 4-14: "According as he hath..."
- a. "Chosen us in him," 1:4a.
- (1) We are "Chosen IN HIM," i.e., Jesus is the chosen one, (Isaiah 42:1), and we are chosen by virtue of being IN CHRIST - (Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:26,27)
- (2) Those "in Christ" are chosen, or elected, of God "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth", and called by the gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; 1 Peter 1:2, 22-25.
- (3) It's an heavenly calling, Hebrews 3:1.
- (4) Those "in Christ" are chosen "in Him before the foundation of the world," v.4b.
- (a) *Before the universe was created (cf. 1 Tim.1:9; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).*
- (5) Those "in Christ" are chosen that they "should be holy and without blemish (blame) before him in love," the purpose of the choosing, or the design of God's electing act. Cf. 5:27.
- (a) *Holy living is emphasized. Cf. Matthew 5:8; Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 6:17; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Titus 2:11,12; 1 Peter 1:15,16; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10.*
- (b) *"In love," without which no sacrifice is acceptable, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Galatians 5:6; 1 Corinthians 16:14.*
- b. "Predestinated ("foreordained," ASV) us unto the adoption of children (sons) by Jesus Christ to himself," 1:5,6.
- (1) "Foreordained" – "to mark out before hand, to define a boundary" of something; "to predetermine" Cf. Builder planning a building.
- (2) Before the world began God decided and determined the "boundaries" of his spiritual kingdom – who – what kind of people would be included and excluded *in group terms.*
- (a) *All those who would choose to come within the boundaries of his doctrine and remain there will be saved, John 8:31,32; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 9.*
- (b) *The invitation is open to all, and all can come into God's blessings the means of an obedient faith, Matthew 11:28-30; John 3:16; 6:44, 45; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Hebrews 2:9; 5:8,9; Revelation 22:17.*
- (c) *All those who choose Jesus as God's Son shall be God's chosen people.*
- (d) *There is no Calvinistic doctrine taught here!*
- (3) This adoption of sons:
- (a) *Means to "place as a son" in God's family.*
- (b) *It is by the new birth, John 3:3-5; Acts 2:36-41; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

- (c) All of God's children are in God's house or his family, which is the church, 1 Timothy 3:14,15.*
- (d) Is by Jesus Christ and by him alone, his sacrificial death having provided the means of our adoption, and when we by faith obey his gospel the adoption is accomplished.*
- (e) Is done "according to the good pleasure of his (God's) will," as are all things God does, v. 5 (cf. Ephesians 1:9; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11).*
- (1) All is conformable to the good pleasure of his will, just as it was according to the purpose of his will.*
- (f) His choosing, foreordaining and adopting us as his sons is "to the praise of the glory of his grace," v. 6a.*
- (1) "Praise" means "commendation," and "glory" means "honor, majesty, and exaltation which belong to God- which he rightly deserves.*
- (2) All praise and glory in this life belong to God, "to whom be glory for ever and ever," Galatians 1:5.*
- (3) Jesus possessed that glory before his Incarnation, and received it again when he ascended, John 17:5; Philippians 2:9-11; Ephesians 1:19-23.*
- (4) Those accepted in Christ will receive glory with Christ when he returns, Colossians 3:4; Philippians 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:16-18.*
- c. Also, in him "we have redemption," 1:7a.
- (1) Redemption, refers to deliverance or a releasing from bondage or setting one free by paying a ransom.*
- (a) All sinners are slaves to, held in bondage to, sin and need redemption, John 8:34 (cf. Rom. 7:14).*
- (b) Since all have sinned, all need redemption, Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; 1 John 5:19.*
- (c) No mere man can redeem himself; for redemption he is dependent on God, Jesus Christ and the gospel of Christ.*
- (2) We have redemption through his (Christ's) blood, and only through him and his blood, Ephesians 1:7a (Acts 4:12); Matthew 20:28; 26:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:23-26; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Galatians 3:13; 4:5; Colossians 1:13,14; 1 Timothy 2:5,6; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18-20; 2 Peter 2:1.*
- (3) That redemption is the forgiveness of our sins, 1:7a (cf. Colossians 1:14).*
- (a) Needed because all have sinned, Romans 3:23.*
- (b) To sin is to transgress the perfect law of God, 1 John 3:4.*
- (c) The just law of God condemns the sinner to death Some payment or ransom must be made or the sinner will perish eternally.*
- (d) Only the blood of Christ washes away sin, Acts 22:16.*

- (e) *When this takes place, the demands of the Law of God have been satisfied and it has no further claim against the sinner. He is redeemed from the just claims of the Law of God against his soul.*
- (f) *God does not pay the redemption price to the Devil. All souls belong to God, even the souls of sinners, and God alone judges and sentences us then.*
- (g) *The wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23. But the Devil can't collect the wages for service to him, nor exact the penalty, nor receive the ransom paid.*
- (h) *While in a sense redemption and forgiveness are one action, they speak of two different things with respect to us.*
 - (1) *In redemption our helpless condition in sin due to our bondage therein is primarily in view, which demands a ransom being paid on our behalf.*
 - (2) *In forgiveness our own personal responsibility and guilt for that bondage is set before us in all its ugliness, with our need for it dependent upon another and upon his conditions.*
- (4) This redemption and forgiveness is "according to the riches of his grace," so freely granted to us that it abounds, 1:7d.
 - (a) *God's grace through Jesus Christ is the ground, the basis, of our redemption and forgiveness, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31.*
 - (b) *Without God's grace, no sinner could be saved! But that grace is conditional, Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 1:11, 12; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:1, 2; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1 Peter 4:17, 18; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:36-41.*
 - (c) *God supplies all our spiritual needs "according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ," Philippians 4:19.*
 - (d) *In the spiritual realm his "supply" of grace is more than sufficient to redeem and save all who will obey and serve, Romans 5:20, 21.*
 - (e) *V. 8 enlarges upon v.7 and the "riches of his grace" by declaring "wherein he hath abounded toward us" (ASV): "which he made to abound toward us") in all wisdom and prudence," 1:17, 18.*
 - (f) *The concept of God's grace being given to us in great measure is explained also in Romans 5:15-21; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:9-12; 2:2-10; 2 Timothy 2:7*
 - (g) *Its condition— – gospel obedience, an obedient faith.*
- d. Another blessing we have "in Christ" from God: He hath "made known to us the mystery of his will," 1:9, 10.
 - (1) This is a key thought in the great theme of Ephesians.
 - (2) What was once a mystery or hidden or unrevealed has now been uncovered, revealed, made known in its completeness.
 - (3) It was first made known to the apostles of Christ and through them to us in the written word, Ephesians 3:1-6, 9-11; Galatians 1:11, 12; John 16:7-15; 1

Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 John 1:1-3.

- (4) "Made known...according to his good pleasure," v.9, v.5b. Conformable to his good pleasure; because it pleased him to do so.
 - (5) "Which he hath purposed ("set forth") in himself (in him, or in Christ, ASV)," 1:9.
 - (6) "That," as v.10 affirms, "in the dispensation of the fullness of times" (this dispensation of time, when God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law, etc., Galatians 4:4,5), "he might gather together in one all things in Christ..." and under the headship of Christ (1:22,23).
- e. Further still, "in whom also we were made a heritage" (ASV), 1:11,12.
- (1) That is, "We (both Jews and Gentiles) are made the heritage of God himself in Christ."
 - (2) A heritage is a possession that one owns by right of inheritance, which we have in and through Christ and are promised in the world to come, Hebrews 1:2; Galatians 4:7; Mark 10:30; Titus 1:2; Romans 8:24, 25; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 9; 1 John 2:25.
 - (3) "Being predestinated (foreordained) according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."
 - (a) *This was no after-thought, but was according to God's plan and purpose "in Christ before the foundation of the world," 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:18-20.*
 - (b) *His workings are not the result of chance or impulse or arbitrary action. Christ and his church were at the heart of this eternal purpose and program of God.*
 - (4) To the end "that we (Jewish believers) should be to the praise of his glory, we (Jewish believers) who had (ASV) first trusted in Christ," 1:12.
 - (a) *The "we" of v.12 refers to Jewish Christians such as Paul and the apostles, et al. The "ye" of v.13 refers to Gentile believers, like most of the Ephesians. See: Acts 2; then Acts 10; Acts 19.*
 - (b) *"That we should be to (a people devoted to) the praise of his glory." f. Finally, "in Christ," obedient believers of "the gospel of your salvation" receive "the earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of the purchased possession (of God's own possession, ASV)," 1:13, 14.*
 - (1) *It's through the gospel of Christ that we receive the earnest of our inheritance.*
 - (2) *"Unto the redemption of the purchased possession"*
 - (a) The redemption of 1:7 refers to our redemption from past sins, our forgiveness.
 - (b) The redemption of 1:14, to the final redemption from the grave, when we are glorified at the 2nd Coming of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15.
 - (3) *"Earnest," meaning, "guarantee," "pledge," "an assurance, pledge or guarantee of something that would be forthcoming, not "a down payment" or "partial payment" for something.*

(a) Gen.38:15-20 establishes its Bible meaning and usage.

(1) When Judah sought the services of one he thought to be a harlot, he promised her "a kid from the flock," v. 17a.

(2) Not having the payment with him, she asked for "a pledge, till thou send it," or an assurance or guarantee that he would fulfill he promise to pay, v. 17b.

(3) When he asked, "what pledge shall I give thee?" She said, "Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thy hand," v. 18.

(4) In v. 20 his payment was sent in order to recover or receive the return of his pledge.

(5) Therefore, his pledge was never intended to be a down payment on or a partial payment for her services, but an assurance or guarantee to her that he would pay for her services as promised.

(b) Vine's definition, Vol. II, p.11, agrees: "In general usage it came to mean a pledge or earnest of any sort; in the N.T. it is used only of that which is assured by God to believers..."

(c) *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, *Young's Analytical Concordance*, *Wilson's O.T. Word Studies*, and *The Theological Word Book of The O.T.*, Vol. 2, p.693, all say the original word for "pledge" or 'earnest' means: "a pawn (given as security), a surety, a pledge, or to give as a pledge," and all of them quote Genesis 38:17,18 among the scripture examples given.

(1) Not one of these sources, in their strict definitions of the word "earnest," give it the meaning of "a down payment" or "partial payment" of the Christian's inheritance.

(2) It is only in their comments where they function as a Commentary that they ever do that!

*(4) "The gospel of your salvation...which **IS** the earnest (the pledge, assurance, guarantee) of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession."*

(a) It is not the Holy Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance.

(5) Think! Where or how do we have present-day divine assurance of, or divine guarantee of, redemption through Jesus Christ and the redemption of the purchased possession?

(a) If it is not in the gospel of our salvation, then where or how?

(b) See: Matthew 7:21-27; Romans 1:16,17; Hebrews 5:8,9; 2 Peter 1:5-11,16-21; cf. Romans 8:16-18; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:8.

3. In this first section (1:3-14) we have found and studied the marvelous list of spiritual blessings, all of which, God has given us in Christ, wherein he revealed his eternal plan for the world's salvation.

- a. While all material blessings also come from God and are vital to our physical existence and welfare, and are available to all men, James 1:17; Matthew 5:45; Genesis 8:22.
 - b. All spiritual blessings are found only in Christ, given only to those who are in Christ, and are of much greater value to us than the material, because they provide salvation for the soul, the greatest and most valuable possession we possess, Matthew 16:24-26.
 - c. In view of that, the spiritual should be appreciated more highly and sought after more diligently than the material.
 - d. This eternal purpose of God deals with his people in Christ in this world and in the world to come, both here and hereafter.
4. Therefore, in the second section (1:15-23) we find Paul praying for the believer, the elect in Christ, that they may become so enlightened as to come to a fuller more precise knowledge of God and of the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ in making all this possible.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Lessons Learned:

1. We ought to pray, as did Paul, that we, all of us, may have the eyes of our heart enlightened about these marvelous things.
2. That we might come to have a more precise knowledge of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through his great power made all these things possible.
3. Robert Shank, in his book, *Elect in the Son*, p.27, said: "Of all passages of Scripture touching the matter of election, Ephesians 1:3-14 is the foundation passage." Then in the entirety of his book he denied that these verses teach anything akin to the Calvinistic doctrine of election. He affirmed that John Calvin's doctrine of election is totally false.

B. Will You Believe on Christ & Be Blessed?

Edited by Don McClain—Based on an outline by Edgar J. Dye -

The Hope of His Calling

Ephesians 1:15-23

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

12. All Spiritual Blessings In Christ – 1:3
 - a. He chose us in him - 1:4 / Adopted as Sons - 1:5 / Accepted In Christ - 1:6 / Redemption & Forgiveness - 1:7,8 / Having Made Known To Us The Mystery - 1:9,10 / Obtained An Inheritance - 1:11-14
2. God provided these riches in Christ according to His predetermined will!
3. God provided these riches by His sovereign power!
4. God will provide what He has promised according to both His will and power.

B. Paul's Prayer for the church in Ephesus—

1. After Paul explained the spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3-14), he expressed his earnest desire that Christians realize the extent of God's power and grace exercised on our behalf (1:15-23)

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The constant object of Paul's prayers: 1:15-16

1. Paul had heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus - (they had a faith that worked – James 2:17,18,20-24; Luke 5:17-25; Gen. 22:12)
2. Paul had heard of their love for all the saints – (They had a love that worked – Gal. 5:6; 1 John 3:14-20)
3. Paul did not cease to pray for them – (Rom. 1:8,9; Col. 1:3,9)

B. The Content of Paul's Prayer: 1:17-19

1. That God may give to you a spirit, (i.e., an attitude) of wisdom and revelation – (compare Col. 1:9-12)
 - a. Paul is not praying for some mystical influence to come upon these Christians. Neither is he praying that God would give them the Holy Spirit, so that they could understand the Holy Spirit's message revealed through the Apostles. Nor is Paul teaching that some truths in God's revelation are so deep and hidden that the Christian needs some "special illumination", to see them. It is not the limited human mind that prevents people from seeing the truth, rather it is wrong attitudes in the human mind (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)
 - b. The right attitude or disposition towards the truth, which is an honest and humble heart (Luke 8:15; James 1:21), and diligent study (Heb. 5:14; 2 Timothy 2:15). In

other words, Paul is praying that God's revelation would prick the hearts of these Christians, and that they would humbly embrace it

2. This wisdom and revelation is found in a complete and full knowledge of God – (experiential knowledge – not mere education – Eph. 3:18,19)
 - a. **“Wisdom”**: “Includes also the understanding of how to apply the things of God to life. It is expressed in prudent, practical, intelligent, sagacious activity” (*Caldwell p. 51*).
3. Enlightening the inward man – (prompting internal motivation – Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal 5:22)
4. That you may know “What is the hope of His calling” – 18b
 - a. God has called us to eternal life in Christ - (Eph 4:4; Rom 8:24,25; Titus 1:2; 2 Thes. 2:14)
 - b. We need to know of God’s willingness and power to save us – (1 Thes. 5:24; John 3:16; 10:28,29; 2 Thes 1:11; 1 Pet 1:3-5; Jude 1:24; Rom 1:16; Ep. 6:10-18)
 - c. God will inherit those whom He has purchased - (v. 7,11).
 - d. What has God given that we may be rich in Christ – (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:9; 2 Pet 1:3)
 - e. God wants us to know how special we are to Him – (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 20:28)
5. “What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe” – 19
 - a. God’s power is beyond measure
 - b. Therefore He is more than able to keep His word to us – (3:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:5; 2 Pet 1:3-11)
 - c. The greatest example is the resurrection and exaltation of Christ - (v.20-23; Phil 3:10)

C. The exaltation of Christ: 1:20-23

1. “Which He wrought in Christ” – (speaking of what God worked in the past) 20
 - a. “when he raised Christ from the dead” — God’s power and execution of His redemptive plan was accomplished in raising His Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead — See Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:14.
2. “And seated him at his right hand” — 21
 - a. The place and position of highest honor. “The Father's throne has also become Christ's throne (Reve 3:21).
 - b. According to Paul and Peter (Acts 2:34-35), following the resurrection Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, the fulfillment of Psalm 110:1.
 - c. Psalm 110:1-4 also has Jesus being priest while He is reigning as King. If Jesus is not reigning now, then He is not a priest now - (Zechariah 6:13; Hebrews 4:14-16).

3. “Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named” —(21)
 - a. Various designations of authority are piled up to emphasize the supremacy of Christ. Whatever grades of authority there may be in the universe, they are all inferior to Him. (Colossians 1:16; 1 Peter 3:22; Phil. 2:9)
 - b. God’s energetic power which resurrected and exalted Christ in the past (cf. Rom. 8:34; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22) is the same power available to believers in the present (cf. Phil. 3:10).
4. “And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church” — 22,23
 - a. “He put” = the Father put — Ps. 8:6; 110:1; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27
 - b. “Head over all things” — There is nothing that is not under Him — Heb. 2:7; Col. 1:15-17
 - c. The church - The body of Christ, His people - The true church is the church that recognizes Christ as its head. The true church is the church that is in subjection to Christ in everything (5:24).
5. “The fullness of Him who fills all in all.” —
 - a. Paul had already noted that all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), and being in Christ and being in the body of Christ are the same thing. Thus, every blessing, and all that God can mean to us is only found in the church. — (Colossians 2:9) - “He imparts to it, as His body, all its life, its strength, its grace, its gifts” (*Erdman p. 47*).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Lessons Learned:

1. May we be more fully impressed with the powerful truths of God’s grace, love and power.
 - a. We ought to pray, as did Paul, that we, all of us, may have the eyes of our heart enlightened about these marvelous things
2. That we might come to have a more precise knowledge of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through his great power made all these things possible.
 - a. No Christian should be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of the facts of faith.
 - b. Each of us should pray for and seek out a greater understanding of the riches we have in Christ and our relationship with God through Christ.

B. Will You RECEIVE all Christ GIVES TO HIS PEOPLE??

“Saved By Grace Through Faith”

Ephesians 2:1-10

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

13. All Spiritual Blessings In Christ – 1:3 / He chose us in him - 1:4 / Adopted as Sons - 1:5 / Accepted In Christ - 1:6 / Redemption & Forgiveness - 1:7,8 / Having Made Known To Us The Mystery - 1:9,10 / Obtained An Inheritance - 1:11-14
14. Paul's Prayer For The Ephesians
 - c. That they might know God - Ep 1:17
 - d. That they might know the hope of His calling - Ep 1:18a
 - e. That they might know the glorious riches of His inheritance in the saints - Ep 1:18b
 - f. That they might know the exceeding greatness of God's power exhibited through Jesus toward believers - Ep 1:19-23

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Our Condition Outside of And Without Christ (Eph. 2:1-3)

1. “Dead in trespasses and sins” - Ep 2:1 –
 - a. The word DEAD has reference to “the state of being ‘separated’ from God.
 - b. Just as "physical death" is a separation of body and spirit – (James 2:26) So "spiritual death" is when we are separated from God because of our sin – (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1-2)
2. Walking with the world, according to Satan - Ep 2:2
 - a. Live by the world's standards – (Romans 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; James 4:4)
 - b. Live a life influenced by Satan – thus his child – (1 Jn 5:19; John 8:44; Mat. 13:38)
 - c. Have a noncompliant spirit or disposition – (1 Sam. 15:22,23; Isa 30:1; Eph. 5:6; 1 John 3:10)
3. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind - Ep 2:3
 - a. Includes all who are outside of Christ – (Eph. 2:12; even religiously devout people – Acts 2; 9; 10; 16; Rom. 7:14-24 etc.)
 - b. In ignorance, we have all conducted ourselves according to the desires of our flesh – "Living to gratify the flesh" (Barnes) - (Rom. 3:9-20,23)
 - 1) “Of the flesh”- "unrighteous cravings, such as belong to and are spawned by the flesh" (Hendriksen)

- 2) “Of the mind” - "all kinds of hostile, self-righteous, and/or immoral plans and cogitations, which finally result in wicked deeds“ (Hendriksen)
- c. And thus "sons of disobedience", and "children of wrath" Ep. 2:3
 - 1) The product of a sinful life is the propensity to sin even more - (2 Pet. 2:14; John 8:34; Rom 6:16)
 - 2) Nature: Greek, PHUSIS = a feeling or action -which by long habit has become established; “second-nature” – The Ephesians, before they became Christians, had a long established habit of disobedience to God, and thus were the “children of wrath.”
 - 3) The result of a sinful life is wrath – Those outside of Christ will be the recipients of the wrath of God – (2 Thes 1:7-9)

B. BUT - God Has Provided Salvation

1. How can such "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath" ever be “made alive” spiritually?... (See again the Blessings we have in Christ in Chapter 1...)
 - a. We are made "holy and without blame"? - Ep 1:4
 - b. We are made "adopted sons"? - Ep 1:5
 - c. We are made "accepted" by God? - Ep 1:6
 - d. We receive redemption through the blood of Jesus? Ep 1:7
 - e. We receive the “hope of His calling” and the “riches of His glory?”– Ep 1:18
2. This is made possible BECAUSE God is RICH in MERCY – (vs. 4 - pity & compassion - Ex. 34:6,7; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 51:1; Rom 2:4; Titus 3:3-5; 1 Pet 1:3)
3. Made possible BECAUSE of His GREAT LOVE for us – (vs. 4 - John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10)
4. Raised us up from death – (vs. 5 - Ep. 1:19,20; Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:11-13; 3:1-3)
5. We have been made alive in Christ “BY GRACE” – (vs. 5 - unmerited favor – Ep 1:6; Rom. 3:23,24; Tit. 2:11,12; etc.)
6. Into heavenly citizenship – (vs. 6; Ep 1:3; 2:19; Phil 3:20)
7. That forevermore there will remain a monument of God’s goodness – (vs. 7; John 3:16; 1 Tim 1:16,17; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)
8. Realized only in Christ – (vs. 7; Gal. 3:26-29)

C. Saved By Grace Through Faith — 2:8-9

1. “Salvation is due to God’s unmerited favor – (Rom. 3:24; 5:18,19; Titus 2:11-14)
2. Salvation is received through our faith – (John 8:24; Heb. 11; James 2:14-26; Rom. 4:12; 10:9-17; Mk 16:16)
 - a. The term faith refers to one’s trust and reliance upon its object and includes obedience

— If one does not have enough faith to obey, that one does not have enough faith to save - (Luke 6:46ff; Romans 4:12; 6:1-6, 16-18; Hebrews 11; James 2:14-26)

3. Not by man's own merit – (salvation is not provided due to our deserving it – Rom 3:23,24 ; 5:8,10; — Not received through keeping the Law – Rom. 3:19ff; 4:1-4; Gal. 3:10-29; - not provided based on our works of righteousness – Tit. 3:3-5)
4. The Principle Exemplified —
 - a. Noah – (Gen. 6:8-22; 7:1,23; Heb. 11:7)
 - b. The walls of Jericho – (Joshua 6:2-20; Heb 11:30)
 - c. Naaman – (2 Kings 5:1-19)
 - d. Those on Pentecost – (Acts 2:14-47)
 - e. Paul – (Acts 22:16; Gal. 2:20,21)

D. The Fruit of Our Salvation — (2:10)

1. We are new creatures in Christ – (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:3-19; Col. 3:1-14)
2. We are to serve God by working for Him – —
 - a. A pattern for . . . – (Tit. 2:7)
 - b. Zealous for . . . – (Tit. 2:14)
 - c. Ready for every . . . – (Tit. 3:1)
 - d. Maintain . . . – (Tit. 3:8,14)

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Lessons Learned:

3. Who We Were / Who We Are.
 - a. Sinners - saved from wrath by the grace of God through an obedient faith.
 - b. Sinners saved from wrath to serve God in accordance with His revealed will.
 - c. Who and where are you?

“The Unveiling of The Mystery of God”

Ephesians 2:11-3:21

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

15. All Spiritual Blessings In Christ – 1:3 / He chose us in him - 1:4 / Adopted as Sons - 1:5 / Accepted In Christ - 1:6 / Redemption & Forgiveness - 1:7,8 / Having Made Known To Us The Mystery - 1:9,10 / Obtained An Inheritance - 1:11-14
16. Paul's Prayer For The Ephesians
 - d. That they might know God - Ep 1:17
 - e. That they might know the hope of His calling - Ep 1:18a
 - f. That they might know the glorious riches of His inheritance in the saints - Ep 1:18b
 - g. That they might know the exceeding greatness of God's power exhibited through Jesus toward believers - Ep 1:19-23
17. Saved By Grace Through Faith
 - a. Our condition outside of Christ- Ep 2:1-4
 - b. God has provided salvation- Ep 2:5-9
 - c. We must accept salvation through an obedient faith- Ep 2:8-10

II. DISCUSSION:

A. GENTILES' CONDITION “BEFORE & WITHOUT” CHRIST - (2:11,12)

1. "Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (11,12)
 - a. According to the flesh - they were not descendants of Abraham — “uncircumcised”
 - b. Separated from the state of Israel - not part of “NATIONAL” promise — (Gen 12:2a; cf. Rom. 9:4)
 - c. They were not included together with God's "chosen people" according to the flesh. Though some Gentiles were admitted into Judaism as proselytes, Gentiles as a whole were excluded; they were thus alienated.
2. "Strangers from the covenants of promise" (12)
 - a. Promises and covenants were not made with them - (National / Land / David / Law) — (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:18–21; 17:1–8; Deut. 28–30; 2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:1–4).
 - b. The Law was a covenant between God and Israel — (Ex 19:5-6; 24:3-8; Deut 5:1-3).
3. "Having no hope" (12)
 - a. Unlike Israel they had no expectation of a personal Messiah-to save them. Hope

springs forth from promises made — Being strangers from the covenants of promise, they did not have the hope the Jews claimed to have.

4. "Without God in the world" (12)

- a. In one sense, they did have God, as "He did not leave Himself without witness..." - cf. Ac 14:17
- b. But they did not have the true knowledge of God, a knowledge that provides righteousness, peace and the joy of salvation.

B. GENTILES' CONDITION "NOW & IN" CHRIST"... (2:13-18)

1. They are now "fellow citizens with the saints" (19a)

- a. Before, they were "aliens" from the commonwealth of Israel and "strangers" from the covenants of promise but now, they are "fellow citizens" with God's people - forming the true Israel of God — (Romans 2:28,29; 9:6; [Gal. 6:15])

2. They are now "members of the household of God" (19b)

- a. Before, they were "without God in the world" - But now, they are members of "God's family" — (Gal. 3:26-29)

3. They are now part of "a holy temple in the Lord" (20-22)

- a. Before, they "without God in the world" - But now, God dwells in them through His Spirit. by the gospel — (1 Cor. 3:16,17; 1 Pet 2:4-10)!

B. THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST REVEALED – 3:1-12

1. A Dispensation of Grace given to Paul – (3:1,2)

2. Made known to Paul – (3:3)

3. Understood by reading – (3:4)

- a. How "we" come to know this "mystery"
- b. It is not through direct revelation, though Paul received it this way, It is through reading his words, i.e., through reading the Word of God!
- c. The Word of God is understandable! — Some people say it is not, or that it is too hard to be understood, but clearly Paul intended for people to understand his "knowledge in the mystery of Christ"!
- d. The problem some people have is that they misunderstand Paul's use of the term "mystery" and think the Bible is still a mystery; it is NOT!

4. Revealed to holy apostles and prophets – (3:5) - IT HAS BEEN REVEALED!!

- a. "...according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest," - Ro 16:25-26
- b. "having made known to us the mystery of His will..." - Ep 1:9

- c. "the mystery which as been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints." - Col. 1:26-27
5. Explained with reference to the Gentiles – (3:6)
- a. I.e., those that we saw in chapter two, who at one time were: "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" / "strangers from the covenants of promise" / "having no hope and without God in the world" /
 - b. The mystery now revealed is that these Gentiles can be: 1) "fellow heirs" - 2) "of the same body" - 3) "partakers of His (God's) promise in Christ"
 - c. This is what Paul wrote about in Ep 2:11-22, and to which he refers in Ep 3:b-4a - That Gentiles, who for ages were not included in God's special dealings with the Israelites... - ...could now become part of God's spiritual family and heirs to the wonderful blessings that God makes available through Jesus Christ!
6. Paul was the selected apostle to be sent to the Gentiles and was enabled by the working of God's power – (3:12)
- a. "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" - Ep 3:7-8 - This Paul did, even in letters like this one to the Ephesians as we saw in Ep 1:3-14
 - b. "to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery" Ep 3:9 - Again, Paul used epistles like Ephesians, and also Colossians as we saw in Ep 2:11-22
 - c. "to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be known" - Ep 3:10-12 - Here Paul expands his thoughts, this wisdom of God is being made known **"by the church."** - The whole church, as "the pillar and ground of the truth", and is to be involved in proclaiming the wisdom of God - cf. 1Ti 3:15 - BUT the main point is that the very "existence" of the church proclaims the wisdom of God.
 - d. This wisdom of God is being made known to "principalities and powers in the heavenly places" - Not just to "the Gentiles" (Ep 3:8) and to "all people" (Ep 3:9), But as the church carries out its mission, even spiritual entities were being enlightened - cf. 1Pe 1:10-12 (where even angels were once "in the dark" about the salvation now being offered in Christ)
 - e. Making known the wisdom of God "by the church" was part of God's "eternal purpose" - 1) The church was not an afterthought, but part of God's plan for eternity! 2) From the beginning, it was to play an important role in God's scheme of redemption for mankind! - 3) This verse has serious ramifications for those who say the church was an "afterthought", established only after Christ and His kingdom were rejected. This verse clearly indicates that the church was in God's plan from the beginning!
 - f. Knowing that his work as an apostle, and the work of the church, was all part of God's "eternal purpose" being carried out in Christ Jesus, Paul had great boldness and confidence of continued access to God — Eph. 3:12

- g. Therefore, he did not want his mention of imprisonment to be a source of concern -
For even the tribulations it might have caused him was glory for the Gentiles! -
Ep 3:13 - How? Because in imprisonment Paul was "an ambassador in chains"
- Ep 6:19-20

C. PAUL'S SECOND PRAYER – 3:14-21

1. Addressed to the Father of Jesus – (3:14)
2. All who serve and worship the Father are identified as members of His family – (3:15)
3. That they be strengthened through the Spirit in the inner man – (3:16; 1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:11)
4. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith - (3:17; Col. 3:16; John 14:23; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 13:5;)
 - a. Rooted & grounded in love – That they may Comprehend the vastness of God's goodness – (18)
 - b. To know the love of Christ (which is past knowledge) – (19)
 - c. That they be filled with the fullness of God – (19)
5. Addressed to the Father of Jesus – (3:14)
 - a. Glorifying God Who is able – (*to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to His power that works in us – 20*)
 - b. Glorifying God in the church – Paul sees "the church" as the means by which glory is to be given to God (*by Christ Jesus to all generations forever & ever – 21*)

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Lessons Learned:

6. Who We Were / Who We Are.
 - a. We are part of God's "eternal purpose" being carried out!
 - b. We who are Gentiles are but a demonstration of that wonderful "mystery of Christ" -
1) "fellow heirs" - 2) "of the same body" - 3) "partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" -- with the faithful of Israel (such as Peter, Paul, and many others who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah)
7. Are you in this "body", which we learn in Ep 1:22-23 is the church of Jesus Christ? The Lord adds the saved to His church (cf. Ac 2:47).
8. How can one be saved and thus "added" by the Lord to His church? Consider carefully Ac 2:36-41

“Walking Together In Unity”

Ephesians 4:1-16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

18. For three chapters, Paul has dealt with "doctrine" in which he has described both: Our spiritual "possessions" in Christ (Chapter. 1) Our spiritual "position" in Christ (chapter's 2,3)
19. In the remaining three chapters of this epistle, Paul will focus on "duty", i.e., responsibilities that are ours because of the blessings we enjoy as described in the previous chapters
20. Of the blessings described, one upon which Paul elaborated is the "unity" that we have in Christ by virtue of His work on the cross...
 - a. He has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God in "one body" - Ep 2:14-16
 - b. Now, Gentiles can be fellow heirs, of the "same body" - Ep 3:6
21. It should not be surprising, then, that the first duty that Paul exhorts us to fulfill is "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" - Ep 4:3

II. DISCUSSION:

A. TO WALK WORTHY OF OUR CALLING (4:1)

9. On the basis of what Paul wrote in chapters 1–3 he implores them to walk worthily.
 - a. Seeing we are in Christ, reconciled to God in one body - the gospel demands we walk (live) in harmony with God's revealed nature and will - in UNITY - (Phili 2:1-10)
 - b. Consider the prayer of Jesus, (John 17:20,21); the orders of Paul, (1 Cor. 1:1-13); and the instruction of James, (James 3:13-4:12)

B. THE "ATTITUDES" FOR MAINTAINING UNITY (4:2-3)

1. LOWLINESS - This word means: The having a humble opinion of one's self - A deep sense of one's (moral) littleness / Modesty, humility, lowliness of mind.
 - a. This virtue is necessary in order in order to 1) submit to the authority of God & Jesus, (Mat 5:3), 2) in order to love other - to properly value those around you - (cf. Php 2:3-4;
 - b. Without this virtue, members in the body begin trying to be the "head" of the body, a role reserved only for Christ
2. GENTLENESS - This word can be translated as gentleness, mildness, meekness - It is not a quality of weakness, but of power under control.

- a. Moses was a meek man (Num 12:3), but capable of great strength and boldness
 - b. Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart" (Mt 11:29), but we see where He drove the money changers out of the temple
 - c. Thus it is being gentle, even when there is the potential for being harsh, but gentleness is more conducive for maintaining unity.
3. LONG-SUFFERING — The idea here is one of patience, forbearance, long-suffering, slowness in avenging wrongs
- a. When the body consists of members who are not perfect, and often sin against each other, maintaining unity is not possible unless they are willing to endure each other's imperfections.
4. BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE — Similar to long-suffering, "bearing" means to sustain, to bear up, to hold up, to endure -
- a. Made possible only through LOVE. - As Paul wrote in his chapter on love: "love suffers long...is not provoked" - 1Co 13:4-5
 - b. Indeed, the virtue of love is the "tie" that binds all these virtues together - cf. Col 3:12-14
5. ENDEAVOR — Displaying these virtues does not come naturally nor easy, nor does maintaining unity! Thus the need for much effort, as Paul uses a word which means "to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence."
- a. Only by giving diligence to display ALL these virtues, can we hope to "keep (maintain) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ep 4:3).

C. THE DOCTRINE NECESSARY FOR UNITY — (4:4-6)

1. ONE BODY...

- a. This refers to the body of Christ, the church in the "universal" sense - Ep 1:22-23
- b. The "body" of saved believers throughout the world - Of which Christ is the "head", and "savior of the body" - Ep 5:23
- c. While there may be many "local" churches (congregations Romans 16:16), there is only ONE "universal" church, with ONE "head" - Jesus Christ!

2. ONE SPIRIT...

- a. This would be the Holy Spirit - Who has already been described in this epistle (the Holy Spirit of promise & guarantee of our inheritance" - Ep 1:13,14 / By Whom both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father -Ep 2:18 / By Whom the "mystery of Christ" was revealed to the apostles and prophets - Ep 3:5 / As the One whose "unity" is to be maintained in the bond of peace - Ep 4:3
- b. When the ONE message revealed by the one and only revealer of truth is followed - unity will inevitably be the result!

3. ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING...

- a. For Paul, this pertains primarily to "the resurrection of the dead" - Ac 23:6; 24:15; Ro 8:23-24; cf. 1Co 15:19-23; Php 3:10-11,20-21
- b. Which necessarily includes such concepts of "salvation" (1 Th 5:8) and "eternal life" (Tit 1:2; 3:7)

4. ONE LORD...

- a. This refers to Jesus, of course - 1Co 8:5-6
- b. Whom God has made "both Lord and Christ" - Ac 2:36
- c. If we are believing in, following after, and submitting to the same Lord, we will be united! — 1 Cor. 1:1-13

5. ONE FAITH...

- a. This the body of truth, "the faith", which Jude says was "once for all delivered to the saints" - Jude 3
- b. It is that "pattern of sound words" of that Paul taught Timothy (2Ti 1:13), and which he was to commit to faithful men (2 Tit 2:2)
- c. We find this "pattern of sound words" in the pages of the New Testament, which contains that which all Christians must believe.
- d. If we believe the same thing, i.e., the truth God has revealed, we will be united! — John 17:17-21

6. ONE BAPTISM...

- a. This is the baptism of the great commission which was commanded by Jesus to be preached throughout the whole world until the end of time — Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16
- b. I.e., the baptism in which a penitent believer is immersed in water, in the name of Jesus, unto the remission of sins, which began to be proclaimed on the first Pentecost after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - Ac 2:38; 8:12-16; 10:47,48; 19:5
- c. The ONE BAPTISM IS NOT HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM! —

7. ONE GOD AND FATHER...

- a. The Father, Note that Paul emphasizes both: 1) His personality ("Father of all") 2) His transcendent authority and omnipresence ("who is above all, and through all, and in you all") — Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; 12:6
- b. Who together with the Son and Holy Spirit, makes up the "Godhead" — Mat. 28:19; 1 Co. 12:4-6. 2 Co. 13:14. Ep. 2:18. 1 Jno. 5:7. Re. 1:4-6

8. These "seven ones" constitute "the unity of the Spirit" that as Christians we must be so

diligent to keep "in the bond of peace". Not one of these is "non-essential"! E.g., just as crucial as maintaining who the "One Lord" is, so we must be steadfast in holding to the "One Baptism"! To assist us in our efforts to "keep the unity of the Spirit", Christ has given to His church certain "gifts".

C. THE "GIFTS" FOR UNITY (4:7-16)

1. THE SOURCE OF THESE GIFTS... (7-10)

- a. They come from the bounty of Christ's grace (7)
- b. As prophesied, they were given after Christ ascended to heaven (8-10)

2. THE NATURE OF THESE GIFTS... (11)

- a. The use of "doreas" and "domata" instead of "charismata" in verses 7-8 suggests Paul has in mind "functions", and not "miraculous spiritual gifts" although miraculous gifts were intrinsically a part of the apostles and prophets function.
- b. APOSTLES - 1) Those who were to be eye-witnesses of the resurrection - Ac 1:15-22 - 2) Their role in the church was foundational, necessary to the establishment of the church - Ep 2:20 - 3) As such, their work or function was temporary.
- c. PROPHETS - 1) These were inspired men and women used in the process of revelation - Ep 3:5; cf. Ac 2:17; 11:28; 21:9 - 2) As with the apostles, their role was foundational, necessary to the establishment of the church - Ep 2:20 - 3) Just as apostles were not replaced, so the prophets' role was temporary - cf. 1Co 13:8
- d. EVANGELISTS - 1) Literally, "bearers of good news" - 2) These are individuals like Philip (Ac 21:8), who -proclaimed the gospel of Christ both publicly and privately - cf. Ac 8:5-13,26-40 -3) Timothy was charged to "do the work of an evangelist" - 2Ti 4:5 - 4) Unlike apostles and prophets, their work does not involve -"laying the foundation", but rather building upon that which is already laid, which they do every time they lead someone to Christ - 5) Therefore, their work or function continues to the present
- e. PASTORS AND TEACHERS - 1) It may be that Paul intended these terms to describe one function (because "some" is not repeated) - - a) The role of "pastor" (shepherd) certainly requires "feeding" or teaching - -b) While there is indication elsewhere that there was a special function of "teachers" in the local church - Ac 13:1; 1Co 12:28-29; 2Ti 1:11; Jm 3:1 / 2) The term "pastor" is found only here in the Scriptures, but from Ac 20:17,28 and 1Pe 5:1-2 it becomes clear that "pastors, shepherds, elders, presbyters, bishops, overseers" are simply different terms describing the spiritual leaders of local congregations / 3) The nature of the work of "pastors and teachers" (i.e., overseeing and feeding the flock of God) naturally follows the work of the evangelists / 4) And like the function of evangelist, continues to the present
- f. What about DEACONS? - 1) Clearly Paul does not intend this passage in Ephesians

to be an exhaustive list of functions in the Lord's church, for he does not mention deacons - cf. Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:8 - 2) But the list is adequate to illustrate the point: Christ has given "gifts" to His church!

3. THE PURPOSE OF THESE GIFTS... (12-16)

- a. To prepare members of the body for service ("equip the saints for work of ministry")
- b. To build up the members of the body ("edify the body of Christ"), so they can - 1) grow to maturity (13), Possessing the unity of the faith, and - 2) Having the knowledge of the Son of God, and 3) Measuring up to the stature expected of those in Christ
- c. Will not be children (14) — 1) Tossed to and fro by every doctrine that comes along — 2) Easily deceived by cunning and false teachers
- d. But instead will be "growing upward" as the body of Christ (15-16) — 1) Growing up in all things into the Head, Christ — 2) From which the whole body can grow, provided every part does it share — 3) Made possible also as we "speak the truth in love" and "edify itself in love"

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Lessons Learned:

1. So, we see that as Christians we are to walk worthy of both the One who calls us and UNITY demanded in the gospel
 - a. Display the "attitudes" necessary for unity
 - b. Hold fast to the "basis" upon which our unity rests
 - c. Utilize the "gifts" Christ has given to assure we all come to the unity of the faith ...then Christ's work on the cross will not be in vain! - cf. Ep 2:16
2. Not only that, but then we will also truly conduct ourselves in a manner "worthy of the calling with which you were called" - Ep 4:1
 - a. We were called to be "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" - Ep 2:19
 - b. We were called to be "a holy temple in the Lord", "a habitation of God in the Spirit" - Ep 2:21-22
 - c. We were called to "make known the manifold wisdom of God" - Ep 3:10

Are we doing all we can as a members of the body of Christ to “walk together in unity”, and by so doing walk in manner worthy of our calling?

“Walking In Truth And Holiness”

Ephesians 4:17-32

II. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

22. In the previous lesson, we saw where Paul began to describe our "duty" to "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" - Ep 4:1
23. In doing so, he first called us to "walk together in unity" by admonishing us to...
 - d. Display the "attitudes" crucial for maintaining unity - Ep 4:2-3
 - e. Understand the "basis" of the unity we have in Christ - Ep 4:4-6
 - f. Utilize the "gifts" given by Christ to His church that serves to keep the body of Christ together and growing - Ep 4:7-16
24. In the last half of chapter four (Ep 4:17-32), Paul continues to describe the sort of "walk" that is worthy of our calling, especially as "a holy temple in the Lord" (cf. Ep 2:21-22)
 - a. Whereas the first half emphasized "Walking Together In Unity"
 - b. This section emphasizes "Walking In Truth And Holiness"

II. DISCUSSION: THE ADMONITION (17-24)

A. NO LONGER WALK LIKE THE REST OF THE GENTILES... (17-19)

3. They walk "in the futility of their mind" - How so?
 - a. It starts with the "hardening of their heart"
 - b. Which leads to "ignorance that is in them"
 - c. Because of such ignorance they are "alienated from the life of God"
 - d. And that results "having their understanding darkened"
 - e. Notice where Jesus describes this same process - cf. Mt 13: 14-15
4. Their walk is "past feeling" - as indicated by the fact they...
 - a. "have given themselves over to licentiousness" (i.e., unbridled lust, excess)
 - b. "work all uncleanness with greediness" -- Desensitized, they seek after ever-increasing forms moral depravity - cf. Ro 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Pet 4:3,4; 2 Tim 3:1-7; etc.

B. INSTEAD, WALK IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS... (20-24)

1. This is how you learned Christ

- a. As you heard Him and were taught by Him (through His apostles, of course - cf. Mt 28:19-20)
 - b. In Whom is the truth - cf. Jn 8:31-31; 14:6
2. For you were taught to "put off" the "old man"
 - a. That is, your "former conduct", how you behaved before you were saved - cf. Col 3:5-9
 - b. Putting off the old man is needed because it is never content, but "grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (like addictive drugs, you always need more)
3. And to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind"
 - a. Which is the key to true "transformation" - cf. Ro 12:1-2
 - b. You "renew" your mind only as you "set your mind on things above" - cf. Col 3:1-2
4. And to "put on the new man"
 - a. A new man "which was created according to God" - cf. Col 3:10
 - b. A new man, "in righteousness and true holiness" - cf. Col 3:12-17
5. In giving the admonition "No longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles", Paul has made it clear that it involves both a "putting off" and a "putting on". I.e., our "Walking In Truth And Holiness" is not just a bunch of "Thou Shalt Not's", there are also some "Thou Shalt's". — To illustrate further the difference between the "old man" (how the rest of the Gentiles walk) and the "new man" (how Christians are to walk),

III. DISCUSSION: THE APPLICATION (25-32)

A. CASE IN POINT: LYING... (25)

1. The "old man" thinks nothing of lying
2. The "new man" puts away lying, and in its place speaks truth with his neighbor (especially to those who members of the same body) — Eph. 4:15; Col. 3:9

B. CASE IN POINT: ANGER... (26-27)

1. The "old man" gets angry and lets it linger, or get out of control
2. The "new man" may get angry, but does not...
 - a. Let it linger ("do not let the sun go down on your wrath") — Pr. 14:29; 19:11; 25:23.
 - b. Allow it to prompt sinful behavior ("nor give place to the devil") — Ps. 4:4; 37:8; Mat. 5:22; Ro. 12:19–21. Ja. 1:19.

C. CASE IN POINT: STEALING... (28)

1. The "old man" is willing to steal
2. The "new man" not only stops stealing, but works so he can help others in need!

D. CASE IN POINT: CORRUPT COMMUNICATION... (29)

1. The "old man" doesn't worry or care what comes out of his mouth
2. The "new man" not only avoids "corrupt communication", but seeks to speak that which is uplifting to those who hear

D. E. SUMMARY... (30-32)

1. Why be concerned about putting off the "old man" and putting on the "new man"?
 - a. When Christians act like the "old man", it grieves the Holy Spirit
 - b. By the Holy Spirit we were sealed for the day of redemption- cf. Ep 1:13-14
2. Therefore, we ought to put away those things befitting the "old man" (bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, malice)
3. And in its place we need to put on those things befitting the "new man" (being kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God forgives us in Christ)

III. CONCLUSION:**A. What a contrast there would be if all those in the church truly carried out the admonition to "Walk In Truth And Holiness"!**

4. The church would stand out like "a city that is set on a hill"! - cf. Mt 5:14-16
5. And the world, though it now has "their understanding darkened", might be more likely to come to see the truth that is in Jesus
 - a. We can NEVER be a positive influence in a wicked world if we are LIKE the world!
— 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Rom. 2:17-24
6. But what hope is there if the church is more like the world than the "holy temple" it is to be? 1 Pet 1:13-2:12
7. WE ARE TO BE THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD! — Mat 5:13-16; Phil 2:14-16

“Walking In Love, Light & Wisdom”

Ephesians 5:1-21

III. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

25. Though we now enter chapter five, we are still noticing how to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” - Ep 4:1
 - a. We have been "called" to be...
 - 1) "holy and without blame before Him in love" - Ep 1:4
 - 2) "sons by Jesus Christ to Himself" - Ep 1:5
 - 3) "fellow citizens with the saints" - Ep 2:19
 - 4) "members of the household of God" - Ep 2:19
 - 5) "a holy temple in the Lord" - Ep 2:21
 - 6) "fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ" - Ep 3:6
 - b. What sort of "walk" is worthy of such a calling? So far we have seen that it is one in which we are...
 - 1) "Walking Together In Unity" - Ep 4:1-16
 - 2) "Walking In Truth And Holiness" - Ep 4:17-32
26. As we come into the fifth chapter, Paul sets forth three sets of contrasting walks...
 - a. Walk in LOVE – not in unloving sin – Ep 5:1-7
 - b. Walk in LIGHT – not in darkness - Ep 5:8-14
 - c. Walk in WISDOM – not in foolishness - Ep 5:15-21

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Walk In Love – (5:1-7)

8. As Christ also has loved us and gave Himself for us - (5:2,25)
 - a. Means keeping God’s commandments – 1 John 5:2-4; John 14:15, 21-24
 - b. Means loving one another – John 13:34,35; 15:17; 1 John 3:14-16
 - c. Character of love – 1 Cor. 13:1-8
9. Some loveless sins - (5:3-7)
 - a. Fornication — Sexual impurity - sex outside of marriage - Heb. 13:4
 - b. Uncleaness — “the state of moral impurity, especially in relationship to sexual sin” — Col. 3:5-7

- c. Covetousness — Greed - a strong desire to acquire more and more material possessions — Col 3:5; 2 Pe 2:14.
- d. Filthiness — to act in defiance of social and moral standards, with resulting disgrace, embarrassment, and shame — 1 Cor 13:4–5; Rom 1:27; Jude 13
- e. Foolish Talking — speech not fitting godliness - indecent, foolish, or dirty words'
- f. Course Jestng — vulgar expressions and indecent content—'vulgar speech, indecent talk.

10. Those who walk in “unloving SIN” will ...

- a. Receive no inheritance - Heb 3:14ff
- b. Receive God's wrath — Rom. 1:18ff; 2 Thes 1:7-9; Rev. 21:8

11. Therefore - Do not be partakers — 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1

B. WALK AS LIGHT (8-14)

1. Before coming to Christ, we were once "darkness" (remember Ep 2:1-3); but now we are "light in the Lord" and should walk as "children of light" - Ep 5:8
 - a. The "fruit" expected of those "children of light" is “goodness, righteousness and truth” - Ep 5:9
 - b. By bearing such fruit, we fulfill our role as "light" by "proving" (demonstrating) what is well-pleasing to the Lord - Ep 5:10; cf. Ro 12:1-2
2. Having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness – (11)
 - a. The "fruit" expected of those "children of light" is “goodness, righteousness and truth” - Ep 5:9
3. Exposing those in darkness – (11,12)
 - a. We are not to have fellowship with "unfruitful works of darkness" - Ep 5:11; e.g., fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, Ep 5:3-4
 - b. Instead, our task is to "expose" them - Ep 5:11b-13
 - c. Things that we must "expose" are often so disgraceful, it is shameful to speak of them - But by "walking in the light" ourselves, we can through example and word expose by contrast these "works of darkness"
 - d. Thus the need to be "light" ourselves, something that comes only from Christ - Ep 5:14 - Christ gives "light" to those who were spiritually asleep and dead - cf. Ep 2:4-6
4. Awake unto righteousness – (13-14)
 - a. Christ gives "light" to those who were spiritually asleep and dead - cf. Ep 2:4-6 [Is. 26:19; 60:1; Rom. 13:11] but as Christians we are to continue to live sober, righteously and godly in this present world — Titus 2:11-14; 1 Pet 1:13

5. To "Walk As Light" is an awesome responsibility, and some have allowed the "darkness" to overshadow the "light", rather than the "light" exposing the "darkness". We MUST be sure to carry out our role as "the children of light"

C. WALK AS WISE (15-21)

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF "WALKING AS WISE"... (15-17)

- a. Doing so with great care - Ep 5:15 - The word translated "circumspectly" means "exactly, accurately, diligently" / Unlike fools, who care little about where they are going or what is happening
- b. Taking advantage of the time available to one - Ep 5:16 / To "redeem the time" is "to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that zeal and well doing are as it were the purchase money by which we make the time our own" (from the "Online Bible") / This is necessary, because the days are "evil" (bringing toils, annoyances, perils; of a time full of peril to Christian faith and steadfastness; causing pain and trouble - Online Bible)
- c. Understanding the will of the Lord - Ep 5:17 / Only by understanding the will of the Lord can we be a "wise people" / Just as Israel was to demonstrate their wisdom by doing the will of the Lord, so we can "walk as wise" only if we understand His will for us - cf. Deut 4:5-6

2. TO WALK AS WISE REQUIRES BEING "FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT"... (18-21)

- a. While those who "walk as fools" delight in being filled with wine, those who "walk as wise" will endeavor to be filled with the Spirit!
- b. What evidence is there that one is "filled with the Spirit"? Paul describes three indications... — 1) One indication is singing praises - Ep 5:19 — 2) Another indication is giving thanks - Ep 5:20 — 3). A third indication is submitting to one another in the fear of God - Ep 5:21

III. CONCLUSION:

1. Children of God who delight in...

- a. Singing praises and making melody in the heart
- b. Giving thanks always for all things to God
- c. Submitting to one another in the fear of God

-- demonstrate that they are "filled with the Spirit", and as such, truly are "followers of God as dear children" (Ep 5:1)

2. As children of God, and "filled with the Spirit", they are able to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, as they...

- a. "Walk in love" - Not in unloving sin -
- b. "Walk as light" - Not in the darkness of ignorance

- c. "Walk as wise" — not in foolishness -
- 3. Brothers and sisters in Christ, we live in a world
 - a. That has perverted the meaning of "love"
 - b. That takes perverse pleasure in works of darkness
 - c. That stumbles around aimlessly, like drunken fools
- Can we not see the need for the people of God today to live up to their "calling", and to "prove what is acceptable in the Lord"? — Rom 12:1,2

“Displaying God’s Wisdom In Our Various Relationships”

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

IV. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

1. Up to this point Paul has been describing how we can "have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" - Ep 4:1
2. We have seen that conduct "worthy of the calling" involves:
 - d. Walking in unity - Ep 4:1-16
 - e. Walking in truth and holiness - Ep 4:17-32
 - f. Walking in love, walking as light and walking as wise - Ep 5:1-21
3. It is through our relationships that we interact most with the society in which we live, and it is through our various relationships that we demonstrate the wisdom and will of God before the world! — Ep 5:22-6:9
 - a. The responsibilities of wives - Ep 5:22-24
 - b. The responsibilities of husbands - Ep 5:25-33
 - c. The responsibilities of children - Ep 6:1-3
 - d. The responsibilities of fathers - Ep 6:4
 - e. The responsibilities of servants - Ep 6:5-8
 - f. The responsibilities of masters - Ep 6:9
4. Thus it is through our relationships we have great potential to demonstrate the wisdom of God... love, sacrifice, obedience, honesty, fairness, are to be displayed in our various relationships - By example, then, we can demonstrate in our families what is truly good and right (i.e., God's will), and prepare others to be receptive to the gospel message!

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Relationship Between Christ & His Church — (5:23-32)

1. Christ is the head & Savior of His church — (5:23)
 - a. Jesus has authority and governs His people — (1:22,23; Col. 1:18; Mat 28:18)
 - b. Therefore . . . the church IS subject to Christ in everything – (5:24;)
 - c. Only those who submit are His church, i.e., the saved — (Acts 2:47; Col. 3:17; Mat. 7:21-23) - If we are following the Lord we are His people - If we are not following the Lord we are - regardless of what we think of ourselves!

2. Christ loves the church & gave Himself for it – (5:25; Acts 20:28)
3. Christ sanctifies, cleanses and washes the church – (5:26,27;)
4. Christ nourishes & cherishes it – (5:29; [2 Cor. 4:14; 11:2]; Col. 1:22; 1 Pet 1:17-21; 2:24)
5. The church is one with Christ, as a husband & wife – (5:30-32; cf. Rev. 19:7,8; 21:2)

B. MARITAL RESPONSIBILITIES (5:22-33)

1. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord in everything - (5:22,24)
 - a. The reason: the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church - Any time you have organization that is functional, you must have some chain of authority. In the family, it is God's Will that the husband be the head of the wife, and that parents be over their children
 - b. Here is an opportunity for wives to demonstrate the wisdom and value of an important principle in God's will: that of submission! Jesus taught by both word and example of the importance of submission - cf. Jn 13:12-17; Mk 10:42-45
 - c. Indeed we all are to submit in one way or another - Jm 4:7; Ep 5:21
 - d. Through their submission, wives prove that God's will is best in such matters!
2. The husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the church – (5:23)
 - a. When a husband exercises his authority as head of the family with the kind of love Jesus displays while ruling over His church, they demonstrate God's love and wisdom!
3. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church – (5:25)
 - a. Husbands are to love their wives... Just as Christ loved the church, i.e., with a sacrificial love designed to bless and benefit their wives - Just as they love their own bodies, i.e., with a love that nourishes and cherishes their wives
4. Husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies - (nourishing & cherishing)– (5:28,29; Ge. 2:21–24. Mat. 19:5)
5. The husband & wife are one – (5:31; Gen. 2:23,24; Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:7) -
6. Importance of love & respect – (5:33; 1 Pet. 3:1, 6,7)

C. FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (6:1-9)

1. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN... (1-3)
 - a. Children are to obey their parents in a way that honors them (6:1; cf Col. 3:20)
 - b. There are certainly temporal benefits for such obedience (“that it may be well with you...”) - (6:2,3)
 - c. But there are also spiritual repercussions - cf. Col 3:20 ("for this is well pleasing to the Lord")

- d. And by their example, children can show the value of obedience to the commands of God

2. THE DUTY OF FATHERS... (4)

- a. Fathers are charged both negatively and positively..
- b. DON'T provoke children to wrath (i.e., discipline without love)
- c. DO bring them up in the "training and admonition" of the Lord (i.e., discipline tempered with love)
- d. In the world, people usually fall into two extremes of child raising: — 1) Discipline without love (child abuse) — 2) Love without discipline (permissiveness)
- e. But when fathers properly administer both love and discipline, by example they show how God raises His own children in the family of God - (cf. He 12:5-11; cf. Col. 3:21; Prov. 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15-17)

3. THE DUTY OF SERVANTS... (5-8)

- a. In the First Century A.D., servants were an intricate part of many households, which may explain Paul including instructions to them and masters in this and parallel passages - cf. Col 3: 18-4:1
- b. Christians who were servants were expected to exemplify the proper kind of obedience required of all Christians... / Obedience with fear and trembling - cf. Php 2:10 / Obedience in sincerity of heart, as to Christ Himself / Obedience with good will, as to the Lord / Obedience with an understanding that the Lord is an impartial Judge
- c. In this way even slaves could demonstrate by example what true obedience was according to the Will of God

4. THE DUTY OF MASTERS... (9)

- a. Those Christians who had slaves (like Philemon) were charged to treat their servants in very special ways: — 1) "do the same things to them", i.e., their treatment of slaves should be governed by the same sort of principles given to the servants... / 2) "with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ" / 3) "not with eyeservice...but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" / 4) "with good will...as to the Lord, and not to men" / 5) "knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord..."
- b. In particular, Christian slave-owners were to give up threatening and to remember that God shows no respect of persons
- c. By their example, masters could demonstrate the proper exercise of authority, and reveal much about how our Master in heaven rules over us in the kingdom of God! - WITH LOVE / OPPORTUNITY / MERCY ...

III. CONCLUSION:

1. How we conduct ourselves in our marriage and family relationships can greatly effect our efforts to make known "the manifold wisdom of God" ...
 - a. Marriages and families that are "dysfunctional" serve only to belie the claims we make about the gospel and its power to transform lives
 - b. Whereas marriages and families based upon the teachings of God's Word can speak volumes as to the value of principles inherent in the gospel; such principles as: 1) Submitting to God and others in authority 2) Exercising authority with sacrificial love 3) Obeying those placed over us by God 4) Developing others through training and admonition, not intimidation 5) Rendering service that is sincere, not hypocritical 6) Exercising authority with justice and fairness
2. So as we endeavor to "walk worthy of the calling" that we have in Christ, let's not overlook those areas where it is most imperative to have a "worthy walk": in our marriages and families!

“Be Strong In The Lord And In The Power Of His Might”

Ephesians 6:10-24

V. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

5. "Finally, my brethren..." - With these words Paul begins to draw his epistle to a close, an epistle in which he has beautifully described:
 - a. The Christian's possessions in Christ ("every spiritual blessing") - chapter 1
 - b. The Christian's position in Christ ("fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God") - chapters 2-3
 - c. The Christian's purpose in Christ ("to walk worthy of the calling") - chapters 4-6
6. To effectively carry out our "purpose", Paul's final concern is that the Christian be "strong" - Ep 6:10-20
7. We need to realize, as Christians, we are at war:
 - a. A Spiritual war – A battle that is waged in the minds of men! -
 - b. Internally – the war with sin, self deception, pride, selfishness, doubt, discouragement, etc.
 - c. Externally – we are at war with false doctrine, false religion, ungodliness, immorality, negativity, etc. –
8. In this lesson, the last of this series on Ephesians, we shall consider what Paul has to say about "Standing Strong In The Armor Of God" which adequately and sufficiently equips us to be victorious ...

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Make use of the armor God has provided: — (6:10,11)

3. Where true strength is found – (“Be Strong in the Lord”) – Eph. 6:10
 - a. All spiritual blessings are in Christ, including those things necessary to resist the devil and his minions — 2 Ti. 2:1; 4:17.
 - b. Outside of Christ, and apart from God, man is completely unprepared to do battle with the devil — Prov 16:25; Jer 10:23; Rom 1:18ff; 3:23; 1 John 5:19
 - c. We are baptized into Christ — Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:26,27
 - d. We are to abide in Christ by following His teaching — John 15:1-10; 2 John 9.10
4. The source of strength – (“and in the Power of HIS Might”) – Eph 6:10;
 - a. Paul states that there is "strength" and "power" available for the Christian beyond their own! Not only has God saved us, but God has also given us every "weapon",

both defensive and offensive to overcome evil and to make it to heaven. cf. Ep 1:19; 3:16,20; Php 2:12-13; 4:13 1 Co. 16:13. 2 Co. 12:9, 10. Col. 1:11.

- b. The point is, we are not left to our own feeble strength, but there is "divine strength" that we can "put on" to protect us in the "battles" we must face.
 - c. Also, this strength is found in EVERYTHING God provides, including one another. "The imagery is that of a Roman heavy-armed legionary, not the light-armed fighter of the auxiliary contingent. This is a picture of a soldier of the line" (Lenski p. 657).
5. Our responsibility in acquiring this strength – (Put on the whole armor of God) – Eph. 6:11
- a. The phrase "put on" demands our active participation in this struggle against evil (Romans 13:12).
 - b. "The whole armor": The emphasis is upon the necessary completeness of his equipment, i.e., none of the armor described is "optional."
6. Why we need God's strength – (that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil) - Eph 6:11;
- a. "Devil": False accuser, slanderer. Being successful against temptation demands that one "accept" certain fundamental truths. The Devil hates us. He cannot be appeased and he will never accept a truce. He is bent on our eternal destruction.
 - b. Satan has various "wiles" (lit., cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery), but Christians need not be ignorant of his "devices" [temptation, illicit desires of presented to the flesh and mind; false doctrine; Lies; persecution] - cf. 2 Co. 2:11; 4:4; 11:3, 13–15; James 1:13-16; 2 Th. 2:9–11; John 8:44; 1 Pe. 5:8. 2 Pe. 2:1–3. Re. 2:24;
 - c. Only with the Lord's help can we overcome the wicked one - 2Th 3:3; 1Jn 2:13-14

B. THE STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY: (6:12,13)

1. We need to understand our enemy - (5:22,24) "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but ..." - 12
 - a. This battle is UNAVOIDABLE - The word "wrestling" suggests that each Christian is involved in a personal struggle with evil. (1 Cor 10:13; James 1:13)
 - b. If we underestimate our spiritual enemy, we shall see no need for God's armor, and with no weapons but our own puny strength, we shall be quickly and ignominiously defeated! We need to encourage each other and take advantage of God's provisions! - (Hebrews 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11,14; Hebrews 10:24).
 - c. Physical weapons are powerless in this struggle (2 Corinthians 10:2-5).
2. PRINCIPALITIES & RULERS: —12
 - a. Satan is active everywhere on the face of this planet (1 John 5:19). We are fighting against the rulers, authorities, the cosmic powers of this dark age, against the

wicked spiritual forces in the spiritual realm — see Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 1:16; 2:14-15; Romans 8:38-39 -

- b. This does not deny our Lord's decisive conquest of the principalities and powers, but indicate that as usurpers they have not conceded defeat or been destroyed

3. THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE: — 12

- a. Darkness is their natural habitat, the darkness of falsehood and sin — (1 John 1:5-10)
- b. Christians have been rescued from the "domain of darkness" (Colossians 1:13-14), but our foe will continually try to lure us back.
- c. We are to "expose the unfruitful deeds of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11), because ignorance of the will of God or misinterpretation only provide the Devil with more opportunities to deceive (Acts 26:18; 2 Timothy 2:25-26).

4. AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES: 12

- a. Called "spiritual" because they are not flesh and blood. "The spirit-forces whose essential character is wickedness" (Gr. Ex. N.T. p. 384).
- b. "Wickedness" is active evil. Satan is called the wicked one (Lk 3:19; 7:21; 1 Jn 2:13)
- c. We need to bear in mind that they have no moral principles, no code of honor, no higher feelings. They are utterly unscrupulous, and ruthless in the pursuit of their malicious designs" (Stott p. 264).
- d. "In the heavenly places": Compare with 1:3; 2:6; 3:10. This fight is fought in the spiritual realm.
- e. The real battle does not rage in our physical body. Sometimes people blame their natural desires for the reason why they cannot live the Christian life, yet Jesus pointed out that the "real problem" is when people allow themselves to "believe" the wrong things (Mark 7:20-23). The real battle is for the mind.

5. THEREFORE TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD — 13

- a. "Take up": Or put on (6:11). "Is the accepted term for taking up arms" (Gr. Ex. N.T. p. 384) Again, I must stress that the Devil "will" take up the battle against us (2 Timothy 3:12; James 1:2-4,12-13).
- b. "The whole armor of God": Only when FULLY arrayed will we be sufficiently equipped to faith the victory! The second time this is emphasized (6:11). Some Christians are so self-confident that they think they can manage by themselves without the Lord's strength and armor. Others are so self-distrustful that they imagine they have nothing to contribute to their victory in spiritual warfare. Both are mistaken. Paul expresses the proper combination" (Stott p. 266).
- c. "Stand therefore": "Stand your ground" (TCNT). God often emphasizes the need for Christians to "stand" (6:11,13; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Philippians 1:27-28; Romans 5:2; 1 Peter 5:12).

C. A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ARMOR: 6:14-17

1. "Having girded your waist with truth" (14)
 - a. TRUTH, which serves like a belt - It will hold our life together with a sense of direction and purpose.
 - b. "With truth": Basically two views exist concerning "truth" here. It may refer to the objective truth of the gospel (John 8:32-34; 17:17; cf. He 12:1), or "truthfulness", that is, sincerity and integrity of character. "The guileless honor and integrity of the Christian" (Boles p. 338).
 - c. In the end, one is dependent upon the other. Integrity is formed by bringing your life into conformity with the word of God (1 Peter 1:14-15).-
2. "Having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (14)
 - a. RIGHTEOUSNESS, which guards like a breastplate - Doing that which is good and right will guard our hearts against the slanderous attacks of the Devil (Job 1:9-10),
 - b. The faithful Christian knows that he or she stands innocent in the sight of God (Romans 8:1). Otherwise, ungodly living brings on emotional guilt as well as judicial guilt.
3. "Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" (15)
 - a. Readiness. "Here the preparedness which makes us fully ready to plunge into the fight a readiness inspired by the gospel" (Lenski p. 667).
 - b. The gospel is God's power unto salvation - Ro 1:16-17
 - c. Success against evil comes when the Christian is well acquainted with the gospel message (Hebrews 5:12-14; Colossians 1:23). Ready to defend and proclaim it (1 Peter 3:15; Philippians 1:16; Colossians 4:5-6).
4. "Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (15)
 - a. A strong conviction in God can protect us from every "fiery dart" that Satan can throw at us (false doctrine, lusts of the flesh, persecution)
 - b. "But resist him, firm in your faith" (1 Peter 1:7). Unresolved doubts mean trouble for the Christian (James 1:6-8).
 - c. This faith comes only from the Word of God - Ro 10:17
 - d. We can RESIST EVERY dart Satan Hurls!!!! Do not believe Satan's lies, such as - "YOU HAVE TO SIN - YOU CANNOT RESIST - YOU ARE ONLY HUMAN" ... etc. These are Satan's LIES! — 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Peter 5:9; Ep. 4:27; Ja. 4:7.
5. "And take the helmet of salvation," (17)
 - a. This could refer to the forgiveness of our sins (past salvation) or the hope of future glory (1 Thessalonians 5:8 "as a helmet, the hope of salvation").

- b. It “is that measure of salvation which we have already received (forgiveness, deliverance from Satan's bondage, and adoption into God's family) or the confident expectation of full salvation on the last day (including resurrection glory)” (Stott p. 282). This letter has discussed both (1:3-18).
 - c. A clear remembrance of one's deliverance (2 Peter 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:13-15) is a powerful weapon and defense against evil.
 - d. The Christian who has "heaven" on their mind, will not trade such eternal wealth for some short-lived earthly pleasure (Hebrews 11:25-26; 1 John 3:3).
6. “Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (17)
- a. Here is the "offensive" weapon that Christians must use in their battles, and it is a powerful one! - He 4:12
 - b. With this "sword" it is possible for the Spirit to "cut to the heart" those who hear the Word - cf. Ac 2:36-37; 7:54
 - c. The revelation given by the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Ephesians 3:3-5), is the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to convict (John 16:8) mankind of their sins and to persuade them to come to Christ (Acts 17:2-3).
 - d. The word of God is to also be used in conquering temptation — Matthew 4:4,7,10
 - e. Thus we see the importance of Bible study, for God expects Christians to take the offensive in the fight against Satan (Ephesians 5:11; Mark 16:15). But a soldier who is ignorant concerning the use of the weapon given him, stands at a great disadvantage.

D. THE NEED FOR PRAYER: 6:18-20

7. “PRAYING ALWAYS”,
- a. PRAYER is an oft forgotten defense and weapon in this armor. “The soldier must maintain contact with his commanding officer” (Boles p. 341). “Thus Scripture and prayer belong together as the two chief weapons” (Stott p. 283).
 - b. “ALWAYS” Continue in prayer — Acts 2:42. / Pray without ceasing — 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Luke 18:1. etc.
 - c. “IN THE SPIRIT”: This would include praying in harmony with the Holy Spirit's wishes, that is according to the will of God (1 John 5:14).
 - d. “BEING WATCHFUL TO THIS END”: “And be always on the alert to seize opportunities for doing so” (Wey). “...conveys the idea of never being off guard with respect to these enemies who would like to find us heedless and secure” (Lenski p. 676). Mat 26:41; Colossians 4:2.
 - e. “WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE”: steadfastness, persistence, and constant attention to task. The man of perseverance is not easily discouraged or disheartened (Romans 12:12; Acts 18:10-17; Philippians 1:12-14).

- f. "For all the saints": "The Christian's prayer is unselfish. He does not think only of himself but he prays also for the welfare of others. His fellow-soldiers need help too. We are all fighting together in one army against one common enemy" (Caldwell p. 318).

III. CONCLUSION:

1. 1. When we arm ourselves with such qualities as 1) Truth; 2) Righteousness; 3) The gospel; 4) Faith; 5) The hope of salvation; 6) The word of God 7) and Prayer; then we will be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"! - Ep 6:10
2. With such strength, we are able to resist and stand firm against anything Satan might throw against us - But the choice to "put on the whole armor of God" is up to us!
3. Are we taking care to adorn ourselves with this wonderful armor???
4. In verses 21-24, Paul concludes this wonderful epistle with a comment concerning Tychicus, who will bring the brethren up to date about Paul's circumstances - Ep 6:21-22
5. Paul's closing benediction is fitting for this occasion as we bring this study to a close:

Ephesians 6:23-24 (NKJV)

²³ Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.