

Sermons From Ephesians



**Sermon Outlines Based On
The Epistle To The Ephesians**

MARK A. COPELAND

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MarkCopeland@aol.com

Introduction To Ephesians

Ephesians 1:1-3

INTRODUCTION

1. Have you ever heard of “Hetty” Green, known as “America’s Greatest Miser”?
 - a. She died in 1916, and left an estate worth over \$100 million
 - b. Yet, it is said that...
 - 1) She ate oatmeal cold, because it cost to heat it
 - 2) Her son’s leg was amputated, because she delayed too long looking for a free clinic
 - c. Sounds crazy, doesn’t it?
 - 1) For someone who had such great assets, to go through life miserable
 - 2) Living the life of a pauper, when great wealth was at her disposal
2. But the same could be said of many Christians today...
 - a. For in Christ Jesus, we have countless spiritual blessings! - cf. **Ep 1:3**
 - b. However, many of these blessings go unused
 - 1) Blessings that are wonderful, but unappreciated by many
 - 2) Resulting in some Christians living what Thoreau would call “lives of quiet desperation”
3. God would have us to know about these blessings, or spiritual “riches”, and in the New Testament one book in particular describes many of them...
 - a. It is the book of Ephesians
 - b. One expressed purpose of the book is that we might know “what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” - cf. **Ep 1:18**
4. Lest we become the spiritual equivalent of “Hetty” Green, we begin a series devoted to the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which we plan to “mine” for the riches that are ours in Christ Jesus

[In **Ep 1:1-3**, Paul addresses the brethren at Ephesus and begins immediately to speak of our “spiritual blessings”. Let’s first more closely consider...]

I. THE AUTHOR (1:1a)

A. PAUL...

1. Formerly, “Saul of Tarsus”, the persecutor of the church - **Ac 9:1-2**
2. But who became the “apostle to the Gentiles” - **Ac 9:15**

B. AN APOSTLE OF JESUS BY THE WILL OF GOD...

1. His apostleship was not of his own choosing - cf. **Ga 1:1**
2. He knew it was by the grace of God that he had been so called - **Ep 3:8a**
3. His charge? To “preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” - **Ep 3:8b**

C. WHOSE WORK HAD BROUGHT HIM TO EPHEBUS...

1. First, for a short stay - **Ac 18:19-21**
2. Then for over two years, one of his longer periods of service in one place - **Ac 19:1-10**
3. He also met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus - **Ac 20:17-38**

D. WRITING NOW AS “AN AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS”...

1. At the time Paul wrote this epistle, he was awaiting trial in Rome - cf. **Ep 3:1; 4:1; 6:20**
2. This epistle was written about the same time as Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon, approximately 60-62 A.D.
3. I.e., during the time period briefly described in **Ac 28:30-31**

[Now for a few thoughts on...]

II. THE RECIPIENTS (1:1b)

A. THE SAINTS WHO ARE IN EPHESUS...

1. The recipients of this letter were called “saints”
 - a. The word “saint” means “one who has been set apart”
 - b. It is related to the word “sanctified” which means “set apart”
 - c. ALL Christians were called saints in the New Testament, for in Christ Jesus even the vilest sinners are “sanctified” upon their conversion - cf. **1 Co 6:9-11**
2. The recipients of this letter were those brethren “in Ephesus”
 - a. This is called into question by some, for in a few manuscripts “in Ephesus” is omitted
 - b. For a detailed examination of this question, cf. New Testament Commentary, Exposition Of Ephesians, William Hendriksen, Baker Book House, pp. 56-61
 - c. Hendricksen’s conclusion: this letter was written to the churches of Ephesus and surroundings
3. Historical background concerning the work in Ephesus can be found in **Ac 18:19-28; 19:1-41; 20:17-38**

B. AND FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS...

1. This describes the character of those “saints” in Ephesus
2. They are “faithful in Christ Jesus”; that is, they trusted in Him for their salvation - cf. **Ep 1:13**
3. They were “faithful” in another sense, also, in that they were trustworthy in their stand for the truth - cf. **Re 2:1-3, 6**
4. However, they were to be later rebuked for leaving their “first love” - **Re 2:4-5**

[To these “faithful saints”, Paul give his customary greeting in which he prays for grace and peace to come upon them from God and Jesus (**1:2**). With the very next verse, Paul begins to praise God for the blessings we have in Christ, which reveals to us . . .]

III. THE THEME: THE BELIEVER’S RICHES IN CHRIST (1:3)

A. THE SOURCE OF OUR BLESSINGS (RICHES)...

1. They come from “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”
2. As revealed later, they come to us a result of the “riches” of . . .

- a. God's grace - **Ep 1:7**
- b. God's glory - **Ep 1:18**
- c. God's mercy - **Ep 2:7**
3. As James wrote, "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights . . ." - **Ja 1:17**

B. THE SCOPE OF OUR BLESSINGS (RICHES)...

1. They include "every" spiritual blessing; not just a few, but every single one!
3. Blessings that are "spiritual" in nature; unlike many of the blessings to the nation of Israel of old, which were but material

C. THE SPHERE OF OUR BLESSINGS (RICHES)...

1. First, they are "in the heavenly places"
 - a. Lit., "in the heavenlies", a phrase found only in Ephesians (**1:3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12**)
 - b. Referring to the spiritual realm, as opposed to the physical
2. Secondly, they are "in Christ"
 - a. It has been counted that this phrase "in Christ" occurs 27 times in this epistle
 - c. Emphasizing that it is only by being "in" Christ that one can have access to "every" spiritual blessing

[With **verse three**, then, we have the "theme" of this epistle stated, and one would do well to think of it as the "**key verse**". Before we close this introduction to Ephesians, it may be helpful to consider the following outline of the book as presented in **The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 2, Warren W. Wiersbe, p. 7...**]

IV. A BRIEF OUTLINE

A. DOCTRINE: OUR RICHES IN CHRIST (chapters 1-3)

1. Our spiritual possessions in Christ (**1:4-14**)
 - a. From the Father (**1:4-6**)
 - b. From the Son (**1:7-12**)
 - c. From the Spirit (**1:13-14**)
 - First Prayer: for enlightenment (**1:15-23**)
2. Our spiritual position in Christ (**2:1-22**)
 - a. Raised and seated on the throne (**2:1-10**)
 - b. Reconciled and set into the temple (**2:11-22**)
 - Second Prayer: for enablement (**3:1-21**; with verses **2-13** as a parenthesis)

B. DUTY: OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHRIST (chapters 4-6)

1. Walk in unity (**4:1-16**)
2. Walk in purity (**4:17-5:17**)
 - a. Walk not as other Gentiles (**4:17-32**)
 - b. Walk in love (**5:1-6**)
 - c. Walk as children of light (**5:7-14**)
 - d. Walk carefully (**5:15-17**)
3. Walk in harmony (**5:18-6:9**)

- a. Husbands and wives (**5:18-33**)
- b. Parents and children (**6:1-4**)
- c. Masters and servants (**6:5-9**)
- d. Walk in victory (**6:10-24**)

CONCLUSION

1. In our next lesson, we will begin our study of this Epistle to the Ephesians in earnest, noticing immediately some of those “unsearchable riches of Christ”
2. But as we have already seen, the “sphere” in which these blessings (riches) are to be found is “**in** Christ”. How does one get “into” Christ?

The answer is found in **Ga 3:26-27**, where we learn that those who have been “baptized into Christ have put on Christ”. Are you in Christ...?

Blessings Involving The Father

Ephesians 1:4-6

INTRODUCTION

1. As suggested in the previous lesson, the “theme” of Ephesians is “**The Believer’s Riches In Christ**”
2. After his brief salutation (**1:1-2**), Paul immediately begins in **1:3** by praising God for the blessings (or riches) we have in Christ...
 - a. This “doxology” actually continues throughout verses **4-14**
 - b. The spiritual “possessions” that are mentioned in this passage can easily be outlined as:
 - 1) Blessings involving the Father (**4-6**)
 - 2) Blessings involving the Son (**7-12**)
 - 3) Blessings involving the Holy Spirit (**13-14**)
3. In an effort to appreciate how spiritually blessed we are in Christ, we will examine this section (**4-14**) in three separate lessons

[With verses **4-6**, then, we focus in on “**Blessings Involving The Father**”, beginning with the fact that in Christ we are...]

I. CHOSEN BY GOD (1:4)

A. DEFINING THE TERM “CHOSEN”...

1. Comes from the Greek **eklegomai** {ek-leg’-om-ahee}, and means “to pick out, choose, to pick or choose out for one’s self”
2. Related to the idea of “election” which comes from **ekloge** {ek-log-ay’}, meaning “the act of picking out, choosing”

B. THE “TIME” OF THIS CHOICE...

1. “*before the foundation of the world*”
2. Before the world was ever created, God made His “choice” or “election”
3. Just as with Christ Himself, who was foreordained “before the foundation of the world”
- **1 Pe 1:20**

C. THE “OBJECTS” OF THIS CHOICE...

1. The **Calvinist** believes that this choice was...
 - a. Individual (only certain select individuals have been chosen)
 - b. Dependent solely upon God’s gracious and mysterious will, without any foreknowledge of good or evil on the part of those selected
 - c. Unconditional and final (there is no possibility of apostasy)
2. The **Arminian** believes that this choice was...
 - a. Individual (certain select individuals have been chosen)

- b. Based upon foreknowledge of those souls who would respond to the gospel and persevere in the faith
 - c. Unconditional and final, in the sense that God already knows those who will persevere to the end
3. Paul says simply “...chose us in Him (i.e., Christ)”, and I understand this election by God to have been...
- a. **General**, not particular; **corporate**, not individual
 - b. The body of Christ, the church as a whole, which God chose for His divine and gracious purposes He planned to carry out in Christ
 - c. And that while in the “corporate” sense this choice is unconditional and final, as “individuals” we must be “*diligent to make your calling and election sure*” - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - 1) Just as Israel (as a nation) had been chosen by God to receive His blessings
 - 2) But individually, the Israelites also had to “make their calling and election sure”

D. THE “PURPOSE” OF THIS CHOICE...

- 1. “*that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*”
- 2. The goal of God’s choice in eternity was to produce a people in Christ Jesus who would be:
 - a. “**holy**” - set apart for a special purpose
 - b. “**without blame**” - free from condemnation
 - c. “**in love**” - walking before God in a “sphere” of love - cf. **Ep 5:1-2**

[In Christ Jesus, then, we are blessed to be God’s “chosen” people (cf. **1 Pe 2:9**). How God was able to carry out the “purpose” of His choice when all He had to work with were sinners will be explained in verses **7-12**. But first we also learn that in Christ Jesus we have been...]

II. PREDESTINED BY GOD (1:5-6a)

A. DEFINING THE TERM “PREDESTINED”...

- 1. From the Greek word, **proorizo** {pro-or-id’-zo}, meaning “to predetermine, decide beforehand”
- 2. Thus this verse speaks of that which God “predetermined beforehand”
- **WHO was it that God “predetermined”?**

B. THE SUBJECTS OF GOD’S “PREDESTINATION”...

- 1. Paul simply says “*us*”
- 2. As with election, I understand Paul to speaking of the church as a whole
- 3. As B. W. Johnson says: “**The whole line of argument is general instead of particular.**” (The People’s New Testament)
- WHAT was it that God “predetermined”?**

C. THE PURPOSE OF GOD’S “PREDESTINATION”...

- 1. “adoption as sons”
- 2. Quoting Johnson again: **God has “foreordained that we, the church of Jesus Christ, should be adopted as his children.”**
- 3. As Wiersbe points out, the word “predestination” refers primarily to what God does for

- saved people: **“Election seems to refer to people, while predestination refers to purposes”** (The Bible Exposition Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 11)
3. So it is here, that Paul reveals that which had been predetermined beforehand was the church (all those who are saved) would be “adopted” into the family of God
- **WHY did God “predetermine” this?**

D. THE BASIS OF GOD’S “PREDESTINATION”...

1. **“according to the good pleasure of His will”**
2. Putting it simply, the idea “pleased” God!
 - a. It is something He wanted to do
 - b. And by His Divine Will He has made it possible!

[What should our reaction be to all this? **To praise God** for His glorious grace (“to the praise of the glory of His grace”)! For it is His “grace” by which we can now be...]

III. ACCEPTED BY GOD (1:6b)

A. DEFINING THE TERM “ACCEPTED”...

1. Comes from the Greek word **charitoo** {khar-ee-to’-o}, and means...
 - a. To be highly favored
 - b. To peruse with grace, compass with favor
 - c. To honor with blessings
2. It is used in **Lk 1:28** in reference to the virgin Mary (“highly favored one”)
3. Like Mary, those in Christ are “highly favored” in God’s sight!

B. THE BASIS UPON WHICH WE ARE “ACCEPTED”...

1. **“in the Beloved”** (Jesus Christ)
2. As emphasized in **1:3** and throughout verses **4-14**, all these blessings (including acceptance by God) are “in” and “by” Jesus Christ:
 - a. God chose us “in Him (Christ)” - **1:4**
 - b. God predestined us to adoption as sons “by Jesus Christ” - **1:5**
 - c. God has made us accepted “in the Beloved (Christ)” - **1:6**
3. Therefore it is by our being “in” Christ that we are privileged to be “highly favored” by God, and showered by these wonderful blessings!

CONCLUSION

1. And what should our reaction be?
 - a. To praise God for His glorious grace! - cf. **Ep 1:6**
 - b. Offering such praise is a form of “spiritual sacrifice” by which we can say “thank you!” - cf. **He 13:15**
2. How can God afford to be so gracious to those who are sinners? Our next lesson will examine how in detail, but notice **Ep 1:7**
 - a. Have you experienced this redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins?
 - b. To learn how, carefully read **Ac 2:36-41...**

Blessings Involving The Son

Ephesians 1:7-12

INTRODUCTION

1. We saw in the previous lesson that Paul starts his epistle to the Ephesians with praising God for the spiritual riches (blessings) that we have in Christ - **Ep 1:3**
2. Throughout **Ep 1:4-14** Paul lists some of these wonderful blessings that are ours, and in verses **4-6** we saw those blessings which center around the Father, how we who are in Christ are:
 - a. **“Chosen by God”**, to be holy and without blame before Him in love (**1:4**)
 - b. **“Predestined by God”**, to receive the adoption as sons of God (**1:5-6a**)
 - c. **“Accepted by God”**, that is, to be highly favored by Him (**1:6b**)
3. How is it that we who are sinners are so blessed by God?
 - a. The answer is hinted at in verses **4-6** by the repeated reference to Christ:
 - 1) “chose us **in Him**”
 - 2) “adoption as sons **by Jesus Christ**”
 - 3) “made us accepted **in the Beloved**”
 - b. Thus it is only through Jesus Christ that we can receive these wonderful blessings! (**1:3**)
4. This becomes even clearer as we now consider verses **7-12**, as Paul expands upon **“Blessings Involving The Son”**...
 - a. Please note that the distinction being made between blessings involving the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a narrow one
 - b. For each of the blessings usually involve two or more Persons in the Godhead
 - c. But for memorization purposes it can be helpful to divide up the blessings in the way we have done

[The first blessing we notice in this section is that through His Son...]

I. GOD HAS REDEEMED US (7a)

A. DEFINING “REDEMPTION”...

1. The Greek word is **apolutrosis** {ap-ol-oo'-tro-sis }
2. It means **“a releasing effected by payment of ransom”**
3. As Hendriksen defines it, “deliverance as a result of the payment of a ransom”
4. Hendriksen goes on to suggest that this “redemption” implies:
 - a. **“emancipation...from the guilt, punishment, and power of sin”** - cf. **Jn 8:34; Ro 7:14; Ga 3:13**
 - b. **“restoration to true liberty”** - cf. **Jn 8:36**

B. OUR REDEMPTION IS “THROUGH HIS (CHRIST’S) BLOOD”...

1. The price paid in order to redeem us was the blood of Jesus - cf. **1 Pe 1:18-19**

2. By His death on the cross, Jesus has paid the price to deliver us from the bondage of sin, for which He deserves our highest praise! - cf. **Re 5:9, 12**

[We now see how God could carry out His choice to have a people who are holy and without blame, adopted as sons unto Him, when all He had to work with were “sinners”. Through the death of Jesus and the shedding of His blood, God was just to “redeem” or “deliver” sinners from the bondage of sin!

There is another way to express what God has done to make it possible for us to be “holy and without blame before Him in love”, and that is, through His Son...]

II. GOD HAS FORGIVEN US (7b-8)

A. DEFINING “FORGIVENESS”...

1. The Greek word is **aphesis** {af-es-is}, and it’s shades of meaning include:
 - a. **“release from bondage or imprisonment”**
 - b. **“forgiveness or pardon**, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty”
2. With the shedding of Jesus’ blood, it is now possible to be “forgiven”, that is, “pardoned” so that we are no longer guilty of or imprisoned by sin

B. WHAT HAS BEEN FORGIVEN ARE OUR “SINS” (TRESPASSES)...

1. The Greek word here is **paraptoma**, {par-ap’-to-mah}
 - a. Lit., it means **“a sideslip (lapse or deviation)”**
 - b. Thus it refers to (unintentional) error or (willful) transgression
2. The very sort of things (faults, offenses, sins, trespasses) that would keep us from being “holy and without blame”
3. Through Jesus’ blood, we can obtain “pardon” from such things, and be “holy and without blame”!

C. THE BASIS FOR BOTH “REDEMPTION” AND “FORGIVENESS” IS GOD’S GRACE...

1. “according to the riches of His grace” - **7c**
2. “which He made to abound toward us” - **8a**
3. As Paul told Titus, it is by God’s mercy and grace we are justified - **Ti 3:3-7**
4. This wonderful grace is manifested by God in all...
 - a. “wisdom” - from the Greek word **sophia**, {sof-ee’-ah}
 - 1) Defined by Hendriksen as **“that ability to apply knowledge to the best advantage, enabling a person to use the most effective means for the attainment of the highest goal”**
 - 2) In God’s case, His wisdom is often beyond the capability of man to find out on his own - cf. **Ro 11:33**
 - b. “prudence” - from the Greek word **phronesis** {fron’-ay-sis}
 - 1) Meaning **“mental action or activity, i.e. intellectual or moral insight: prudence, wisdom.”**
 - 2) With much thought God has chosen to show His grace toward us!

[According to His wisdom, prudence, and grace, God has provided “redemption” and “forgiveness” through the blood of His dear Son!

But there is more! While God’s wisdom is often beyond the ability of man to find out on his own, through His Son...]

III. GOD HAS REVEALED HIS WILL TO US (9-10)

A. “HE HAS MADE KNOWN TO THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL”...

1. As explained by Paul later in this epistle (cf. **Ep 3:3-5**), this “mystery”...
 - a. Was not made known to mankind in other ages - **3:5a**
 - b. But has now been revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets - **3:5b; Ro 16:25-27**
2. Making known the “mystery of His will” is due to “His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself”
 - a. It pleased God in planning to reveal His will to us
 - b. Just as it pleased God to predestine our adoption as sons through Jesus Christ - **1:5**

B. THE “WILL OF GOD” THAT IS NOW REVEALED PERTAINS TO WHAT GOD HAD PLANNED TO ACCOMPLISH IN JESUS CHRIST...

1. God’s “plan” was to be carried out “in the dispensation of the fullness of the times”
 - a. I.e., in the period of time when everything is right and ready - cf. **Ga 4:4-5**
 - b. Hendriksen suggests that the reference is to the entire New Testament era...
 - 1) Particularly to the period which began with Christ’s resurrection and coronation
 - 2) But not ending until the Lord, upon His glorious return, pronounces and executes judgment (New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Ephesians, pp. 85-86)
2. God’s “plan” was to “gather together in one all things in Christ...”
 - a. B. W. Johnson comments: **“He might gather in one all things in Christ. That the scattered families and tribes of men, both Jews and Gentiles, should all be gathered and united under one head, Christ. Nay, not only men, but angels...”**
 - b. Paul elaborates upon this thought in **Ep 2:16**, and in **Co 1:19-22**
 - 1) By the death of Christ, Jew and Gentile can become one body
 - 2) By the blood of the cross, God is able to reconcile all things to Himself
 - 3) The ultimate consequence of this “reconciliation” is that we might be presented “holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight” - **Co 1:22**; cf. **Ep 1:4**

[Finally, we also learn that through the Son....]

IV. GOD HAS GIVEN US AN INHERITANCE (11-12)

A. “OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE” OR “MADE A HERITAGE”...?

1. Some translations and scholars understand that verse 11 should read “we were made a heritage”, speaking of God’s inheritance, with an appeal to:
 - a. **Ep 1:14b** - where Paul speaks of “the redemption of the purchased possession”
 - b. **Ep 1:18c** - where Paul speaks of “His inheritance”
2. Reasons for accepting the rendering found in the KJV and NKJV are offered by

Hendriksen:

- a. The immediate context speaks of “our inheritance” - **Ep 1:14a**
- b. In the NT “the inheritance” is ever said to be “ours” or “intended for us” - **Ac 20:32; Ga 3:18; Co 3:24; He 9:15; 1 Pe 1:4** (including **Ep 1:18c**, where “His inheritance” can mean that which God is giving to us)
- c. **Ep 1:5** speaks of “adoption as sons”, and in **Ro 8:15-17** Paul connects the idea of adoption with that of being heirs
- d. In an epistle with many similarities to Ephesians, Paul certainly speaks of how we are “heirs” - **Co 1:12**

B. THIS INHERITANCE IS PART OF GOD’S “PREDESTINATION”...

1. Just as God “predetermined” that those in Christ would receive “adoption as sons” (**Ep 1:5**), so He “predetermined” that His “sons” would receive an “inheritance”!
2. This is in accordance with God’s grand “purpose”, who has the power to “work all things according to the counsel of His will”

C. THE FINAL RESULT IN RECEIVING THIS INHERITANCE...

1. “that we...should be to the praise of His glory”
 - a. That “those in Christ” (and what God has made them) will be a reason to give God glory
 - b. As Paul wrote the Thessalonians: “that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you...” - **2 Th 1:12**
2. Some understand that Paul is now beginning to distinguish between those like him (Jewish believers) and those like his readers (Gentile believers), for a reason that will become clear later (cf. **Ep 2:11-22**)
 - a. For Paul speaks of “we who first trusted” in **verse 12...**
 - b. ...and then says “you also trusted” in **verse 13**
3. Even if so, one cannot make too much of this distinction...
 - a. Because all that is said in **verses 3-11** (where “we” is found) applies to Gentile believers
 - b. And all that is said in **verses 13-14** (where “you” is found) applies to Jewish believers also

CONCLUSION

1. In Christ, then, we have every reason to praise God, knowing that...
 - a. God has redeemed us (**7a**)
 - b. God has forgiven us (**7b-8**)
 - c. God has revealed His Will to us (**9-10**)
 - d. God has given us an inheritance (**11-12**)
2. But there is even more! And in the next lesson we shall examine what that is, as we consider **“Blessings Involving The Holy Spirit”**

For the time being, have you experienced that wonderful redemption, the forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Jesus? The apostle Peter tells how we can in **Ac 2:36-41...**

Blessings Involving The Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:13-14

INTRODUCTION

1. In studying verses **4-12** in which Paul is praising God for the “spiritual riches” in Christ, we have seen blessings which involve both the Father and the Son...
 - a. Blessings involving the **Father** include our being:
 - 1) **“Chosen by God”**, to be holy and without blame before Him in love (**1:4**)
 - 2) **“Predestined by God”**, to receive the adoption as sons of God (**1:5-6a**)
 - 3) **“Accepted by God”**, that is, to be highly favored by Him (**1:6b**)
 - b. Blessings involving the **Son** also include the following:
 - 1) **“God has redeemed us”** through the precious blood of His Son (**1:7a**)
 - 2) **“God has forgiven us”** of our sins by virtue of His grace (**1:7b-8**)
 - 3) **“God has revealed His Will to us”** pertaining to His plan to gather into one all things in Christ (**1:9-10**)
 - 4) **“God has given us an inheritance”** as part of His predetermined plan (**1:11-12**)
2. Verses **13-14** close out this “doxology”, by pointing out blessings we have in Christ that relate in particular to the work of the **Holy Spirit**

[What are these **“Blessings Involving The Holy Spirit”**? The first one is...]

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR “SEAL” (13)

A. DEFINING “SEAL”...

1. The word is **sphragizo** {sfrag-id'-zo}, which means “to set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal”
2. A “seal” was used for various reasons, including:
 - a. To guarantee the genuine character of a document (**Esther 3:12**), or, figuratively, of a person (**1 Co 9:2**)
 - b. To mark ownership (**Song 8:6**)
 - c. To protect against tampering or harm (**Mt 27:66; Re 5:1**)

B. HOW IS THE HOLY SPIRIT OUR “SEAL”...?

1. It could be in every sense of the word...
 - a. In **Ro 8:16**, the Spirit Himself “bears witness” that we are children of God (i.e., guarantees our genuine character)
 - b. In **Ro 8:9**, the indwelling Holy Spirit is considered evidence that we are truly Christ’s (i.e., a mark of ownership, cf. also **1 Co 6:19-20**)
 - c. In **Ro 8:13-14**, it is by the Spirit of God that we “put to death the deeds of the body” so we can live (i.e., to some degree helping to protect against tampering or harm, cf. also **Ep 3:16**)
2. However, the context of Ephesians makes me think that “proof of ownership” is what Paul

had in mind...

- a. He goes on to speak of the Holy Spirit as a “guarantee...until the redemption of the purchased possession” - **Ep 1:14**
- b. He later says that we were sealed by the Spirit “for the day of redemption” - **Ep 4:30**
- So until that “day of redemption”, the Holy Spirit is given to the Christian as evidence that we truly belong to God

C. WHEN ARE WE “SEALED” WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT...?

1. It is **after**, not before...
 - a. One hears the word of truth, the gospel - **Ep 1:13**
 - b. One believes the gospel - **Ep 1:13**; cf. **Jn 7:37-39**
 - c. One becomes a son of God - **Ga 4:6-7** (which occurs when a believer is baptized into Christ - cf. **Ga 3:26-27**)
2. Thus it is only when we obey the gospel of Jesus Christ that we are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”...
 - a. As Peter told the crowd on the Day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:38-39**
 - b. And as he told the Sanhedrin Council - **Ac 5:32**

[This “seal” as a “mark of ownership” is something that might be of more significance to God (and to Satan, who would try to steal what belongs to God) that it does to us, but we can take comfort in knowing that God considers us His property, and that the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to be evidence of such ownership.

Paul describes the Spirit in this passage as “the Holy Spirit of promise”, which could be understood in two ways: 1) the promised Holy Spirit (cf. **Ac 1:4-5; 2:33,38-39**); or 2) the Holy Spirit which gives promise of what else lies ahead. In view of what we learn next about the Holy Spirit, I suspect Paul refers to the latter, for...]

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR “GUARANTEE” (14)

A. DEFINING “GUARANTEE” (“EARNEST”, KJV)...

1. The word is **arrabon** {ar-hrab-ohn’ }
2. It is used to refer to “money which in purchases is given as a pledge or down payment that the full amount will subsequently be paid”
3. In the LXX (Septuagint Version of the OT), the word is translated “pledge” three times in **Gen 38:17-20**

B. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A “GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE”...

1. God has given the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a “deposit” (“earnest”, KJV, and is the same Greek word) - **2 Co 1:22**
2. He is a guarantee of what God has prepared for us - **2 Co 5:1-5**
3. The blessing of the Holy Spirit working in our lives is only a foretaste of the glory that will one day be ours
4. And yet, as an example of what the Holy Spirit can do for us now...cf. **Ro 15:13; Ep 3:16; Ga 5:22-23**

C. HE SERVES AS SUCH “UNTIL THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION”...

1. While in one sense we have been redeemed (**Ep 1:7**) through the blood of Christ, in another sense God has yet to redeem those who are truly His (**Ep 4:30**)
2. Until that day, the Holy Spirit serves as a guarantee that the **final** redemption will one day take place
3. Hendriksen comments: **“At the moment when believers receive THEIR full inheritance, which includes a glorious resurrection body (4:30), the redemption of GOD’S own possession takes place, that is, the full release to him of that which is his by virtue of the fact that he both made it and bought it.”**

CONCLUSION

1. So we have the Holy Spirit as a **“seal”** and a **“guarantee”**. What should our reaction be?
2. For the third time (**1:6,12,14**), Paul says these blessings are “to the praise of His glory”!
3. Thus our reaction should be the same as Paul as stated at the beginning of this section...
 - a. ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” - 1:3***
 - b. I.e., praise God!

Are you praising God for His wonderful grace and mercy? Later on, Paul will tell us how we can “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (**Ep 4:1**), but he sums it up very nicely in **Ro 12:1-2...**

Paul's Prayer For The Ephesians

Ephesians 1:15-20

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen Paul describe how richly blessed we are in Christ in the “doxology” of verses **3-14** in this first chapter of Ephesians.
2. Paul now proceeds to reveal what sort of things he has been praying for on behalf the Ephesians...
 - a. Paul does the same thing in his epistles to the Philippians and Colossians - cf. **Ph 1:9-11; Co 1:9-12**
 - b. In noticing such prayers, I find it helpful to remember that Paul is writing by inspiration
 - 1) I.e., the things mentioned were not just Paul's desire for his readers, but the desire of God as well!
 - 2) And in most cases, what concerns are expressed in these prayers are just as applicable to us as they were to the original recipients of these epistles
3. With that thought in mind (i.e., Paul's prayer is God's desire for us as well), let's take a close look at this prayer...

[Beginning with a recognition of their faith and love (verse **15**) and a mention of his unceasing thankfulness for them (verse **16**), Paul then states that in his prayers his concern for the Ephesians is...]

I. THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW GOD (17)

A. TO “KNOW” GOD IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE...

1. More important than human wisdom, glory, or might - cf. **Jer 9:23-24**
2. It is eternal life itself! - **Jn 17:3**
3. Failure to know God will lead to everlasting destruction! - **2 Th 1:7-9**
- Of course, we are speaking here of knowledge that comes through close and personal association, not casual awareness

B. THIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD COMES BY “A SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION” (17)...

1. Paul could have reference here to either the Holy Spirit Himself, or a spiritual gift that the Holy Spirit gives
2. In either case, it likely refers to that process that was still going on in the first century, where the Spirit of truth was guiding the apostles and early Christians into all the truth (cf. **Jn 16:13; 1 Jn 2:20,27**)
3. Today, we have the full and final revelation in the pages of God's Word, where we can go to learn the truth about God (e.g., cf. **Ep 3:3-4**)

[Do you “know” God? Many people know “about” God, but it is God's will that we come to know “Him”. Through the Word of God as we have it today, you can allow the “spirit of wisdom and

revelation” give you that “saving knowledge” of God Himself!

We now observe that Paul’s concern for the Ephesians included their “eyes being opened”...]

II. THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THE HOPE OF GOD’S CALLING (18a)

A. IN CHRIST, WE HAVE BEEN “CALLED” BY GOD...

1. This “calling” occurred through the preaching of the gospel - **2 Th 2:14**
2. God is “calling” us into His own kingdom and glory - **1 Th 2:12**
3. We have been “called” out of darkness into God’s marvelous light - **1 Pe 2:9**

B. PAUL’S DESIRE IS THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THE “HOPE” OF THIS CALLING...

1. The word “hope” means **“desire with expectation”**
2. What is the expectant desire of this “calling” by God?
 - a. Paul has already revealed some of this hope in verses **4-5**
 - 1) To be holy and without blame
 - 2) To be adopted as sons
 - b. Paul will reveal more about it later in the epistle - cf. **Ep 2:19-22**
3. In this way, Paul is helping to fulfill his own prayer by the writing of this epistle

[Do we appreciate the “hope” of God’s calling? Again, it is through the revealed Word of God (like this epistle to the Ephesians) that we are able to have our own eyes enlightened. There is no reason for us to be ignorant of our wonderful “hope”!

In addition to their knowing the “hope of His calling”, Paul prays...]

III. THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THE RICHES OF GOD’S INHERITANCE (18b)

A. PAUL HAS ALREADY MADE REFERENCE TO...

1. The fact that we were predestined to adoption as sons - **Ep 1:5**
2. The fact that we have obtained an inheritance - **Ep 1:11**
3. The fact that the Holy Spirit was given as a guarantee - **Ep 1:14**

B. HE WILL WRITE MORE CONCERNING OUR “INHERITANCE” LATER ON...

1. Speaking of the exceeding riches of God’s grace in the ages to come - **Ep 2:7**
2. Speaking of how Gentiles can be “fellow heirs” - **Ep 2:12-13; 3:7**

[Again we see how Paul by writing this epistle is attempting to help answer his own prayer for the Ephesians.

There is one more thing that Paul wanted the Ephesians, and if the way he elaborates is an indication of its importance then Paul more than all else prayed...]

IV. THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THE POWER OF GOD (19-20)

A. “POWER” DESCRIBED AS...

1. Exceedingly great (“the exceeding greatness”)
 2. Shown toward those who believe (“toward us who believe”)
 3. In accordance with the same power that...
 - a. Raised Jesus from the dead!
 - b. Seated Him at the right hand of God in the “heavenly places” (cf. **Ep 1:3**)
- How can it be said that such power is available to us who believe? (The next section suggests how)

B. CONCERNING THIS GREAT “POWER”...

1. Paul gives an example in **Ep 2:1-6**
 - a. We who were “dead in trespasses” (**2:1-3**) were “made alive” (**4-5**) and “raised up” (**6**)
 - b. I.e., in Christ we who were spiritually dead have been made spiritually alive - cf. **Co 2:12-13**
 - c. This may not sound as impressive as being raised from the dead physically (as Jesus was, but it cannot happen without the same sort of Divine Power!
 - d. As Jesus said when He raised the paralytic, “Which is easier...?” - **Mt 9:2-8**
 - 1) To raise the sick (and the dead), or to forgive sins (and make spiritually alive)?
 - 2) Both require Divine Power!
2. Paul speaks of its source in **Ep 3:16**
 - a. It is through God’s Spirit in the inner man that we can be “strengthened with might”
 - b. Just as we were “renewed” by the Spirit upon our baptism - **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**
 - c. So we can be strengthened by the Spirit in our daily battles against sin - **Ro 8:12-13**
3. Paul speaks of its greatness in **Ep 3:20**
 - a. It comes from Him (God) “who is ABLE to do”
 - b. With ability that is “exceedingly”, “abundantly”, “above all” that we ask or think!
 - c. Such ability is “according to the power that works IN us” - cf. **Ep 3:16** (“through His Spirit in the inner man”)
4. Finally, Paul charges the Ephesians to stand strong in this power in **Ep 6:10ff**
 - a. By putting on the “armor of God” - **Ep 6:11a**
 - b. For we are in a battle against the devil and his forces - **Ep 6:11a-13** (dare we fight this battle dependent upon our own strength alone?)
 - c. The “armor of God” described - **Ep 6:14-18**

CONCLUSION

1. It appears that Paul followed that saying “Pray as though it all depends upon God, but work as though it all depends upon you!”
 - a. For while he prayed for the Ephesians that they might know...
 - 1) God
 - 2) The hope of God’s calling
 - 3) The riches of God’s inheritance
 - 4) The power of God
 - b. Paul takes it upon himself (with the aid of inspiration, of course) to write of these things in this epistle

2. How is our knowledge of God, the hope of His calling, His riches, His power?
 - a. Certainly it is God's will that we increase in our understanding, appreciation, and application of these blessings!
 - b. With the help of God's Word, especially a book like Ephesians, we can grow in all these things!

But before growth can occur, there must be life. Have you been "made alive together with Christ"? - cf. **Ep 2:5-6; Co 2:12-13**

The Exaltation Of Christ And His Church

Ephesians 1:20-23

INTRODUCTION

1. In expressing his prayer that the Ephesians might know “the exceeding greatness of His Power toward us who believe” (**Ep 1:19**), Paul makes reference to the working of God’s power in...
 - a. Raising Jesus from the dead - **Ep 1:20a**
 - b. Seating Jesus at His right hand in the heavenly places - **Ep 1:20b**
 - At this point, Paul digresses slightly to expand upon the idea of “The Exaltation of Christ” - **Ep 1:21-23**

2. This is a theme worthy of Paul’s digression and our own careful consideration, for several reasons:
 - a. Without “The Exaltation of Christ”, none of the spiritual blessings already described would be possible!
 - b. There are some who say that Jesus...
 - 1) Has yet to start His “kingly reign” (e.g., some pre- and post-millennialists,)
 - 2) Or did not start it until recently (e.g., the “Jehovah’s Witness”)
 - c. Some amazing things are said by Paul in this passage, not only about Christ, but about His church!

[Since the Holy Spirit saw fit to lead Paul into this “digression”, we will take the time to consider what is revealed, beginning with the fact...]

I. CHRIST IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD (20)

A. SEVERAL PASSAGES PRESENT CHRIST AT GOD’S RIGHT HAND...

1. “received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” - **Mk 16:19**
2. “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God” - **Ac 2:33**
3. In the book of Hebrews...
 - a. “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” - **He 1:3**
 - b. “seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” - **He 8:1**
 - c. “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God” - **He 10:12**
 - d. “endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” - **He 12:2**
4. “where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” - **Co 3:1**
5. As a point of interest, one passage has Jesus “**standing** on the right hand of God” (at the martyrdom of Stephen) - **Ac 7:55-56**

B. IMPLICATIONS OF CHRIST SEATED AT GOD’S RIGHT HAND...

1. Fulfillment of prophecy - cf. **Ps 110:1-7**
2. As indicated in this prophecy (and compared with **1 Co 15:25-26**) Christ began His “kingly reign” when He sat down at the right hand of God

- a. He shall “rule in the midst of [His] enemies”
- b. At the right hand of God He shall “judge among the nations”
- c. He shall reign “till He has put all enemies under His feet”
3. As Peter indicated in his sermon on Pentecost, by Christ’s resurrection and exaltation He has been raised to sit on “David’s throne”, and is therefore truly “Lord” - **Ac 2:30-36**

[But how extensive is the “reign” or “authority” of Christ? Does He have only “partial” authority? As we return to our text, we find Paul saying that...]

II. CHRIST IS FAR ABOVE ALL OTHERS, ALL ARE UNDER HIS FEET (21-22a)

A. CHRIST IS FAR ABOVE...

1. “all principality and power and might and dominion” - a likely reference to angelic beings and evil spirits - cf. **Ep 3:10; 6:12**
 3. “every name that is named” - this would include authorities here on earth
 4. “not only in this age but also in that which is come” - both in the present dispensation, and in the one to be ushered in at the consummation of all things
- **Sounds like Christ’s authority is all inclusive, doesn’t it?**

B. ALL ARE UNDER HIS FEET...

1. As Christ Himself said: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” - **Mt 28:18**
 2. As Paul described Christ: “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords” - **1 Ti 6:15; cf. Re 19:16**
 3. As Peter wrote: “angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” - **1 Pe 3:22**
 4. As John wrote: “the ruler over the kings of the earth” - **Re 1:5**
- **Can anyone say that Jesus has NOT begun His “kingly reign” in view of such statements?**

[Indeed, Christ was granted all this dominion when He ascended to heaven to sit down at the right hand of God, as prophesied by Daniel (**Dan 7:13-14**), and as revealed by Jesus to the seven churches of Asia (**Re 2:26-27; 3:21**). Clearly, from the viewpoint of Christ and His apostles, He was reigning over all when the pages of the New Testament were being written.

But there is more amazing truth revealed in Paul’s “digression” and that is...]

III. CHRIST IS HEAD OVER ALL THINGS “TO THE CHURCH” (22-23)

A. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PHRASE “TO THE CHURCH” ...?

1. Christ exercises His authority over all things “in the interest” of the church (Hendriksen); i.e., the rule of Christ is for the benefit of His church!
2. Because Jesus is Lord, all things work together for our benefit - cf. **Ro 8:27**
 - a. This is not to say that Christ will prevent hardship, persecution, even death
 - b. But through Christ all such things can be used to our benefit and ultimate glory!
 - 1) “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him” - **Ro 8:35-39**

- 2) "...the world or life or death...all are yours" - **1 Co 3:21-22**
- 3) Even the sufferings brought on by Satan can be used by God to "perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle" us! - **1 Pe 5:8-11**

B. WHAT IS "THE CHURCH", THAT IT SHOULD BE SO BLESSED...?

1. It is "His body", i.e., the body of Christ - **Ep 1:23**
 - a. Those who have been "called out" into the "assembly" of God's people are like a "body" to Jesus - cf. **Ep 5:28-30**
 - b. As such, Christ loves it and gave Himself for it - cf. **Ep 5:25-27**
 - c. Thus, He is not only the "head" of the body, but the "savior" of it as well - **Ep 5:23**
2. The church is also called "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" - **Ep 1:23**
 - a. Hendriksen suggests that this means "the church is Christ's complement...filling or completing Him who fills all in all"
 - b. Hendriksen continues: "As to his divine essence Christ is in no sense whatever dependent on or capable of being completed by the church. But..."
 - 1) "as a bridegroom he is incomplete without the bride"
 - 2) "as a vine he cannot be thought of without the branches"
 - 3) "as shepherd he is not seen without his sheep"
 - 4) "and so also as head he finds his full expression in his body, the church" (New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Ephesians, William Hendriksen, p.104)

CONCLUSION

1. With this "digression" of Paul we have seen...
 - a. The exalted position that Christ now holds, as "head over all things"
 - b. The exalted position of His Church, which is viewed by Christ as:
 - 1) His "body" (which He loves, nourishes, and cherishes - **Ep 5:25,29**)
 - 2) His "fullness" (the perfect complement to His being)
2. How can anyone say...
 - a. That Christ is not yet "ruler over the kings of the earth"?
 - b. That the church is not important, a nonessential concern for those following Christ?
3. In view of such truths concerning Christ and His Church...
 - a. Are we freely submitting today to His authority? - cf. **Ps 110:3**
 - b. If you have not done so yet, will you allow Him who is "head over all things" **add** you to His church? - cf. **Ac 2:47**

Our Condition Outside Of Christ

Ephesians 2:1-3

INTRODUCTION

1. In the last half of chapter one, we saw where Paul mentioned several things for which he had been praying in behalf of the Ephesians:
 - a. That they might know God (**1:17**)
 - b. That they might know the hope of His calling (**1:18a**)
 - c. That they might know the glorious riches of His inheritance in the saints (**1:18b**)
 - d. That they might know the exceeding greatness of God's power toward believers (**1:19**)
2. In a previous lesson we briefly noted that Paul equated this great power with the working of God that was exercised...
 - a. In raising Jesus from the dead and exalting Him to be the head of all things (**1:20-23**)
 - b. In our own conversion, when God took us who were "dead in sin" and made us "alive together with Christ" (**2:1-7**)
3. In order that we might appreciate more fully the grace and power that was at work in our conversion, this lesson will focus on the description of our condition **before** our conversion
 - a. For we will not likely appreciate our **present** wealth, unless we fully appreciate our **former** poverty!
 - b. Without a proper appreciation of our present wealth, we will not likely heed the exhortations found later in this epistle (e.g., **Ep 4:1,17; 5:1-2**)

[As we consider, then, "**Our Condition Outside of Christ**", we learn that prior to our conversion we were truly "the walking dead"! For as Paul states at first, we were...]

I. DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS (1)

A. "DEAD" IN WHAT WAY...?

1. Not in the sense of being devoid of **any** good or godly desires
 - a. As some who believe in "Total Hereditary Depravity" would teach
 - b. For consider that most of those people whose conversions are described in Acts were "God-fearing, Bible-believing" people **before** their conversion!
 - 1) The thousands of "devout men" in Jerusalem for Pentecost - **Ac 2:5**
 - 2) The Ethiopian Eunuch, who had traveled great distances to worship God and was reading Isaiah when Philip found him - **Ac 8:27-28**
 - 3) Cornelius, a devout God-fearing Gentile who "prayed to God always" - **Ac 10:2**
 - 4) Lydia, a prayerful woman "who worshipped God" - **Ac 16:13-14**
 - 5) The "fair-minded" Bereans - **Ac 17:11**
 - 6) Saul of Tarsus (i.e., the apostle Paul) - **Ac 22:3; Ph 3:4-6**
2. Rather, "dead" in the sense of being "separated" from God
 - a. Just as "physical death" is a separation of body and spirit - cf. **Ja 2:26**

- b. So “spiritual death” exists when we are separated from God - cf. **Ro 6:23; Isa 59:1-2**

B. THE CAUSE OF THIS “DEATH”...

1. Our separation from God has been brought about by “trespasses and sins” - cf. **Ro 6:23**
 - a. “trespasses” (deviations from the straight and narrow path, Hendriksen) - what we might call **sins of commission**
 - b. “sins” (inclinations, thoughts, words, and deeds which “miss the mark” of glorifying God, Hendriksen) - including what we might call **sins of omission**
2. “trespasses and sins” that **we** committed...
 - a. As made clear in verse two of this chapter (“in which you once walked...”)
 - b. Not those of our forefathers - cf. **Ezek 18:20**

[Before our conversion to Christ, then, we were “dead” because of our **own** sins, and as such, spiritually separated from God, even if we were as religiously devout as those described in the book of Acts. That should tell us something about the terribleness of sin!

But the terribleness of sin becomes clearer as we learn what sort of “company” we kept before our conversion. For though “dead”, we were...]

II. WALKING WITH THE WORLD AND THE DEVIL (2)

A. WALKING “ACCORDING TO THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD”...

1. Before conversion, one walks “in conformity with the customs and manners of the world at large” (Barnes)
2. The moral condition of those still “in the world” is described more fully in **Ep 4:17-19**
 - a. Alienated from the life of God because of ignorance and hardened hearts, those “in the world”...
 - 1) Walk in the futility of their mind
 - 2) Have their understanding darkened
 - b. Being past feeling, those “in the world”...
 - 1) Give themselves over to licentiousness
 - 2) Work all uncleanness with greediness
- Sounds pretty much like our own present generation, doesn’t it?
3. With keeping such “company” before one’s conversion, you can understand why they are spiritually “dead” (separated from God) - cf. **1 Jn 2:15-17**

B. WALKING “ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR”...

1. Before our conversion, it is not just the “world” we walk according to, but “him” who Paul describes as:
 - a. “the prince of the power of the air”
 - b. “the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience”
2. This can be none other than Satan himself!
 - a. The great “Adversary” (the word “satan” literally means “adversary”) who seeks to “devour” all he can - cf. **1 Pe 5:8**
 - b. Those “in the world” are under his influence, captives to do his will - cf. **2 Ti 2:26**
3. Those still under his influence are called the “sons of disobedience”, because they serve him

rather than obey God!

[Influenced by Satan, walking “according to the course of this world”, we can see why a person before their conversion is truly “dead in trespasses and sins”!

But is this also true of those devout, religious souls who are not yet “in Christ”? Like those devout Jews at Pentecost, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Lydia, the Bereans, Saul of Tarsus, and God-fearing Gentiles like Cornelius?

Yes! For as Paul says in **verse 3**, “among whom **also we all** once conducted ourselves...”. Yes, even the religiously devout before conversion to Christ were...]

III. FULFILLING THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND MIND (3)

A. BEFORE HIS CONVERSION, EVEN A RELIGIOUSLY DEVOUT PERSON LIKE PAUL...

1. Conducted himself “**in the lusts of our flesh**”
 - a. “Living to gratify the flesh” (Barnes)
 - b. As described in **Ro 7:14-24**, even one who desires to do good, outside of Christ finds himself “enslaved” to the “law of sin” in the members of his flesh
2. Fulfilled “**the desires of the flesh and of the mind**”
 - a. The “*desires of the flesh*” are those “unrighteous cravings, such as belong to and are spawned by the flesh” (Hendriksen)
 - b. The “*desires...of the mind*” would include “all kinds of hostile, self-righteous, and/or immoral plans and cogitations, which finally result in wicked deeds” (Hendriksen)

B. THUS, EVEN RELIGIOUSLY DEVOUT PEOPLE BEFORE CONVERSION ARE “CHILDREN OF WRATH”...

1. “just as the others”, Paul says, placing himself before conversion on the same level as the “sons of disobedience” described in verse two
2. All are “children of wrath” (or “sons of disobedience”) “by nature”...
 - a. Some understand this “nature” to be something one is born with
 - 1) This passage (**Ep 2:1-3**) does not actually say “when” we began to be “children of wrath”
 - 2) Only that before we became “children of God” (at our conversion), we were “children of wrath”
 - b. The term “nature” can be understood as “a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature” (Thayer)
 - 1) In the context of **Ep 2:1-3**, Paul is not talking about sinful conduct committed by ancestors, the consequence of which is felt by their descendants
 - 2) But sins in which “**you** once walked”, “**we** all once conducted ourselves”, i.e., sins **personally** committed
 - c. Therefore, because of our “conduct” before our conversion, we developed a “nature” that resulted in our being:
 - 1) “sons of disobedience” - **2:2**
 - 2) “children of wrath” - **2:3**

CONCLUSION

1. We have seen that **“Our Condition Outside Of Christ”** is one in which we are...
 - a. Dead in trespasses and sins - **Ep 2:1**
 - b. Walking with the world and the devil - **Ep 2:2**
 - c. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind - **Ep 2:3**
 - And thus “sons of disobedience”, and “children of wrath”!

2. How can such “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” ever become...
 - a. “holy and without blame”? - **Ep 1:4**
 - b. Receive the “adoption as sons”? - **Ep 1:5**
 - c. And be “accepted” by God? - **Ep 1:6**

3. The answer will be explained more fully in **Ep 2:4-10**, where we learn of **“Salvation By Grace Through Faith”**
 - a. We will examine that answer in detail in our next lesson
 - b. But for now, compare carefully **Ep 2:5** with **Co 2:11-13**

Have you experienced the working of God’s grace in your life, by being buried with Christ in baptism where your sins are “cut away” and then raised with Christ, thereby “made alive together with Him”...?

Salvation By Grace Through Faith

Ephesians 2:4-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous lesson we saw our true condition outside of Christ:
 - a. Dead in trespasses and sins - **Ep 2:1**
 - b. Walking with world and the devil - **Ep 2:2**
 - c. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind - **Ep 2:3**-- **Truly we were “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath”!**

2. At the close of the previous lesson, I asked, “How can such ‘sons of disobedience’ and ‘children of wrath’ ever become...”
 - a. “Holy and without blame”?
 - b. “Receive the adoption as sons”?
 - c. “Accepted” by God?

3. In the text for this study (**Ep 2:4-10**) we find our answer, where we learn that “salvation by grace through faith” involves many elements besides just grace and faith

[To begin with, “**Salvation By Grace Through Faith**”...]

I. INVOLVES THE “GREAT LOVE” OF GOD (4)

A. THIS IS THE BEGINNING POINT OF SALVATION...

1. From this, all else flows
2. What mercy, grace, etc., that God shows mankind is founded upon the fact that God has a great love for us - cf. **Jn 3:16**

B. THIS LOVE IS NOT BECAUSE OF WHO WE ARE, BUT WHO GOD IS...

1. God did not love us because we were lovable, but because God is loving!
2. As John wrote in an effort to inspire his brethren to love one another, God is love, and that moved Him to offer His Son - cf. **1 Jn 4:7-10**

[Starting then with the love of God, “**Salvation By Grace Through Faith**” also...]

II. INVOLVES THE “RICH MERCY” OF GOD (4)

A. DEFINING MERCY...

1. The word “**eleos**” is defined by Vine’s Expository Dictionary as “the outward manifestation of pity”
2. Mercy, then, is compassion that one has for those in trouble

B. GOD’S “GREAT LOVE” MAKES HIM “RICH IN MERCY”...

1. His great love for sinners enables God to be filled with compassion toward them
2. The riches of His mercy seek to reach out to all who will accept it - cf. **1 Ti 2:3-4; 2 Pe 3:9**

[Unfortunately, not all receive His great mercy. But for those who do, they soon learn that **“Salvation By Grace Through Faith”** also...]

III. INVOLVES BEING “MADE ALIVE TOGETHER” WITH CHRIST (5)

A. HERE IS WHERE “GRACE” REALLY ENTERS IN...

1. For notice that Paul says **“When** we were dead...(God) made us alive”
2. While **still** “dead in trespasses” God has somehow made us alive together with Christ!
3. Though not fully explained in this passage how (and when) this happened, it occurred because of God’s “unmerited favor” (the definition of “grace”)

B. HOW (AND WHEN) WE WERE “MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST” IS EXPLAINED ELSEWHERE...

1. Especially in **Co 2:11-13**
2. Where we learn that it is in baptism...
 - a. We are buried with Christ and then raised with Him - **Co 2:12**; cf. **Ro 6:3-6**
 - b. We, who were “dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh”, were thus “made alive together with Him (Christ)” - **Co 2:13**
 - c. Our trespasses were all forgiven - **Co 2:13**; cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

[So while our text in Ephesians doesn’t actually refer to baptism itself, it describes that which occurs when one is baptized into Christ: by the grace of God we are being “made alive together with Christ”!]

But there is more, for as we continue to read our text we learn that **“Salvation By Grace Through Faith”...**]

IV. INVOLVES BEING “RAISED UP TOGETHER” WITH CHRIST (6-7)

A. WE SAW IN EP 1:20...

1. Where Christ was raised from the dead
2. And then was seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places

B. NOW WE LEARN FROM EP 2:6-7...

1. That we too are raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places!
 - a. This speaks of our present condition in the “spiritual realm” (heavenly places)
 - b. Because of our union with Christ, we enjoy an exalted position together with Him
 - c. Which union serves as the basis for our wonderful spiritual blessings - cf. **Ep 1:3**
2. But our present condition, and the blessings it entails, are only the beginning!
 - a. There is more “in the ages to come”
 - b. There are “exceeding riches of His grace in kindness” yet to be shown in Christ Jesus!

[How wonderful, then, is this salvation by grace! Not only does it pertain to “this age”, but looks

forward to the “ages to come”! As we continue, we find Paul making sure we understand the basis of this wonderful salvation, and that it...]

V. INVOLVES “FAITH”, AND NOT MERITORIOUS WORKS (8-9)

A. SALVATION IS FIRST AND FOREMOST, BY “GRACE”...

1. Up to this point, Paul has said nothing about man’s part in the process of salvation
 - a. It was **God’s** mercy, love, and grace which made salvation possible
 - b. It was **God’s** working that “made us alive...raised us up...made us sit together with Christ”
2. Truly, salvation is...
 - a. **“not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”**
 - 1) Some understand this phrase to refer to “faith”
 - 2) But I understand Paul to be referring to salvation
 - b. **“not of works, lest anyone should boast”**
 - 1) We are not saved by works of merit, whereby we earn salvation
 - 2) But as Paul told Titus “according to His mercy He saved us...” - **Ti 3:5**

B. NEVERTHELESS, SALVATION IS BY GRACE “THROUGH FAITH”...

1. “Faith”, together with the “working of God”, is how we were “raised with Christ” in baptism - cf. **Co 2:12**
2. In other words, it is an obedient faith that receives the salvation in Christ - cf. **He 5:9**
3. So when a person in faith is being baptized...
 - a. They are not “earning” their salvation
 - b. Rather, they are “receiving” their salvation which is by God’s grace and God’s working, for in baptism they are receiving Jesus Christ and all He accomplished by His death and resurrection! - cf. **Ga 3:27**

[Finally, we note that while “**Salvation By Grace Through Faith**” does not include meritorious works whereby we try to earn our salvation, it...]

VI. INVOLVES BEING “CREATED...FOR GOOD WORKS” (10)

A. IN CHRIST, WE ARE “HIS WORKMANSHIP”...

1. As Paul intimated in his discussion of baptism in **Co 2:12** (“the working of God”)
2. Through God’s “working” in which He...
 - a. “made us alive”
 - b. “raised us up”
 - c. “made us sit together in the heavenly places”
 ...we have truly become “a new creation” - cf. **2 Co 5:17**

B. THE GOAL OF THIS “WORKMANSHIP”: CREATED...FOR GOOD WORKS...

1. Though not saved by good works, we are to do good works!
2. God “prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”
 - a. It is part of His predetermined plan
 - b. Not just to save, but to create a people diligent in good works! - cf. **Ti 2:11-14**

3. Therefore, the people of God should...
 - a. “be ready for every good work” - **Ti 3:1**
 - b. “be careful to maintain good works” - **Ti 3:8**
 - c. “learn to maintain good works” - **Ti 3:14**

CONCLUSION

1. So it is “by grace through faith” that...
 - a. “Children of wrath” can become “children of God”!
 - b. “Sons of disobedience” can “receive the adoption as sons” of God!
 - c. We can be “accepted” by God!

2. Because “**Salvation By Grace Through Faith**” involves:
 - a. God’s great love
 - b. God’s rich mercy
 - c. God making us alive together with Christ
 - d. God raising us up together with Christ to sit with Him in the heavenly places
 - e. An obedient faith that trusts in God’s workmanship, not one’s own works
 - f. A new creature that is diligent in doing good works to the glory of God

How can one receive this wonderful salvation? Let Jesus and His apostles show you the way, for it is when we in faith submit to the Lord’s command to be baptized that we enjoy the blessings of God’s love, mercy, and workmanship... - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; Co 2:12-13**

How The Gentiles Became Fellow Heirs

Ephesians 2:11-22

INTRODUCTION

1. It should be evident by now that one of Paul's purposes in writing this epistle was to help answer his own prayer for the Ephesians; e.g., that they might know such things as:
 - a. What is the hope of His calling - **Ep 1:18a**
 - b. What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints - **Ep 1:18b**
2. In the first half of the second chapter, Paul has spoken of the wonderful grace of God as expressed in their "personal" salvation - **Ep 2:1-10**
3. Paul now speaks in more "general" or "corporate" terms, especially as it relates to the salvation of the Gentiles and how they became "fellow heirs" - **Ep 2:12-22**
 - a. This is an important section, as it pertains to the "mystery" to which Paul refers in **Ep 3:3-6**
 - b. But this passage is also important because it describes "us", as most of us are likely "Gentiles" rather than Israelites
 - c. And it also makes clear what our condition can be today, either "outside" of Christ, or "through" and "in" Christ!

[Let us begin, then, by observing...]

I. HOW THE GENTILES BECAME FELLOW HEIRS

A. THE GENTILES' CONDITION "WITHOUT" CHRIST...

1. **"Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (12)**
 - a. They were not part of the state of Israel
 - b. They were not included together with God's "chosen people"
2. **"Strangers from the covenants of promise" (12)**
 - a. Promises and covenants were not made with them
 - b. Promises such as "...to be God to you...and I will be their God" - **Gen 17:7-8**
3. **"Having no hope" (12)**
 - a. Hope springs forth from promises made
 - b. Being strangers from the covenants of promise, they did not have the hope the Jews did
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. THE GENTILES' CONDITION "THROUGH" CHRIST...

1. **Can now be "one body" with the Jews (13-16)**
 - a. Because of Jesus, who is "our peace"

- b. Because of Jesus, who broke down the “middle wall” of division
 - 1) That “law of commandments contained in ordinances” which once separated Jews from Gentiles
 - 2) By His death on the cross, he abolished that which created “enmity” between Jew and Gentile
 - 3) I.e., the law of Moses given at Mt. Sinai
- c. Because of Jesus, who “made peace” by reconciling both Jew and Gentile to God in one body through the cross
- 2. **Can now share access to the Father with the Jews (17-18)**
 - a. Because of Jesus, who came and “preached peace” to those “afar off” (Gentiles) and those “near” (Jews)
 - b. Because of Jesus, for “through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father”
 - 1) The access to the Father is “through Him” (Jesus) - cf. **Ro 8:34**
 - 2) The access to the Father is “by one Spirit” (Holy Spirit) - cf. **Ro 8:26-27**

C. THE GENTILES’ CONDITION “IN” CHRIST...

- 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
 - b. But now, they are “fellow citizens” with God’s people
- 2. **They are now “members of the household of God” (19b)**
 - a. Before, they were “without God in the world”
 - b. But now, they are members of “God’s family”
- 3. **They are now part of “a holy temple in the Lord” (20-22)**
 - a. Before, they “without God in the world”
 - b. But now, God dwells in them through His Spirit!

II. MAKING APPLICATION OF THIS PASSAGE TO OUR LIVES

A. UNDERSTAND WHAT ONE’S CONDITION “OUTSIDE” CHRIST TRULY IS...

- 1. A person is still an “alien” and “stranger”, with no participation in covenants and promises that God has with His people today!
- 2. A person has no basis for hope, and must go through life without the blessing of God guiding them in this world!

B. UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED “THROUGH” CHRIST...

- 1. He has brought to an end the Old Law; we should not seek to be justified by the Law - cf. **Ga 5:4**
- 2. He has sought to unite all into one body; we should not try to undo the work of Christ on the cross through religious division - cf. **Ep 4:1-6**

C. UNDERSTAND WHAT WE HAVE BECOME “IN” CHRIST...

- 1. We have become “fellow citizens with the saints” in the wonderful kingdom of God; let’s live accordingly! - cf. **Ro 14:16-19**
- 2. We have become “members of God’s household (family)”; let’s behave and treat each other as the family of God! - cf. **1 Ti 3:15; 5:1-2**

3. We have become “the temple of God” in which God dwells through His Spirit; let’s be careful not to profane God’s holy habitation! - cf. **1 Co 3:16-17; 1 Co 6:19-20**

CONCLUSION

1. Though Paul may have been speaking in “general” or “corporate” terms, I trust that we have seen the implications of what he has said affect each of us “personally”
 - a. With salvation coming to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, we each benefit greatly on an individual level
 - b. With salvation coming to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, we each bear an individual responsibility to live up to our “holy calling” as God’s kingdom, God’s family, and as God’s temple!
2. What is **your** condition in regard to Jesus Christ?
 - a. Are you still “outside” of Christ?
 - b. Have you benefited from the work that was done “through” Christ on the cross?
 - c. Are you living as a person should who is now “in” Christ?

The Revelation Of The Mystery

Ephesians 3:1-13

INTRODUCTION

1. In the last half of the second chapter...
 - a. Paul expounded upon “How The Gentiles Became Fellow Heirs” (**Ep 2:11-22**)
 - b. In which those who once were “far off” are now “made near” by the blood of Christ - **Ep 2:13**
2. As a result of the work of Christ on the cross, Gentiles can now become “one body” with the Jews in Christ (**Ep 2:14-18**), and therefore can be:
 - a. “Fellow citizens with the saints” - **Ep 2:19a**
 - b. “Members of the household of God” - **Ep 2:19b**
 - c. “A holy temple in the Lord...a habitation of God in the Spirit” - **Ep 2:20-22**
3. When you compare **Ep 3:1** with **Ep 3:14**, it becomes clear in verse one that Paul was about to express a prayer in behalf of the Ephesians
4. But the mention of himself as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles” prompts Paul to interrupt himself...
 - a. From **Ep 3:13**, where Paul concludes his brief interruption, it appears Paul is concerned that his reference to his imprisonment (i.e., his tribulations) should not be taken as a call for pity
 - b. For Paul considers that all he endured for the sake of the Gentiles (including his present imprisonment in Rome) as just part of the wonderful grace of God that had been shown to him, “whom am less than the least of all the saints” (**Ep 3:8**)
5. What was this wonderful grace of God that was shown to Paul?
 - a. It pertains to the revelation of a mystery that for ages had been hidden
 - b. But was now being revealed through apostles and prophets, including Paul
6. In this lesson, we shall examine Paul’s “interruption”, and answer the following questions...
 - a. What is this mystery that had been hidden?
 - b. How was it being revealed?

[Our second question is actually answered first, for before Paul defines “the mystery” he speaks of God’s grace towards him and...]

I. THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY (1-5)

A. A MYSTERY NOW REVEALED... (1-4)

1. By the grace of God, this “mystery” was made known to Paul - **Ep 3:2-3a**
2. Paul, in turn, made known the “mystery” through his writings - **Ep 3:3b**
3. The Ephesians, by reading Paul’s words, could then have his understanding of this “mystery of Christ” - **Ep 3:4**

4. This passage tells us several things:
 - a. **How “we” come to know this “mystery”**
 - 1) It is not through direct revelation, though Paul may have received it this way
 - 2) It is through reading his words, i.e., through reading the Word of God!
 - b. **The Word of God is understandable!**
 - 1) Some people say it is not, or that it is too hard to be understood
 - 2) But clearly Paul intended for people to understand his “knowledge in the mystery of Christ”!
 - 3) The problem some people have is that they misunderstand Paul’s use of the term “mystery” and think the Bible is still a mystery; but notice...

B. IT IS CALLED A “MYSTERY”, BECAUSE IT WAS ONCE “HIDDEN”... (5)

1. It is important to appreciate this fact: this “mystery” is called such, not because it **remains** a mystery, but because that is what it was for so long in times past!
2. Just as certain novels are still called “mysteries”...
 - a. Even though you may have read them and know the ending, you still refer to those novels as “mysteries”
 - b. So it is with the “mystery of Christ”, it is called such because it had been one for so long, though now we know the “ending” (or what had been a “secret”)
3. That such is the case here, consider these passages:
 - 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. “which in other ages was not made known...as it has been revealed” - **Ep 3:5**
 - d. “the mystery which as been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.” - **Co 1:26-27**

[So we know that this “mystery” has now been revealed, but WHAT, exactly, is the “mystery”? Paul explained it earlier in this epistle (cf. **Ep 3:3b-4a**), but now he summarizes...]

II. THE “REVEALED” MYSTERY EXPLAINED (6-12)

A. IT INVOLVES THE “GENTILES”... (6)

1. I.e., those that we saw in chapter two, who at one time were:
 - a. “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”
 - b. “strangers from the covenants of promise”
 - c. “having no hope and without God in the world”
2. The mystery now revealed is that these Gentiles can be:
 - a. “fellow heirs”
 - b. “of the same body”
 - c. “partakers of His (God’s) promise in Christ”
3. This is what Paul wrote about in **Ep 2:11-22**, and to which he refers in **Ep 3:b-4a**
 - a. That Gentiles, who for ages were not included in God’s special dealings with the Israelites...
 - b. ...could now become part of God’s spiritual family and heirs to the wonderful blessings that God makes available through Jesus Christ!

B. AS “APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES”, PAUL’S TASK WAS... (7-12)

1. **“to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” - Ep 3:8**
 - a. This Paul did, even in letters like this one to the Ephesians
 - b. As we saw in **Ep 1:3-14**
2. **“to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery” - Ep 3:9**
 - a. Again, Paul used epistles like Ephesians, and also Colossians
 - b. As we saw in **Ep 2:11-22**
3. **“to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be known” - Ep 3:10-12**
- Here Paul expands his thoughts...
 - a. **This wisdom of God is being made known “by the church”**
 - 1) Paul, of course, was doing his part as an apostle
 - 2) But the whole church, as “the pillar and ground of the truth”, is involved in proclaiming the wisdom of God - cf. **1 Ti 3:15**
 - 3) The church does this, both by what it “is” and by what it “teaches”
 - a) It’s very “existence” proclaims the wisdom of God
 - b) As well as the “message” it proclaims
 - b. **This wisdom of God is being made known to “principalities and powers in the heavenly places”**
 - 1) Not just to “the Gentiles” (**Ep 3:8**) and to “all people” (**Ep 3:9**)
 - 2) But as the church carries out its mission, even spiritual entities are being enlightened - cf. **1 Pe 1:10-12** (where even angels were once “in the dark” about the salvation now being offered in Christ)
 - c. **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 some
 - a) For there are those who say the church was an “afterthought”, established only after Christ and His kingdom were rejected
 - b) But this verse clearly indicates that the church was part of God’s plan from the beginning!

CONCLUSION

1. 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 (**Ep 3:12**)
2. Therefore, he did not want his mention of imprisonment to be a source of concern...
 - a. For even the tribulations it might have caused him was glory for the Gentiles (**Ep 3:13**)!
 - b. How? Because in imprisonment Paul was “an ambassador in chains” - **Ep 6:19-20**
 - 1) As such he could “make known the mystery of the gospel”
 - 2) And whenever the “mystery” is made known, the exalted position God now has for Gentiles can be made known!

3. We, too, should have “boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him”, knowing that...
 - 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”, in which Gentiles can be:
 - 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)

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**). How can one be saved and thus “added” by the Lord to His church? Consider carefully **Ac 2:36-41**...

Paul's Second Prayer For The Ephesians

Ephesians 3:14-21

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous lesson we saw where Paul was about to start his second prayer for the Ephesians in **Ep 3:1...**
 - a. However, he interrupts himself when describing himself as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles”
 - b. Lest they be troubled at whatever tribulations he endured as a prisoner (**Ep 3:13**), Paul stresses the fact that:
 - 1) His apostleship to the Gentiles (even with its tribulations) was a gift to him through the wonderful grace of God - **Ep 3:2-7**
 - 2) His purpose was to “preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” - **Ep 3:8-11**
 - 3) That in Christ he had “boldness and access with confidence through faith” in Christ - **Ep 3:12**
2. Having completed his brief interruption, in **Ep 3:14-21** Paul now continues with his second prayer for the Ephesians (the first having been in **Ep 1:15-23**)
3. The phrase “For this reason...” (**Ep 3:14**; also **3:1**) indicates that Paul expresses his prayer in response to those things mentioned earlier, such as:
 - a. The wonderful salvation by grace through faith - **Ep 2:1-10**
 - b. The work by Christ on the cross whereby Gentiles can now become “fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise” - **Ep 2:11-22; 3:6**

[With gratitude in his heart for God's grace toward the Gentiles, Paul now prays in their behalf, starting with...]

I. THE “INVOCATION” (14-15)

A. POSTURE IN PRAYER...

1. In this prayer, Paul “bows the knee”, a posture in prayer commonly found throughout the Scriptures - cf. **Lk 22:41; Ac 9:40; 20:36; 21:5**
2. However, there does not appear to be an “official posture” when it comes to prayer...
 - a. Solomon “stood” when he prayed to dedicate the temple - **1 Kin 8:22**
 - b. David “sat” before the Lord when he prayed about the future of his kingdom - **1 Chr 17:16**
 - c. Jesus “fell on His face” when He prayed in Gethsemane - **Mt 26:39**

B. THE ADDRESSEE IN PRAYER...

1. The pattern and example of prayer in the New Testament church was:
 - a. “To” the Father - **Ep 3:14; 5:20**

- b. “In the name of” or **“through”** the Lord Jesus Christ - **Ep 5:20; Co 3:17**
- c. And **“in”** the Spirit - **Ep 6:18; Ju 20**; cf. **Ro 8:26-27**
2. There is little evidence of anyone praying “to” Jesus, and even less of praying “to” the Holy Spirit; clearly it is the Father to whom we are to address our prayers - cf. **Mt 6:9**

[To the Father, then, Paul addresses his prayer. The prayer itself is divided into three parts (indicated in the Greek by the word **“hina”**), and is like a staircase with three steps, each step leading to the next...]

II. THE “PETITION” (16-19)

A. TO BE STRENGTHENED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD... (16-17)

1. Paul had mentioned earlier about God’s power “toward us who believe” - **Ep 1:19**
2. Now he prays that the Ephesians might be “strengthened with might”
3. Such strength is “according to the riches of His glory”
4. God’s strength is administered “through His Spirit in (lit., into) the inner man”
 - a. A Christian’s body is “the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” - cf. **1 Co 6:19**
 - b. One design of the indwelling Spirit is to help one “put to death the deeds of the body” - cf. **Ro 8:11-13**
5. But the purpose of such “strengthening” by the Spirit in our text is for a different purpose, first hinted at in **verse 17**...
 - a. First, that **“Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”**
 - 1) To the degree God strengthens (by the Spirit) the believer’s “inner man”, so it is said that Christ Himself indwells the heart of the believer
 - 2) Thus the Spirit is the instrumental agent by which Christ indwells the believer, just as **Ep 2:22** suggests the Spirit is instrumental agent by which God inhabits His church
 - b. Second, **that they may be “rooted and grounded in love”**
 - 1) One work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to instill the love of God in the heart - cf. **Ro 5:5; Ga 5:22**
 - 2) When strengthened by God through the Spirit in the inner man, one becomes “rooted and grounded in love”

[Strengthened by God through His Spirit, so that Christ is dwelling in our hearts and we are well-established “in love”, the next step is...]

B. TO COMPREHEND THE LOVE OF CHRIST... (18-19a)

1. **“may be ABLE...”**
 - a. The word “able” means “to be eminently able; to have full strength”
 - b. Thus the prayer for strength in the first part of the prayer - **Ep 3:16**
2. **“...to comprehend”**
 - a. I.e., to understand, to grasp
 - b. As Paul says later in **verse 19**, “to know...”
3. It is the “love of Christ” that Paul is praying that we be strong to grasp...
 - a. He wants us to know everything about this wonderful love (“width and length...”)
 - b. But this love of Christ is something which “passes knowledge”!
 - 1) How is it possible for us to “know” the love of Christ, if it “passes knowledge”?
 - 2) Only in the sense that no matter how much we learn about Christ’s love, even with

the strength God's Spirit provides, there is always much more to grasp!

- 3) **"...there is a real knowledge of Christ's love possible to us, a knowledge that is capable of increase as we are the more strengthened by power in the inner man, while a complete or exhaustive knowledge must ever remain beyond our capacity."** (The Expositor's Greek Testament, W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, vol. 3, p. 316)

[It is only as we begin to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge that we are beginning to experience the last step for which Paul is praying...]

C. TO BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD... (19b)

1. This is the objective, the goal, of all that was said previously
2. One begins to be filled with "all the fullness of God"...
 - a. As they are strengthened by God (i.e., the Father)
 - b. Which is through His Spirit (i.e., the Holy Spirit)
 - c. Whereby in their hearts may dwell the Christ (i.e., the Son)
3. With the help of the all members of the Godhead, then, one is "filled" the more they begin to comprehend the wonderful "love of Christ" ("For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" - cf. **Co 2:9**)

[Such is the petition that Paul makes on behalf of the Ephesians...]

1. That they be strengthened by the Spirit of God
2. So they can comprehend the love of Christ
3. And thus be filled with all the fullness of God

Is God "able" to fulfill this petition? There is no doubt in Paul's mind, as we see how he closes the prayer...]

III. THE "DOXOLOGY" (20-21)

A. GLORY TO GOD, FOR WHAT HE IS ABLE TO DO... (20)

1. As Paul ascribes praise to God, he does so for what he confident God is able to do
2. As expressed by Paul, God's "ability to do" is...
 - a. "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (far beyond our imagination!)
 - b. "according to the power that works in us" - cf. **Ep 1:19; 3:16**

B. GLORY TO GOD, IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS FOREVER... (21)

1. Paul sees "the church" as the means by which much glory can be given to God
2. Certainly if Paul's prayer is answered...
 - a. That "all the saints" may be able to comprehend the love of Christ - **Ep 3:18**
 - b. That they may all be 'filled with all the fullness of God' - **Ep 3:19**
...the church will have the potential to bring much glory to God! - cf. **2 Th 1:11-12**
3. Of course, such potential is to come only "by Christ Jesus"; but if it does, then it will be "throughout all ages, world without end"!

CONCLUSION

1. Do we desire to give God glory throughout all ages, world without end?
 - a. We ought to, in view of all things we have considered in **Ep 1-3**
 - b. If so, then it must be “by Jesus Christ”, and that can be only as we...
 - 1) Come to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge
 - 2) Allow ourselves to “be filled with all the fullness of God”
2. How can we be sure to be filled with all the fullness of God?
 - a. For one who is already a Christian, we should follow Paul’s example and start with prayer (such as the one in our text)...
 - b. For one who is not a Christian, then one needs first to become a child of God - cf. **Ga 3:26-27**

In our next lesson, we will begin to consider how we can “walk” so as to bring glory to God...

Walking Together In Unity

Ephesians 4:1-16

INTRODUCTION

1. For three chapters, Paul has dealt with **“doctrine”** in which he has described both:
 - a. Our spiritual **“possessions”** in Christ (1)
 - b. Our spiritual **“position”** in Christ (2,3)
2. 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
3. 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
4. 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
 - a. Christ “attained” this unity by His work on the cross
 - b. Our task is to “maintain” it

[Beginning, then, with a charge to **“walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”** (Ep 4:1), Paul describes how to have a “worthy walk”, and that is by displaying...]

I. THE “ATTITUDES” FOR MAINTAINING UNITY (1-3)

A. LOWLINESS...

1. This word means:
 - a. The having a humble opinion of one’s self
 - b. A deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness
 - c. Modesty, humility, lowliness of mind
2. This virtue is necessary in order in order to properly value others around you - cf. Ph 2:3-4
3. Without this virtue, members in the body begin trying to be the “head” of the body, a role reserved only for Christ

B. GENTLENESS...

1. This word can be translated as gentleness, mildness, meekness
2. 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
3. Thus it is being gentle, even when there is the potential for being harsh, but gentleness is more conducive for maintaining unity

C. LONG-SUFFERING...

1. The idea here is one of patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs
2. 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

D. BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE...

1. Similar to longsuffering, "bearing" means to sustain, to bear, to endure
2. What makes such "longsuffering" and "forbearance" possible is another virtue: "love"
3. As Paul wrote in his chapter on love: "love suffers long...is not provoked" - **1 Co 13:4-5**
4. Indeed, the virtue of love is the "tie" that binds all these virtues together - cf. **Co 3:12-14**

E. ENDEAVOR...

1. Displaying these virtues does not come naturally nor easy, nor does maintaining unity
2. Thus the need for much effort, as Paul uses a word which means "to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence"

[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**). But just as important as having the right "attitudes", is understanding and holding to...]

II. THE "BASIS" OF UNITY (4-6)**A. ONE BODY...**

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

B. ONE SPIRIT...

1. This would be the Holy Spirit
2. Who has already been described in this epistle...
 - a. As "the Holy Spirit of promise" - **Ep 1:13**
 - b. As "the guarantee of our inheritance" - **Ep 1:14**
 - c. By Whom both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father - **Ep 2:18**
 - d. In Whom God habitats those who are being built a "holy temple" - **Ep 2:21-22**
 - e. By Whom the "mystery of Christ" was revealed to the apostles and prophets - **Ep 3:5**
 - f. Through Whom God strengthens with might the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
 - g. As the One whose "unity" is to be maintained in the bond of peace - **Ep 4:3**

C. ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING...

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

1:2; 3:7)

D. ONE LORD...

1. This refers to Jesus, of course - **1 Co 8:5-6**
2. Whom God has made “both Lord and Christ” - **Ac 2:36**

E. ONE FAITH...

1. This the body of truth, “the faith”, which Jude says was “once for all delivered to the saints” - **Jude 3**
2. It is that “pattern of sound words” of that Paul taught Timothy (**2 Ti 1:13**), and which he was to commit to faithful men (**2 Ti 2:2**)
3. We find this “pattern of sound words” in the pages of the New Testament, which contains that which all Christians must believe

F. ONE BAPTISM...

1. This is the baptism...
 - a. Commanded by Jesus - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Preached and commanded by His apostles - **Ac 2:38; 10:48**
 - c. By which those who submit to are added to the Lord’s body, the church - **Ac 2:42,47**
2. I.e., the baptism in which a penitent believer is immersed in water for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38; 10:47-48**

G. ONE GOD AND FATHER...

1. The Father, Who together with the Son and Holy Spirit, makes up the “Godhead”
2. Note that Paul emphasizes both:
 - a. His personality (“Father of all”)
 - b. His transcendence and omnipresence (“who is above all, and through all, and in you all”)

[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 “nonessential”! 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”. Let’s now consider ...]

III. THE “GIFTS” FOR UNITY (7-16)

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

1. They come from the bounty of Christ’s grace (**7**)
2. As prophesied, they were given after Christ ascended to heaven (**8-10**)

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

1. Is Paul referring to “spiritual gifts” (cf. **1 Co 12:1-11**), or “functions”?
 - a. If “spiritual gifts”, then we should read verse 11 to say “gave some to...”
 - b. If “functions”, then verse 11 should read “gave some to be...”

- c. The use of “doreas” and “domata” instead of “charismata” in **verses 7-8** suggests Paul has in mind “functions”, and not “spiritual gifts”
2. Understanding it as “functions”, we see that Christ gave some to be...
 - a. **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
 - b. **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 prophet’s role was temporary - cf. **1 Co 13:8**
 - c. **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” - **2 Ti 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
 - c. **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; 1 Co 12:28-29; 2 Ti 1:11; Ja 3:1**
 - 2) The term “pastor” is found only here in the Scriptures, but from **Ac 20:17,28** and **1 Pe 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
 - d. 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. **Ph 1:1; 1 Ti 3:8**
 - 2) But the list is adequate to illustrate the point: Christ has given “gifts” to His church!

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

1. To prepare members of the body for service (“equip the saints for work of ministry”)
2. To build up the members of the body (“edify the body of Christ”), so they...

- a. Can grow to maturity (**13**)
 - 1) Possessing the unity of the faith
 - 2) Having the knowledge of the Son of God
 - 3) Measuring up to the stature expected of those in Christ
- b. Will not be children (**14**)
 - 1) Tossed to and fro by every doctrine that comes along
 - 2) Easily deceived by cunning and false teachers
- c. 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”

CONCLUSION

1. If we can just...
 - 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 have 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 you doing all you can as a member 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

INTRODUCTION

1. 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**
2. In doing so, he first called us to “**walk together in unity**” by admonishing us to...
 - a. Display the “**attitudes**” crucial for maintaining unity - **Ep 4:2-3**
 - b. Understand the “**basis**” of the unity we have in Christ - **Ep 4:4-6**
 - c. Utilize the “**gifts**” given by Christ to His church that serves to keep the body of Christ together and growing - **Ep 4:7-16**
3. 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**”

[We begin, then, in **verse 17** with...]

I. THE ADMONITION (17-24)

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

1. **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”
 -- Notice where Jesus describes this same process - cf. **Mt 13:14-15**
2. **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**

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. **Co 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. **Co 3:1-2**
- 4. **And to “put on the new man”**
 - a. A new man “which was created according to God” - cf. **Co 3:10**
 - b. A new man, “in righteousness and true holiness” - cf. **Co 3:12-17**

[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), we find Paul making...]

II. 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)

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”
 - b. Allow it to prompt sinful behavior (“nor give place to the devil”)

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

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. In it’s place we need to put on those things befitting the “new man” (being kind, tender hearted, forgiving one another just as God forgives us in Christ)

CONCLUSION

1. What a contrast there would be if all those in the church truly carried out the admonition to **“Walk In Truth And Holiness”!**
 - a. The church would stand out like “a city that is set on a hill”! - cf. **Mt 5:14-16**
 - b. And the world, though it now has “their understanding darkened”, might be more likely to come to see the truth that is in Jesus
 - c. But what hope is there if the church is more like the world than the “holy temple” it is to be?

2. Brethren, are we **“grieving the Holy Spirit of God”?**
 - a. While the increasing worldliness in our society naturally concerns us...
 - b. Let’s be careful not to react with attitudes that are more in keeping with the “old man”
 - c. But having been “sealed for the day of redemption”, let’s be sure to react in “righteousness and true holiness”

In our next lesson, we will see that “walking worthy of our calling” also involves **“Walking In Love, Light, And Wisdom”...**

Walking In Love, Light, And Wisdom

Ephesians 5:1-21

INTRODUCTION

1. 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**

2. As we come into the fifth chapter, we learn that our “walk” (or conduct) which is worthy of our calling is one in which we...
 - a. Walk In Love - **Ep 5:1-7**
 - b. Walk As Light - **Ep 5:8-14**
 - c. Walk As Wise - **Ep 5:15-21**

["**Walking In Love, Light, And Wisdom**": why is this so important? As indicated in **Ep 5:1**, we are to be “followers of God as dear children”; and just as God is “love, light, and wisdom” personified, so we should try to imitate our Father! Therefore, consider how we should...]

I. WALK IN LOVE (1-7)

A. FOLLOWING CHRIST AS OUR EXAMPLE... (1-2)

1. Jesus certainly has loved us and given Himself for us
2. He offered Himself to God as an offering and sacrifice in our behalf
3. Let His example teach us how to “walk in love” - cf. **Jn 13:34-35; 1 Jn 3:16-17**

B. WITH A LOVE THAT IS PURE... (3-7)

1. Our love should be free from any hint of immorality or greed - **Ep 5:3**
2. Even words or jokes suggestive of immorality or greed are unbecoming those who are “saints” (holy, set apart for God’s purpose) - **Ep 5:4**
3. This is a serious concern, for immoral or greedy persons have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, but instead will experience the full wrath of God! - **Ep 5:5-7**

["**Walk In Love**”, with a love that is sacrificial and free from any hint of personal gain (either sexual or

monetary)...that is the kind of “walk” worthy of our calling as “saints”. Our “walk” also bears the responsibility of being a positive influence in the world in which we live, and this Paul discusses as we now consider our need to...]

II. WALK AS LIGHT (8-14)

A. WE ARE NOW “LIGHT IN THE LORD”... (8-10)

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**
2. The “fruit” expected of those “children of light” is “goodness, righteousness and truth” - **Ep 5:9**
3. 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**

B. AS “LIGHT” WE MUST NECESSARILY EXPOSE “DARKNESS”... (11-14)

1. We are not to have fellowship with “unfruitful works of darkness” - **Ep 5:11**; e.g., fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, **Ep 5:3-4**
2. Instead, our task is to “expose” them - **Ep 5:11b-13**
 - a. Things that we must “expose” are often so disgraceful, it is shameful to speak of them
 - b. But by “walking in the light” ourselves, we can through example and word expose by contrast these “works of darkness”
3. Thus the need to be “light” ourselves, something that comes only from Christ - **Ep 5:14**
 - a. Christ gives “light” to those who were spiritually asleep and dead - cf. **Ep 2:4-6**
 - b. Some scholars think this verse (**14**) may have been an early “baptismal hymn”, sung at a person’s baptism

[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”. How can we be sure to carry out our role as “the children of light”? This is where “wisdom” comes in, and therefore Paul exhorts us to...]

III. WALK AS WISE (15-21)

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF “WALKING AS WISE”... (15-17)

1. **Doing so with great care** - **Ep 5:15**
 - a. The word translated “circumspectly” means “exactly, accurately, diligently”
 - b. Unlike fools, who care little about where they are going or what is happening
2. **Taking advantage of the time available to one** - **Ep 5:16**
 - a. 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”)
 - b. 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)
3. **Understanding the will of the Lord** - **Ep 5:17**
 - a. Only by understand the will of the Lord can we be a “wise people”

- b. 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. **Deu 4:5-6**

B. TO WALK AS WISE REQUIRES BEING “FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT”... (18-21)

1. 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!
2. What evidence is there that one is “filled with the Spirit”? Paul describes three indications...
 - a. One indication is singing praises - **Ep 5:19**
 - b. Another indication is giving thanks - **Ep 5:20**
 - c. A third indication is submitting to one another in the fear of God - **Ep 5:21**

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”
 - b. “Walk as light”
 - c. “Walk as wise”
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”?
4. May God fill His children with His Spirit...
 - a. So that we can truly “walk in love”, “walk as light”, and “walk as wise”
 - b. And thereby show to the world the “fruit of the Spirit” (i.e., goodness, righteousness, and truth)!

Making Known God's Wisdom By Our Families

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

INTRODUCTION

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:
 - a. Walking in unity - **Ep 4:1-16**
 - b. Walking in truth and holiness - **Ep 4:17-32**
 - c. Walking in love, walking as light, and walking as wise - **Ep 5:1-21**
3. In what might appear at first to be an abrupt change of direction, Paul begins to describe how various family members are to conduct themselves - **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. But the subject matter is really not so abrupt as it may appear, for Paul mentioned earlier...
 - a. How the church is to “make known the manifold wisdom of God” - **Ep 3:10**
 - b. How we are to walk in “wisdom” - **Ep 5:15-17**...and it is through family relationships that we can often do this more successfully than in any other way!
5. How can this be? Well, it is through our families that we interact so much with the society in which we live...
 - a. Through marriage we immediately come into contact with another family (our “in-laws”)
 - b. Through children we develop relationships with those in their schools, their neighborhood, etc.
6. Thus it is through our families we have great potential to demonstrate the wisdom of God...
 - a. The same principles that underlie the gospel message (submission, love, sacrifice, obedience, honesty, fairness) are to be displayed in our family relationships
 - b. 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!

[Thus Paul is not abruptly changing direction, but continues to talk about those sort of things which are crucial to having a “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”. Consider, then, how those who “walk worthy” conduct themselves in regards to...]

I. MARITAL RESPONSIBILITIES (5:22-33)

A. THE DUTY OF WIVES... (22-24)

1. They are to submit to their husbands in everything...
 - a. Just as they are to submit to the Lord (“as to the Lord”)
 - b. Just as the church is subject to Christ
2. The reason: the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church
 - a. Any time you have organization that is functional, you must have some chain of authority
 - b. In the family, it is God’s Will that the husband be the head of the wife, and that parents be over their children
3. Here is an opportunity for wives to demonstrate the wisdom and value of an important principle in God’s will: that of submission!
 - a. Jesus taught by both word and example of the importance of submission - cf. **Jn 13:12-17; Mk 10:42-45**
 - b. Indeed we all are to submit in one way or another - **Ja 4:7; Ep 5:21**
 - c. Through their submission, wives prove that God’s will is best in such matters!

B. THE DUTY OF HUSBANDS... (25-30)

1. They are to love their wives...
 - a. Just as Christ loved the church, i.e., with a sacrificial love designed to bless and benefit their wives
 - b. Just as they love their own bodies, i.e., with a love that nourishes and cherishes their wives
2. Just as the wives have the opportunity to demonstrate God’s wisdom concerning submission, so husbands are given the opportunity to demonstrate Christ’s love...
 - a. As the head over His church, Jesus rules as a “benevolent monarch”
 - b. Some think such a concept as “benevolent monarch” is impossible (as per the saying, “Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely”)
 - c. But 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 not only the possibility, but the wisdom of a benevolent monarchy!

[Indeed, the “marriage” between a man and a woman can reflect the relationship that exists between Christ and the church (31-32). But this can happen only if...

- 1) A husband exercises his authority with love (33a)
- 2) A wife submits to her husband with respect (33b).

Just as there are “marital responsibilities”, so there are...]

II. FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (6:1-9)

A. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN... (1-3)

1. Children are to obey their parents in a way that honors them

2. There are certainly temporal benefits for such obedience (“that it may be well with you...”)
3. But there are also spiritual repercussions - cf. **Co 3:20** (“for this is well pleasing to the Lord”)
4. And by their example, children can show the value of obedience to the commands of God

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

1. Fathers are charged both negatively and positively..
 - a. DON’T provoke children to wrath (i.e., discipline without love)
 - b. DO bring them up in the “training and admonition” of the Lord (i.e., discipline tempered with love)
2. In the world, people usually fall into two extremes of child-raising:
 - a. Discipline without love (child abuse)
 - b. Love without discipline (permissiveness)
3. 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**

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

1. 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. **Co 3:18-4:1**
2. Christians who were servants were expected to exemplify the proper kind of obedience required of all Christians..
 - a. Obedience with fear and trembling - cf. **Ph 2:10**
 - b. Obedience in sincerity of heart, as to Christ Himself
 - c. Obedience with good will, as to the Lord
 - d. Obedience with an understanding that the Lord is an impartial Judge
3. In this way even slaves could demonstrate by example what true obedience was according to the Will of God

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

1. Those Christians who had slaves (like Philemon) were charged to treat their servants in very special ways:
 - a. “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..
 - 1) “with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ”
 - 2) “not with eyeservice...but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart”
 - 3) “with good will...as to the Lord, and not to men”
 - 4) “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
2. 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!

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!

Standing Strong In The Armor Of God

Ephesians 6:10-24

INTRODUCTION

1. *“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 saints and members of the household of God”) - chapters **2-3**
 - c. The Christian’s **purpose** in Christ (“to have a walk worthy of the calling”) - chapters **4-6**
2. To effectively carry out our “purpose”, Paul’s final concern is that the Christian be “strong” - **Ep 6: 10-20**
3. 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”**

[We begin by noticing...]

I. THE SOURCE OF THIS STRENGTH (10-11a)

A. THIS STRENGTH COMES FROM THE LORD, NOT OURSELVES...

1. Note that Paul says...
 - a. “be strong **in the Lord**”
 - b. “in the power of **His might**”
2. Thus Paul states that there is “strength” and “power” available for the Christian beyond their own!
 - a. Which Paul already referred to earlier in this epistle - cf. **Ep 1:19; 3:16,20**
 - b. Which Paul refers to in his epistle to the Philippians - cf. **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13**

B. THIS STRENGTH COMES FROM “THE ARMOR OF GOD”...

1. It is “armor” that **God** supplies
2. It is “armor” that **we** must “put on”, i.e., it is not something we have in of ourselves

[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. Speaking of “battles”, we next consider...]

II. THE NEED FOR THIS STRENGTH (11b-13)

A. TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL...

1. Satan has various “wiles” (lit., cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery), but Christians need not be ignorant of his “devices” - cf. **2 Co 2:11**
2. For example, some of Satan’s “schemes” are:

- a. Blinding people via false doctrine - **2 Co 4:3-4; 1 Ti 4:1-3**
- b. Enticing people to indulge in illicit desires of the flesh and mind - **Ep 2:1-3**
- c. Bringing persecution upon those who try to do right - **1 Pe 5:8-9**
3. Only with the Lord's help can we overcome the wicked one - **2 Th 3:3; 1 Jn 2:13-14**
(note the comments to "young men")

B. TO WRESTLE AGAINST "SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS"...

1. Not only Satan, but we battle against:
 - a. Principalities and powers
 - b. Rulers of the darkness of this age
 - c. Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places
2. I.e., there are demonic forces at play
 - a. Demonic "possession" may not exist today as it did in the days of Christ
 - b. There are certainly demonic "influences", such as "doctrines of demons" - **1 Ti 4:1-3**

[We may not fully understand how the "rulers of the darkness" operate, but clearly we see the need for all the strength God provides us in order to "stand" against such forces. What is the strength God provides? As we continue in our text, Paul explains...]

III. THE NATURE OF THIS STRENGTH (14-20)

A. IT IS THE "WHOLE" ARMOR OF GOD...

1. Note verses **11** and **13**
2. To be able to...
 - a. "stand against the wiles of the devil"
 - b. "withstand in the evil day"

...we need, not part, but the **whole** armor God provides the Christian!
3. I.e., **every** element Paul now describes is essential to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"

B. THE "WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD" INVOLVES...

1. **TRUTH, which serves like a belt**
 - a. It will hold our life together with a sense of direction and purpose
 - b. Truth can free us from sin, which can easily 'beset' us - cf. **Jn 8:32-34; He 12:1**
2. **RIGHTEOUSNESS, which guards like a breastplate**
 - a. Doing that which is good and right will guard our hearts (emotions)
 - b. Otherwise, ungodly living brings on emotional guilt as well as a judicial guilt
 - c. Paul may also have reference to the "righteousness of Christ", that "justification" found only in Him that protects us from the accusations of Satan - cf. **Ph 3:9**
3. **THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, which is crucial to our ability to "stand"**
 - a. The gospel is God's power unto salvation - **Ro 1:16-17**
 - b. Armed with the gospel, we can have "beautiful feet" than enables us to take the glad tidings to others - cf. **Ro 10:15**
4. **FAITH, which is like a shield**
 - 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. This faith comes only from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
- 5. **SALVATION, which is like a helmet**
 - a. In 1 **Th 5:8**, Paul speaks of the “hope of salvation” as our helmet
 - b. Thus it is the “hope” that salvation provides that can protect our minds against things like despair and fear
- 6. **THE WORD OF GOD, which is the “sword of the Spirit”**
 - 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**
- 7. **PRAYER, the means by which we remain “watchful”**
 - a. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus taught that we must “watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation” - **Mt 26:41**
 - b. The sort of “watchful prayer” that is effective, is one that is with...
 - 1) “all perseverance” - as Jesus taught in His parable of the persistent widow - **Lk 18:1-8**
 - 2) “supplication for the saints” - especially those with special needs, even as Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him - **Ep 6:19-20**

CONCLUSION

1. When we arm ourselves with such qualities as...
 - a. Truth
 - b. Righteousness
 - c. The gospel
 - d. Faith
 - e. The hope of salvation
 - f. The word of God
 - g. Prayer
 ...then we are “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 throws against us...
 - a. But the choice to “put on the whole armor of God” is up to us
 - b. Are we taking care to adorn ourselves with this wonderful armor???
3. In verses **21-24**, Paul concludes this wonderful epistle...
 - a. With a comment concerning Tychicus, who will bring the brethren up to date about Paul’s circumstances - **Ep 6:21-22**
 - b. With a closing benediction, one that I will use to close this series of lessons as well:

“Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

*“Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in all sincerity.
Amen”*

- Ep 6:23-24