



“The righteous . . . shall grow  
like a cedar in Lebanon”

Psalm 92:12

Reading Companion  
to the Book of  
**Ephesians**

*“So they read in the book in the law of God . . .  
and caused them to understand the reading”*

Nehemiah 8:8

By

Bill Daniels

## **Preface**

The contents of this book were part of a course taught in the Bible College at New Germany Baptist Church in 2007. In order to present these materials in a form more readily available for further class use we have kept the class divisions used in the course. Listed separately on the Contents page you will find the starting pages for both the 10 class portions as well as for the 6 chapters of the book of Ephesians.

How does a man keep walking in victory when it is hard and he is hurting? How is a man or woman or child to conduct themselves in the home? What should be our way in the work place? We find answers here in this epistle to the believers at Ephesus. May the Lord bless you with His answers, and bless you the more with a heart that never stops asking and seeking.

Bill Daniels

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“But God . . .  
hath quickened us  
together with Christ,  
(by grace ye are saved;)”

(Eph. 2:4-5)

## **Class 1 – Introduction**

This book of Ephesians is the first of the four “Prison Epistles” of the New Testament (N.T.), written during Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Roman imprisonment, with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Sprinkled throughout these four books are references to Paul’s writing while in bonds (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil. 1:7, 13 & 14; Col. 4:3 & 18; Philemon 9, 10, 13, 22 & 23). Thus the time of the writing of all four Prison Epistles was essentially the same, falling within the last 16 verses of the book of Acts, where we find the record of Paul’s arrival under armed escort and two-year detention at Rome. With these books all written during the same time period it is not surprising to find many similarities between them. In fact some refer to Ephesians and Colossians as twin epistles because of their many likenesses. Jensen in his Survey of the New Testament suggested that as many as half of the verses of Ephesians “are very similar to phrases in Colossians”.

Consider how Paul turned his prison term to greatest positive effect. He ever lived as he preached, “*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil*” (5:14). And though he was unjustly held for doing nothing but good and promoting the truth,

yet Paul was not filled with sorrow or venom due to his unfair confinement as one might expect. Amazingly some of the most joyful and Christ-exalting lines of the N.T. flowed from those years of Paul's life. As well, it seems likely the book of Hebrews was written by Paul together with Luke's help, during the months of his confinement at Caesarea before being transported to Rome. While the Jews were seething with hatred and lusting for his blood, Paul was anonymously striving for their very best, seeking to lead them to the truth concerning Jesus Christ, displaying in Hebrews the true interrelation between the old and new covenants. Only God can move such responses in the heart of a believer. Such love, joy, and long-suffering patience are fruits of the Spirit's indwelling work. The worst of times only shatter us if we allow them to. Consider how marvellously great the resulting fruit through the age because Paul was given greater opportunity to write because of his bonds (Acts 28:16-31; Phil. 1:13; 4:22). When endured with the right heart, even a prison can become a wonderfully useful and fruitful place. John Bunyon wrote his classic "Pilgrim's Progress" from prison. God is able to turn any "tragedy" to triumph.

## **The Church at Ephesus**

Ephesus was the chief city of the Province of Asia in Paul's day. Like Corinth, it was a city noted for its philosophers, poets, artists, and orators. Ephesus was a leading centre of international trade, and a city dominated spiritually by the worship of Diana (Artemis to the Greeks). The famed temple of Diana in Ephesus was then considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World (Acts 19:27). Though today men do not even know for sure where this temple was situated!

The development of the church at Ephesus and in Asia was a progressive thing;

- There were Asian converts at Pentecost (Acts 2:9) who returned home with their newfound faith, some likely to Ephesus.
- Paul made a weekend stop at Ephesus on his way back to Palestine after his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21).
- Apollos ministered in Ephesus for a time, while Aquila and Priscilla were living there (Acts 18:24-26).
- Paul then enjoyed an extended time of ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19).
- Paul's message to the Ephesian elders is recorded in Acts 20:17-38.

- This book of Ephesians was written from prison for the saints of the city. It must have been about 61 A.D. when Paul wrote, and he was then about 65 years of age. He referred to himself as "*Paul the aged*" at that time (Philemon 9).
- Timothy later continued in ministry there (I Tim. 1:3).

Eventually the church at Ephesus seems to have become something of a pivotal mother church of the region. When the churches of Asia were later listed and addressed in Revelation 1-3 the church at Ephesus heads the list.

## **Occasion and Purpose**

There does not seem to have been any specific occasion or problem stirring Paul to write this letter to the Ephesians, as with some of his other epistles;

- False teachings gave rise to the writing of Colossians and Galatians.
- I Corinthians was directed at internal contentions and questions.

False accusations were much of the occasion for the writing of II Corinthians.

Paul's purpose in this epistle was to lift Christ high as the exalted Head of His body, the church. He sought as well through this writing to lift the church higher in their understanding of Christ and His church. There is a distinct focus on *unity* in the book. Paul was still seeking to set at one the general division between Jew and Gentile; mentioned in 1:10, the focus of 2:11-22, "*the mystery*" of 3:1-13, for there is "one body, and one Spirit...one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (4:4-6). Note the unifying pictures of the church as a building (2:20-22), body (4:4-13), and bride (5:23-33). The Lord did not want a Jewish church separate from a Gentile church. This is an epistle aimed at the spiritual growth of its readers, leading them into an understanding of the wonder of who God is and what He has done for us, and then leading on to the day-by-day experience of walking in the light of those great truths. None can read this priceless book with a sincere heart without being challenged.

## **Survey**

The book of Ephesians has Paul's characteristic touch. The first three chapters are more doctrinal, giving instruction and building up our faith in our heavenly position. The last three chapters are more

practical, aiding our walk or earthly practice.

### **Basic Outline;**

Chap. 1-3 – Our Heavenly Position.

Chap. 4-6 – Our Earthly Practice.

Consider again the practical lesson suggested by Paul's characteristic approach here. It is implied that we must *believe* and *think* right before we can *live* or *walk* right. Compare the command of Proverbs 4:23 to "*keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*". Out of a well-kept heart arise well-meaning intentions and outward actions. Compare Paul's tendency in the book of Philippians to command not only our will, but our thoughts and emotions as well. Good outward discipline begins within. When this principle is applied;

- To our *personal lives*, it means we must look well to what we believe and think, for this will determine what we do.
- To the *church*, it means preaching and teaching must focus on what the Lord would have us to believe and think, as well as what He would have us to do (perhaps in that order).

- When there is a need to discipline error, we must not seek only to correct wrong actions, but the underlying wrong beliefs and thinking patterns behind them as well.
- To our *home* and *child discipline*, it means our responsibility toward our children is not only a matter of their outward actions. The first item of concern is how they think and believe. Compare Proverbs 23:12-16.

### **Chapters 1-3** – Our Heavenly Position.

From the outset we are led to the lofty heights of “*heavenly places in Christ*” (1:3), where we discover that we who are His are blessed “*with all spiritual blessings*”. “*Heavenly places*” is a key phrase in this epistle (1:3, 10 & 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).

1:1-14 – Our spiritual blessings in Christ. We “*who first trusted in Christ*” are;

- “*Blessed*” (1:3).
- “*Chosen*” (1:4).
- “*Pedestinated unto the adoption of children*” (1:5).
- “*Accepted in the beloved*” (1:6).
- “*Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*” (1:13).

- Have “*redemption through His blood*” (1:7).
- Have “*forgiveness of sins*” (1:7).
- Have experienced “*the riches of His grace*” (1:7) and “*His good pleasure*” (1:9).
- Have come to know “*the mystery of His will*” (1:9).
- Have “*obtained an inheritance*” (1:11), the “*earnest*” or deposit or down payment of which is the indwelling Holy Spirit (1:14).

All of these blessings are ours “*in Christ*”. Note the great prominence of this or a similar phrase in chapter 1. While in prison under something of the curse of Rome Paul was especially mindful that he was blessed in Jesus Christ.

Do not miss the Trinity of God here united in the great work of man’s redemption;

- God the Father elects (1:3-6).
- God the Son redeems (1:7-12).
- God the Holy Spirit seals (1:13-14).

1:15-23 – As is so common in Paul’s writings, lofty considerations of the Lord combine with a heart overflowing with love for His people spilling out into

prayer. Do you see him there within the earthly bondage of a Roman prison, yet inwardly soaring aloft into Christ's very presence "*in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion*" (1:20-21)? In prayer Paul was "released" from all earthly dominion to stand before the King of kings. Just as Jonah was released as it were in prayer from the confines of the fish's belly. Here is sound theology rising in sincere worship, just as it should be! Nothing hollow or dry, but real and alive. Nothing shallow, but reaching into the depth and heights of all that God has for us.

### 2:1-22 – Things we were once without;

- Redemption (2:1-10) – Before salvation we were;
  - Spiritually dead (vs. 1).
  - Servants of the devil (vs. 2).
  - Slaves to desire (vs. 3).
  - Until we understand what we once were, we can never fully comprehend the grace of the God who saved us.
  - "***But God...***" (vs.4-10). Compare Romans 5:8. In Christ God has raised us up from the depth of spiritual death

(vs. 5) to the height of “*heavenly places*” (vs. 6). And why? That He might freely show us “*the exceeding riches of His grace*” into “*the ages to come*” (vs. 7).  
What a wonder!!

- Relationship (2:11-22) – Jew and Gentile brought together in unity within the church. It was in fact because of Paul’s preaching on this unity in Christ that he was writing from a Roman prison.

3:1-13 – Minister of the mystery. What is “*the mystery*” of which Paul speaks? The mystery is not that Gentiles would be included in God’s plan of redemption, for this was established from of old (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 2:2; 11:10; 42:6; 49:6). It is that Gentiles are now “*fellow heirs and of the same body*” (vs. 6), that Jew and Gentile would be joint-heirs of God’s blessing together in a new thing, the church. Compare Galatians 3:28-29 & I Corinthians 12:13.

3:14-21 – Intercessory prayer. Note the similar progression to Romans 11. Behold the way we should pray for each other.

### **Chapters 4-6** – Our Earthly Practice.

The turning point with chapter 4 is comparable to

Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Galatians 5. And the theme is similar to those portions as well, that to walk in the Spirit is to walk in loving service toward others. Love for God and man is the foundational N.T. principle of Christian practice.

4:1-16 – Walking in love. A bowed heart (vs. 2) fosters unity (vs. 3-6) and the use of all the gifts for the benefit of others (vs. 7-16). Our great object is to seek to nurture every member of the body into the perfect image of Christ.

Note that apostles and prophets (4:11) related to the foundation of the church (2:20), while evangelists, pastors, and teachers relate to the present, ongoing construction (compare II Pet. 2:1).

4:17-5:17 – Walking in purity. Note the key principle of replacement here (4:20-32). Wrong practice must not only be stopped, but must be replaced by its corresponding right practice.

Do you see what grieving the Spirit involves by comparing the immediate context (4:29-32)? It is to not be walking in love. And though the Spirit is a Person who can be grieved He cannot be grieved away (vs. 30b; 1:13-14).

Again and again we find Paul's warnings against sexual promiscuity, as in 5:3-6. Compare I Corinthians 6 & 7; I Thessalonians 4.

5:18-21 – Walking in the Spirit. While filling with the Spirit is commanded (5:18), baptism with the Spirit is *never once* commanded in the Bible. The results or evidences of Spirit filling follow (5:19-21);

- Gladness (vs. 19). The pure, joy-filled, Spirit-led praise of a meeting of believers is set in contrast to a riotous drunken revel. A Spirit-filled heart has something to sing about and cannot help but to do so. But “*the song of fools*”, as their laughter, is as empty and annoying “*as the crackling of thorns under a pot*” (Eccl. 7:5-6).
- Gratefulness (vs. 20).
- Givenness (vs. 21).

5:22-6:4 – Walking in the home. In dealing with human relationships the Lord relates nothing of our *rights* but only our *responsibilities*. There is no “if”, “since”, or “but” involved here;

- Wives submit (5:22-24).
- Husbands love (5:25-33).

- Sacrificial (vs. 25).
- Sanctifying (vs. 26-27).
- Self-fulfilling (vs. 28-33).

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## **On the Side**

In your search for a marriage partner, ask the Lord for;

- One who loves you enough to die for you.
- One with your best interests at heart.
- One not necessarily who pleases you, but one whom you can delight in pleasing.

- 
- Children obey (6:1-3).
  - Fathers provoke not (6:4).

6:5-9 – Walking in society.

- Sincere servants (vs. 5-8). A portrait of a biblical employee.
- Mindful masters (vs. 9). A portrait of the biblical employer.

6:10-20 – Warring against Satan. Note the focus on *standing* here (vs. 11-14);

- God’s enemy must be recognized (vs. 10-12). There is more to the Christian’s battle than just the natural temptations of his flesh.
- God’s resources must be employed (vs. 13-20). There are powers in the unseen world against which we are powerless without God’s resources of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, God’s Word, and prayer.

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## **Ponder Points**

Another thought on viewing the book of Ephesians;

- Heavenly Treasures (1-3) – Blessed already with “*all spiritual blessings*”.
- Holy Testimony (4-6:9) – The Spirit moves us to a life of love, unity, service, and purity.
- Hell’s Tempest (6:10-20) – The evil one stands against every Spirit-filled life (Zech. 3:1).

## Class 2 – Ephesians 1:1-14

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*Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

*Eph 1:2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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### **1:1-2** – Paul Greet the Saints.

Contrast Galatians 1:1 where there was much more of a need for Paul to defend himself, his apostleship, and message before those who were raising doubts. Here before these people who knew and loved him Paul had nothing he needed to prove.

*“To the saints”* – Not a special class of believers but a term referring to all true believers in Jesus. The word *“saint”* has the same root as that behind *“holy”* or *“sanctify”* or *“sanctification”*. The idea is to *“set apart”*. Every believer in Jesus Christ is set apart from the world and unto God.

*“To the faithful in Christ Jesus”* – All that is ours by God’s grace is in and through Jesus Christ. See the prominence of this happy position (1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, etc., 2:5, 6, 7, 10, 13, etc.).

*“Grace be to you, and peace”* – This greeting so

characteristic of Paul is a combination of the Gentile (grace) and Jewish (peace or shalom) greetings common in his day. Paul's love and best wishes extended to all, excluding none. These words of greeting are always in this order, expressing the truth that true peace is a result only of experiencing God's grace.

*“From God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ”* – What else are we to conclude by the placing of these two Persons together except that there is some equality shared by them?

**1:3-14** – *“To the Praise of His Glory”*.

This portion is as if a great doxology of praise to the Triune God, presented in three stanzas;

- The first (vs. 3-6) relating more to the Father's purpose.
- The second and longest (vs. 7-12) relating more to the Son's presentation.
- The third and shortest (vs. 13-14) relating to the Spirit's preserving.

All three stanzas conclude with the refrain, *“to the praise of His glory”*. All that God does in man's behalf is meant to lead his heart to *“the praise of His*

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

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*glory*". And the range of God's good purposes toward man runs from "*before the foundation of the world*" (vs. 4) to "*the redemption*" (vs. 14), and on into "*the ages to come*" (2:7). From eternity past to eternity future!

Vs. 3-6 – Purposed in the Father.

Vs. 3 – "*Blessed be...God*" – The Greek word translated "*blessed*" here combines the verb "to speak" with the adjective "good". The idea is of a good word. Though held captive in unjust imprisonment Paul's tongue was given only to a good word for God. Far from being consumed with bitterness, he was overwhelmed with the God of grace!

In beginning to express praise to God in vs. 3 Paul continues with what is essentially one long continuous sentence all the way through to the end of vs. 14. His heart was so full of the wonderful truths he relates, it was as if he just did not know where to end off, each new word or thought stirring and rambling right into the next, seemingly giving

no thought from a human perspective to any careful arrangement into proper sentences, as I have just done. It is classic Paul, a literary style characteristically his. The Spirit of God of course inspired the writing, but in doing so He did not mess with the man's individuality. The Spirit took up the man into His hand with all of his personal human uniqueness still intact and somehow wonderfully lifted the result to the level of a divine communication. Do you see how God in His sovereignty is able to take up the human element or input and make it His own work, yet without trampling or snuffing out the human side? The result is wholly and completely God's writing, the very expression of the heart and mind of God. Yet the writing is distinctly and unquestionably Paul. The man's characteristic way and interests and concerns were not lost in this amazing process called inspiration. Was it God? Totally! Without compromising either jot or tittle. Was it Paul? Without doubt! His writing style quite distinct from John or James or Luke. To remove the human element makes it dictation or puppetry. To remove the divine element makes it fallible. We are going to need this interesting biblical balance to illustrate another in just a moment.

*"In heavenly places"* – *"Heavenly"* is an adjective like

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

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

---

“worldly”, referring to that which pertains to heaven as opposed to earth. Here it stands in the plural and with only the definite article (the), literally “in the heavenlies”. This is a key term found 5 times in this epistle (1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) and referring to all that is involved in that spiritual realm of our eternal inheritance and citizenship, that “*hope which is laid up for you in heaven*” (Col. 1:5) made ours through union with the risen and ascended Christ in heaven.

Vs. 4-5 – “*He hath chosen us...having predestinated us*” – N.B. that *events* more than *individuals* are in focus here. More than a discussion of God’s selection of certain individual souls, this is a celebration of God’s electing grace, that He would so grace man making prior plans and arrangements for man, that we might be found related to Him at the last in holiness and love and in adoption into His own family. This ultimate outcome is the purpose of His choosing. He chose to purify and love us, and chose us to purify and love. He foreordained us to

be placed as sons. God's choice is the starting point of His blessing. The point is that redemption was no afterthought, but His gracious purpose from the beginning. Romans 8:29 relates predestination to our conformity to the likeness of Christ. We are predestined unto His likeness. God's choice is the initiation of it. God's loving grace is the motivation of it. And whatever reasons or criteria involved are not given. It is all about the good pleasure of His will, allowing no room for human pride. And that is about as far as we can run with the theme. Yet we have no indication here that God's choosing in any way negates man's personal responsibility to respond or believe. There can be no doubt that God elects to redemption and holiness, and this according to His abounding grace. But these great truths neither nullify the freedom of man's choice nor qualify the basis of God's choice. This context does not support the fatalistic notion of extending God's sovereignty to the violation of man's will. Neither does free choice violate grace. We find no indication that the saints at Ephesus were *made* or *caused* to listen to the gospel or to believe it in vs. 13, or that they were sparked by God to regeneration and thus could be given faith to believe. They heard and believed the gospel of their salvation. As in the matter of inspiration, it was a work that was wholly God. And yet somehow that

work did not snuff out human interest, involvement, or individuality.

*“In love”* – God’s gracious purpose is to bring man to Himself that He might rejoice together with man in loving relation. Compare in Malachi 1:2 God’s choosing as the expression of His love. As we see there, He expects this truth to lead man to love Him in return.

*“Unto the adoption of children”* – Believers have been made sons of God;

- In that they have been *“born again”* through the work of the Spirit and the incorruptible seed of God’s words (I Pet. 1:23; James 1:18). Born not to physical life as in our first birth, but to eternal, spiritual life into God’s own family.
- In that they have been placed and privileged as sons in adoption (Gal. 4).

*“According to the good pleasure of His will”* – The reason for God’s gracious purposes toward man is not a matter of man’s earning or deserving, neither is it a matter of some need in God. It is purely because He chose to love the unlovely. *“The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you,*

*Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein  
he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

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*because ye were more in number than any people;  
for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the  
LORD loved you” (Deut. 7:7-8). The Lord loved and  
chose because He loved, because that is His nature,  
not because any man deserved any of it!*

Vs. 6 – *“To the praise of the glory of His grace” –  
Justice is when a man receives exactly what he  
deserves. Mercy is one not receiving what he  
deserves. Grace is favour displayed where wrath is  
deserved. Grace is God choosing to love helplessly,  
hopelessly undeserving sinners. And when we at  
last see how He has loved we who are so unlovely,  
our hearts respond in praise for His glorious grace!*

*“Accepted in the Beloved” – “The Beloved” or beloved  
One refers not to a position but to the Person of  
Jesus Christ. That blessed One so “beloved” of the  
Father has become “the Beloved” of believers as  
well. Only “in Him”, only through our union with  
that beloved One do we become beloved and  
accepted before God, clothed with His own  
righteousness.*

Vs. 7-12 – Presented through the Son. Upon word

*Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood,  
the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his  
grace;*

*Eph 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all  
wisdom and prudence;*

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of “*the Beloved*” Paul’s focus now shifts to Jesus Christ who brings into effect God’s gracious purposes for man.

Vs. 7 – “*Redemption*” speaks of deliverance through the paying of a price or ransom (Col. 1:14). Our redemption is only through the death and shed blood of Jesus Christ. Through the price of “*the precious blood of Christ*” (I Pet. 1:18) fallen man is purchased out of sin’s bondage (I Cor. 6:20; Rev. 5:9), and removed from under the law’s curse (Gal. 3:13; 4:5).

Vs. 8 – All through “*the riches of His grace*” God has favoured us and redeemed us and forgiven us at greatest cost. Indeed He has *abounded* His grace toward us. Do not miss the quantity words in this context;

- *Every* spiritual blessing (vs. 3).
- “*According to the riches [wealth] of His grace*” (vs. 7).

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

*Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

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- His grace *“abounded toward us”* (vs. 8).

Vs. 9 – *“The mystery”* – *“Mystery”* in the N.T. refers to God’s hidden counsels, known only through His special revelation, and now revealed through the living Word of God who came and the written Word of God which was completed. The *“mystery”* is that redemption would be brought to all mankind through Christ’s coming as a man to die, and that the result of this work of grace would extend to all, both Jew and Gentile, united in one body. Further detail on this matter comes a bit later in this book.

Vs. 10 – *“In the dispensation of the fullness of times”* – *“When the fullness of time was come”* God sent Christ *“to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Gal. 4:4-5). And when the *“fullness of times”* are at last come to completion God will have fulfilled His purpose to bring together all things scattered and divided by the intrusion of sin. Every redeemable being will be

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

*Eph 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

---

brought to complete union and harmony in and under Jesus Christ. This is not universal salvation, but “*the consummation*” of God’s restoration of believing man to Himself, the fulfilment of those six great purposes listed in Daniel 9:24;

- *“To finish the transgression,”*
- *“And to make an end of sins,”*
- *“And to make reconciliation for iniquity,”*
- *“And to bring in everlasting righteousness,”*
- *“And to seal up the vision and prophecy,”*
- *“And to anoint the most Holy”.*

“*In one all things in Christ*” – Again, every spiritual blessing is and will be summed up “*in Christ*”. The practical outworking of this is described in the closing chapters of Revelation in the new heavens, earth, and Jerusalem.

Vs. 13-14 – Preserved by the Spirit.

*Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

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Vs. 13 – “*Ye heard the word of truth*” – That the believers at Ephesus heard means somebody was bold to tell them. Nobody believes without hearing! And nobody hears without telling. It is God who has made it this way, that His people must speak the gospel if others are going to hear and benefit from it. “*How shall they hear without a preacher?*” Paul asked.

“*In whom also after that ye believed*” – God has ordained as well that some will believe when the message is proclaimed, that His words made known will not return void. There is a clear sequence of events here;

- You heard the word of truth, “*the gospel of your salvation*”.
- “*After that*” you believed in Jesus as Saviour.
- “*After that*” you were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Sealing expresses the idea of authority or security. In sealing a place or document in ancient times one

would press his signet or personal insignia (cut onto a ring or cylinder) into soft wax. It was the ancient signature before more modern times of ink and the ready availability of pens and paper. The seal, like a signature, fixed one's authority or authentication to the document or law or action or place sealed. Only that man in his capacity or one of comparable or greater authority could dare break that seal without subjecting himself to the wrath of the signatory. That seal was a mark of ownership, and to tamper with it a kind of theft. We see the use of several such seals or signets in the Bible;

- Pharaoh gave his signet ring to Joseph in Genesis 41:42.
- The signet ring of the Persian king Ahasuerus was used to ratify laws both for and against the Jews in Esther 3:12 & 8:7-10.
- The lid to the lions' den was sealed through the night by King Darius in Daniel (6:17).
- Christ's tomb was sealed with the authority of the Jewish leaders in Matthew 27:62-68.
- There was a book with seven seals in John's vision, which only *"the Lion of the tribe of Judah"* was found worthy to open (Rev. 5).
- Satan will be sealed by God in the bottomless

*Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

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pit for the duration of Christ's 1000-year earthly kingdom (Rev. 20:3).

It is evident from this portion that all who heard and believed the gospel were sealed from the moment of their salvation, and God's divine seal can never be broken by any created power. Compare 4:30.

Vs. 14 – *“The earnest of our inheritance”* – This word *“earnest”* means “guarantee” or “pledge” or guaranteeing “deposit”. The Greek word behind it is found 3 times in the N.T. (also II Cor. 1:21-22 & 5:5), always referring to the Spirit. The idea is of something given as a pledge in binding a bargain, a first instalment or part payment, some portion given in assurance of the rest yet to come. When a man gives his bride-to-be an engagement ring as a pledge or promise that he fully intends to follow through in marriage it is a reflection of the same. The indwelling Holy Spirit given in the very special way in which He is owned by all believers in the current church age is God's promise to us with something in our hand. The Spirit is God's pledge of the fullness of salvation. We may rest assured that He

would never reverse His solemn pledge before making good on His promise of our full inheritance.

*“Of our inheritance”* – If the Spirit of God is the deposit or part payment of our inheritance, then what could be *“our inheritance”*? Nothing less than the *fullness* of God’s presence (Rev. 21:1-4). It is the very ultimate of what a man could ever receive or inherit. When we at last have the fullness of God’s presence all else can only be lesser. The promise of God is eternal life, eternal existence in His presence, *with Him!*

*“Until the redemption of the purchased possession”* – *“Redemption”* here not in its beginning stage, but in its final completion. Paul refers to that coming day when we are at last with Christ and become like Him. It is that day toward which we, with all creation, are groaning and travailing. It will be *“the times of refreshing”* and *“restitution of all things”* of which Peter preached in Acts 3 (vs. 19-21).

Thus when the Spirit of God enters a soul at the moment of salvation God seals that soul for eternity, as if pressing His own emblem on that one, marking him as His own possession, fixing the believer’s eternal destiny with the very authority of God Himself, whose authority is surpassed *by none!* As

well God gives the Holy Spirit into that saved soul as the pledge of the *fullness* of His presence one day. That pledge or promise is as assured and fixed and permanent as God's words, as God Himself! To doubt that God will keep what He has sealed and follow through on what He has pledged is to doubt the truthfulness and trustworthiness of God Himself.

## **Class 3 – Ephesians 1:15-2:10**

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*Eph 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,  
Eph 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

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Paul's opening discussion of the glory of God's grace in all that the triune God has designed and done for His chosen ones turns then in vs. 15 to his thanks and prayers for the saints. This in turn will lead his heart right back to God for His goodness and grace.

### **1:15-23** – Paul's Prayer.

Vs. 15-16 – “*After I heard of your faith*” – Word came to Paul while he was held at Rome of the faith and love of those to whom he now writes. Seems a bit of an odd comment if he was writing to those he knew and led to life and leadership in the city of Ephesus during his many months of ministry there some 5-6 years before. He would have already known of their faith and love. He had been there to help lead them to it. Comments like this lead to the conclusion that Paul was actually writing this epistle to a wider audience than just the church at Ephesus. It seems to take in others as well who came to faith in Christ after Paul's departure from the area. Perhaps this

letter was meant to be circulated throughout the province of Asia, read in all the budding congregations of believers springing up like a great fairy ring through the witness spreading out from Ephesus. Paul wrote in a similar manner to the believers at Colossae, a church Paul was apparently not directly involved in founding; *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints”* (Col. 1:3-4).

Do not miss the wonder of what is implied here in these words. What Paul and others began in Ephesus *did not remain idle!* The body of believers there in that city just kept the message moving out. Who knows how many new believers read this letter, having come to faith through Paul’s spiritual children in that area.

Notice that Paul began praying for them when they had come to faith, not before. He does not say, “Praise God, I have been praying for your souls for years”. Did he pray for the salvation of the unsaved? We see little evidence or encouragement toward prayer that the lost might be saved in the N.T. (Rom. 10:1; I Tim. 2:1-3; Jn. 17:9).

*“Unto all the saints”* – Genuine faith breeds genuine love in a renewed heart, and that without partiality (*“all the saints”*). We see the same principle often in the N.T. True saints love, especially their fellow saints. When Paul heard of this response in them he knew he had good cause for rejoicing, that it was evidence of a real and vibrant faith. Note the same combination of faith and love in Colossians 1:4 and Philemon 5.

*“I cease not to give thanks”* – Paul was a man continually given to prayer. And again, though he was held in unjust captivity his heart beamed with a continual gratitude attitude in the most dismal of circumstances. And Paul’s interest was not confined just to the saints at Ephesus either. During the very same era of his life;

- To the believers at Philippi he wrote, *“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy”* (Phil. 1:3-4).
- And to the Colossians, *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you”* (Col. 1:3).
- And to his friend Philemon, *“I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers”* (Philemon 4).

*Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

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He found much for which to be thankful even in prison.

Vs. 17 – Paul begins now to relate what he prayed for them (vs. 17-20), this rising to a crescendo of focus upon Jesus Christ coming out the end of the chapter (vs. 21-23).

*“The God of our Lord Jesus Christ”* – Notice that God the Father is the God of Jesus (Matt. 27:46; Jn. 20:17), yet in the mystery of the Trinity this somehow does not diminish the deity of Christ. In Psalm 45:6 it is the Father calling the Son *“O God”*, as the writer of Hebrews clarifies (Heb. 1:8). See the contrast in Psalm 45:7 (and Heb. 1:9).

There were basically four things Paul prayed for them. He was asking God for their clarity of knowledge and understanding of;

- God (vs. 17).
- Their calling (vs. 18), especially the hope of it.
- Their inheritance (vs. 18).

*Eph 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

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- God's power exercised in their behalf (vs. 19).

First and foremost God's revelation is toward our fullest knowledge of Him, whom to know is "*life eternal*" (Jn. 17:3).

"*Spirit of wisdom*" – This probably does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to our human spirit charged to the full with wisdom through God's revelation of Himself. Paul asks that the truth of God might pour into their souls through the Spirit's work through His Word like a continual divine download. God's gracious purpose and desire for man is to reveal precise and fullest knowledge of Himself. Though He needs no one, yet He desires shared relation with man, to know and be known correctly.

Vs. 18 – "*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened*" – Again referring to the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, working through the special revelation of God's words.

"*The hope of His calling*" – Paul prays that they

might comprehend all of that to which God had called them in Christ, and all that is involved in that calling;

- A worthy walk, of lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, love, and unity (4:1-3).
- A high, holy, and heavenly calling (Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1).
- Peace and thanks-living (Col. 3:15).
- *“Unto His kingdom and glory”* (I Thess. 2:12).
- Not *“unto uncleanness, but unto holiness”* (I Thess. 4:7).
- To bless and not curse or retaliate in return (I Pet. 3:9).
- *“Unto His eternal glory”* (I Pet. 5:10).

God’s calling involves both an admirable walk and an assured hope.

*“The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* – Paul would have them to fully understand the wealth of what God has in store for them (and us), that heavenly inheritance of the fullness of God’s very presence, with whom is *“fullness of joy”* and *“pleasures for evermore”!* (Ps. 16:11).

*Eph 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

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Consider that thought of God's "*inheritance in the saints*". Could it not also express what God receives "*in the saints*"? Christ receives His bride in the church, as Boaz found his bride from a foreign people.

Vs. 19-20 – "*The exceeding greatness of His power*" – Paul longed for them to comprehend the super-abounding power of God exercised in behalf of believers. This verse is an amazing statement, involving four different words for power in the Greek behind the English;

- "*Power*" (δυναμις, *dunamis*) – General term for inherent power.
- "*Working*" (ενεργεια, *energeia*) – More focused on power exercised or working.
- "*Mighty*" (κρατος, *kratos*) – Used in the N.T. of God's might.

"*Power*" (ισχυς, *ischus*) – Chiefly physical strength.

As if Paul battled to put the magnitude of the

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

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concept into words. Seems if he had a couple more words for shades of might he would have thrown those in here too. Compare;

- 3:7 – “according to *energeia* of His *dunamis*”.
- 6:10 – “be *dunamis* in the Lord and in the *kratos* of His *ischus*”.

“When He raised Him from the dead” – God’s super-abounding power used in raising Christ from death is what He exercised “to usward who believe”. Paul equates God’s resurrection power with that used in bringing believers to spiritual life from their death in sin. This confirms new birth to be a far cry from a mere change of heart and life, but life where there was no life, as if one were physically raised from the dead. Compare 2:10 where Paul speaks of our being “created in Christ Jesus”, as if a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). The salvation of a soul is no small thing. It is as major and mighty a work of God as Christ raised to life after three days dead or as the original creation. The salvation of a soul is the result of the same super-abounding resurrection, creation power of God exercised on that soul, lifting him from death

*Eph 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

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to life, from spiritual oblivion to existence.

*“In the heavenly places”* – Again as in vs. 3, literally “in the heavenlies”, this time with the idea of place coming through more strongly. It is that place where Jesus is currently seated at the right hand of the Father, that place where our inheritance of “*all spiritual blessings*” awaits.

Vs. 21-23 – With the mention of Christ’s resurrection and ascension Paul’s thoughts flow straight into exaltation and explanation of Jesus Christ, a theme never far from the surface with this man. Do not miss the lesson on the nature of prayer here. From thanksgiving for others and supplication in their behalf the spiritual man’s heart soars to the very heights of exaltation in God and Saviour. No clinical, disciplined, organized thing by any means. Just the natural flow of a heart consumed with God’s love and love for God.

*“Far above all”* – Not just above but “*far above*”. Paul is stacking terms again here, as in vs. 19, now

*Eph 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,  
Eph 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

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expressing all dominion as all power there. His terms take in as well words used of the differing ranks of angels, both good and bad (3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:15). Christ's name and authority is above every created being, whether in physical or spiritual realms, both now and forever.

*“Hath put all things under His feet”* – An obvious allusion to Psalm 8:6-8 (see Psalm 110:1). Every enemy will be brought either to willing submission or to complete ruination. Compare I Corinthians 15:24-26.

*“To the church”* – Though the term “church” generally is used in the N.T. to refer to a local body of believers, here the concept widens into the universal sense of the entire collective body of the redeemed of this age. It is the way the term is used throughout this epistle. The word translated “church” literally means “called out”. The church is made up of all who are called out of the world and united with Jesus Christ in a personal, intimate way. It is that body later to become Christ's bride

(II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:9).

*“Which is His body”* – Jesus is the *“Head”* in the sense of the supreme Authority over all (vs. 21). Yet He is *“Head”* in a more connected sense as well, as the Head of His body, the church. Somehow the congregation of the saved of this age fills up *“the fullness of Him”*. As the head needs the body, so God has made Jesus somehow fulfilled or made whole or complete through the church. And as the body cannot live without the head, so the church has no existence without her Saviour. Paul often uses this figure of the church as Christ’s body, and the individual believers as members of that body (4:10-16; Rom. 12:4-8; I Cor. 12). It describes the unity with diversity in the church. Each member fulfils his own necessary, individual function, yet all united as one. A properly functioning body pictures how life under our exalted Head should be. Such a body moves together under the will and leadership of the head, fulfilling its purposes. Can you picture an arm doing its own thing independent of the head? Such would be absurd and frustrating. So it is with those members of the church doing their own thing independent of their Head.

## **Chapter 2**

## **2:1-10** – Saved by Grace.

After the example of Jesus Christ raised from death and ascended to glory by the power of God, Paul now expands on the theme of that same power “*to usward who believe*”. Though we once were spiritually dead in sin, yet now in Jesus we too have been raised to spiritual life, and are now poised and prepared to ascend “into the heavnlies” with Him in due time.

In the first three verses we see our hopeless condition before we believed in Jesus;

- Vs. 1 – Spiritually dead.
- Vs. 2 – Servants of the devil.
- Vs. 3 – Selfish devotion.

Vs. 1 – “*And you*” – As is true of Jesus, so God has “*raised us up together*” as well (2:6), making alive what was dead; Jesus physically, we spiritually. And as Jesus was set at God’s “*own right hand in the heavenly places*” (1:20), even so we who are in Him God has made “*to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (2:6).

“*In trespasses and sins*” – Expressing the way man’s spiritual death came about. Adam and Eve died

*Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

*Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

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spiritually the moment they chose sin. And the entire human race descending from them are born in spiritual death. “*Trespases*” perhaps reflects more the actual acts of crossing the line of right, “*sins*” more the inherent evil nature leading to acts of violation. It’s not just a matter of evil actions, but of the evil nature behind the actions.

Vs. 2 – The world, the flesh, and the devil are the three great enemies of God’s children. Satan works through the whole course or way or influence of the world (attitudes, moral principles, availabilities, vanities, etc.), that entire diverse system of beliefs and practices generated by the clever line of Cain living for themselves in complete neglect of God. To allow our own lust to lead us into devotion to such is to become the servant of Satan. Therefore God’s earnest counsel is to “*be not conformed to this world*” (Rom. 12:2) and to “*love not the world*” (I John 2:15), for “*the whole world lieth in wickedness*” (I John 5:19), in the very lap of the wicked one.

*Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

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Vs. 3 – “*Also we all*” – There is a note of emphasis behind the English here in the sense of “*we all ourselves also*”, perhaps speaking of the Jews in contrast to Gentiles. The Jews were no better off for all of their external advantages. They were just as dead in sins as pagan Gentiles and equally without hope. Outward factors of more biblical lifestyle or finest heritage or some spiritual advantage have absolutely no effect upon man’s inherent spiritual deadness. Only God’s resurrection power can make the vital transformation (creation).

“*Conversation*” (KJV) is old English for manner of life or conduct.

“*In the lusts of our flesh*” – Here is now our third great enemy, our own heart’s lust and thoughts of self-gratification, running with little hesitation after Satan’s enticements to evil through the world.

“*Children of wrath*” – God’s wrath is the focus here, for “*the wrath of God abideth on*” every unredeemed soul “*that believeth not the Son*” (John 3:36). Before

*Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love  
wherewith he loved us,  
Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened  
us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

---

we found Christ we were children of the devil, dwelling under the looming threat of God's abiding wrath.

Vs. 4-5 – “*But God...*” – Here is another of those great turning points (Rom. 3:21; 5:8) expressing God's gracious response to man's dilemma. Our wicked walk (vs. 2) and way (vs. 3) attracting God's wrath has been answered by the wealth of God's loving mercy. And *that is grace!* The wonderful richness of God's mercy and the greatness of His love glows all the brighter here beside the contrast of what we were. God is the answer for man's need and the only source and initiator of man's salvation. He is not just an ample source but “*rich in mercy*” with “*the riches of His grace*” (vs. 7; 1:7). As man's sin surpassed all reason in its abysmal depths, so God's loving-kindness has surpassed all our need into the heavenlies. God was not obligated to do anything. Man was deserving of nothing. God was moved only by His loving desire and design to mercy undeserving man. “*For God so love the world*”.

*Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

*Eph 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

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Vs. 6 – “*Made us sit together in heavenly places*” – This is expressed as if it were a finished event, a present reality. *As good as done!* It is what our beginning in spiritual life will ultimately end with. *I will be there, with Him!* What glorious privileges are ours “*in Christ Jesus*”! What a wonderful preview we have been given!

Vs. 7 – “*That in the ages to come*” – This is a statement of purpose, *God’s* purpose in so lifting us as He has. He has lifted the redeemed to a position of blessedness, *in order that* He might freely continue to bless them with “*the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us*” into the coming ages. God cannot fully bless man as He wishes to do with man’s sin in the way, just as He could not fully bless Abraham with all that He wished to promise him while the man was still in incomplete obedience (Gen. 13:14ff). Thus the Lord lifts man to forgiveness and cleansing that nothing might stand in the way of His fullest blessing. *How abundantly good He is!*

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

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Vs. 8-9 – *“By grace are ye saved”* – That there be no mistake as to what we have in Christ and the way we have it. But more, this is the expression of a man overwhelmed with the grace of God, his heart overflowing with it, repeating himself on the theme (vs. 5), making use of a great collection of words of favour; *“Mercy”* and *“love”*, and that *“rich”* and *“great”* (vs. 4), *“grace”* and that exceeding rich (vs. 5, 7, 8), *“saved”* (vs. 5, 8), *“kindness”* (vs. 7), *“gift”* (vs. 8).

*“Through faith”* – Man’s side of the grace coin. Here is summarized that great core N.T. teaching of a salvation that is by grace alone through faith alone utterly apart from the works of the law. This same theme is so much of the discussion of the book of Galatians and the earlier chapters of Romans. God’s grace is the heavenly hand offering the unbelievable boon, man’s faith the earthly hand lifted to receive it.

*“And that not of yourselves”* – Speaking of *“that”* salvation, affirming that what we have is entirely from God, nothing of it arising from our own

*Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

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earning. Some who are of a more Calvinistic persuasion insist that what Paul speaks of here as “*that*” that is “*the gift of God*” refers to faith. They would suggest that Paul is teaching here that a response of faith does not arise from within ourselves but must be given by God. But the Greek word behind the English translated “*that*” is in a form that could not be modifying “*faith*”. And the contrast here is of something some might mistakenly think could be attained “*of works*”. This can only speak of the entire concept of salvation under discussion here.

“*Lest any man should boast*” – Lest God’s grace be diminished through man’s pride inflated. Lest man should be able to in any way speak of his own merits.

Vs. 10 – “*Created in Christ Jesus unto good works*” – Though human works have no part in a soul’s salvation, works are not to be discounted altogether. Our good works hold an important place in our lives in God’s sight, but only when such works are “*in Christ Jesus*”. Prior to salvation works

are of no value, only “*filthy rags*” in fact (Isa. 64:6). After salvation they are of greatest value, indeed the very purpose for our new creation in Christ.

“Created in Christ Jesus” – Compare 4:24, our “*new man*” created after God in righteousness and true holiness. Compare Galatians 6:15.

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

(Eph. 2:13)

## Class 4 – Ephesians 2:11-3:6

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*Eph 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*

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Having related salvation by grace through faith, Paul now turns to a consideration of the *extent* of that salvation, what it is unto. The outcome of God’s work of redemption is Jew and Gentile all gathered “*together in one...in Christ*”, united in one shared fellowship, sharing equal privileges within that body, with all enmity between these two great human divisions abolished. Paul does not go so far as to say that all distinction between the two is removed, only that every division, dissension, and cause of bad feeling is no more in Christ.

### **2:11-13** – Near in Christ.

Here is a celebration of our transfer from our former barren condition of distance from God to a newfound nearness in Jesus.

Vs. 11 – “*Wherefore remember*” – Consider from whence you have come. Such a remembrance is the essence of the Feast of Tabernacles for the Jewish

*Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

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nation and the Communion table for the church. Remembering is an important part of the Christian experience.

*“Called Uncircumcision”* – This was the contemptuous term by which Jews referred to Gentiles, rather than hearts that yearned and eyes that wept over the lost condition of the pagan world, knowing the Jewish nation held the answers in the true God. Pride bred contempt in those who so proudly wore the name “Circumcision”, and filled their mouths with scorn for the despised Uncircumcised. Circumcision was the sign (badge) of Jewish birth into the covenant family as Abraham’s descendants. Paul does not speak here as though he shared this contempt. He simply told it like it was among the people of his nation.

*“In flesh made by hands”* – Paul’s point is that it was only a physical thing, in contrast to circumcision of heart in regeneration (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11).

Vs. 12 – *“At that time”* – Before Jesus came it was a

time of great darkness for the Gentile world. They were not only distant from God but without access to any form of special revelation of God as the Jewish race had in the Old Testament (O.T.) They “*at that time*” were utterly without hope in Christ. No citizenship among God’s chosen people. No awareness of any promises from God. The reference here is largely to God’s covenant of blessing to Abraham and sons through his “*Seed, which is Christ*”. Compare Romans 9:4-5. Before the gospel came the Gentile world had no notion that any blessing through God’s covenants and promises to Israel was actually available to them. No hope at all. No relation or access to the true God. Such was the condition of those who “*walked in darkness*”, dwelling “*in the land of the shadow of death*”, until the “*great light*” at last came in Jesus Christ and His “*glorious gospel*” message (Isa. 9:2; I Tim. 1:11). All was barren and dismal and without prospect, the utter completeness of bleakness. Among the thoughtful of the pagan world this deep-seated hopelessness has always been a common theme in their writings and poetry. One writer related the ancient common saying that “the best thing of all was not to be born, and the next best, to die”. Solomon in wisdom spoke the heart of the pagan world in Ecclesiastes, suggesting “*no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be*

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

---

*merry*” (Eccl. 8:15). What else, if all you have is under the sun?

Vs. 13 – *“But now in Christ Jesus”* – *“In Christ”* is the contrast of *“without Christ”* in vs. 12. *“Now”* that they had found Him all was changed. It was and is the prophesied *“beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”* (Isa. 61:3).

*“Made nigh by the blood of Christ”* – *“Accepted in the Beloved”* is the way Paul put it in 1:6-7, and there as here, *“through His blood”*. Only in Christ’s shed blood and atoning death are both Jews and Gentiles made right with God. Christ’s good example and teaching did not accomplish the windfall. We have received our priceless position among the blessed only through the shedding of His precious blood, without which there could be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22).

**2:14-22** – United in Christ.

Vs. 14-15 – Peace among men.

*Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one,  
and hath broken down the middle wall of partition  
between us;*

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Vs. 14 – *“He is our peace”* – Chasing this thought of Jesus Himself being our peace, the context carries the ideas of both peace with man (vs. 14-15) and with God (vs. 16-19). Jesus is man’s reconciliation with God and at the same time He is man’s reconciliation with man, even of that greatest of human divisions between Jew and Gentile. Compare;

- Isaiah 9:6-7 – He is the *“Prince of peace”*, bringing the promise of *“no end”* to *“the increase of His government and peace”*.
- His kingdom will be marked by;
  - o An end to dangerous untamed animal life (Isa. 11:6-9).
  - o Swords and spears beaten to plowshares and pruninghooks (Micah 4:3-4).
- Isaiah 57:19 – *“Peace, peace to him that is afar off [Gentile], and to him that is near [Jew], saith the LORD”*.
- Luke 2:14 – The angel’s praise at Christ’s

birth, proclaimed “*on earth peace, good will toward men*”.

- Romans 5:1 – “*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*”.

“*Both one*” – In Jesus Christ both Jew and Gentile are united. “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28; compare Col. 3:11). For He has “*broken down*” and “*abolished*” what once stood between. What stood between?

- “*The middle wall of partition*” – The allusion was likely to the separating wall between the courts of Jews and Gentiles in the temple precincts at Jerusalem. The building housing the actual holy place, with brazen altar before it, was surrounded by an area where *only the priests* were allowed. Down 12 steps was a large pavement area called the court of Israel where *only Jews* were permitted. Outside that was then a large pavement surrounding the whole complex on three sides called the court of Gentiles. The courts of Israel and Gentiles were separated by a middle wall or partition of arches and columns. On the

*Eph 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

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pillars of this middle wall were posted severe warnings in Greek and Latin that Gentiles were to precede no further. For a Gentile to cross this line and enter into the court of Israel was punishable *by death!* Paul seems to speak figuratively of this partition between courts being knocked down, with an end to the separation between Jew and Gentile in the church, with an end to the visible suggestion of one closer to God's holiness than the other. With the hammer of the Roman army the Lord accomplished the literal removal of that physical partition in Jerusalem only a few years later. Compare as well the veil of the temple physically torn at Christ's death (Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19-20), displaying barriers removed between God and redeemed sinner.

- *"The enmity"*.
- *"The law of commandments contained in ordinances"* – It seems that separating wall between courts figuratively represented the

*Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

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law. This is a comprehensive statement referring to the whole of the Mosaic law, not allowing for the unbiblical separation between moral and ceremonial aspects. Now done away in Christ.

*“In His flesh”* – This speaks of Christ’s earthly life, He being *“made of a woman”* (Gal. 4:4; cf. Heb. 2:14). It refers as well to Christ’s physical death and resurrection, satisfying the law’s demands and receiving in Himself the full penalty of its violation.

*“Of twain one new man”* – The church, *“which is His body”*, is a *“new”* thing incorporating both Jew and Gentile. It is not that national Israel has essentially been done away with their rejection of Christ. It is not that the promises made to the sons of Jacob have been fulfilled in some allegorical sense now on the church. But all are made one in Christ with promises made to national Israel yet to be fulfilled.

Vs. 16-19 – Peace with God.

Vs. 16 – *“Having slain the enmity”* – In Christ’s death

*Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

*Eph 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

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through man's enmity poured out upon Him, He accomplished the destruction of the enmity, both between man and man and between God and man. "That He might reconcile" man both vertically and horizontally, with peace the grand result all the way around. God's purposes for us are all good!

Vs. 17 – "*Preached peace*" – In His coming to earth and coming back from death, peace was all of Christ's purpose. It was what He would leave with His disciples before His death when He said "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you*" (Jn. 14:27). It was the very first word He spoke to His disciples after His resurrection (Jn. 20:19). It is "*the gospel of peace*" He has sent to the world on beautiful feet (Rom. 10:15; Isa. 52:7), leading alienated souls to peace with God and with man.

Vs. 18 – "*We...have access*" – "*Access*" speaks of the introduction or freedom of entrance or approach to God we have received in Jesus. Compare 3:12; Romans 5:2. Ironside once made the comment that

grace “is the golden sceptre held out by the King of Glory to all who venture to approach in faith”. He of course referred to King Ahasuerus holding out the sceptre to Esther granting her freedom to approach him (Est. 5:1-2). She dared do so at risk of her life (Est. 4:11). It was a freedom allowed only to the king’s favourites. Now in Christ we have received a favoured position of acceptance “*in the Beloved*” with the King of kings! Our free access or entrance to God is one major difference between the old and new covenants. The presence of God in the O.T. economy was;

- Always behind veils.
- Always through clouds and incense.
- Always through priests.
- Only a certain day in the year.
- Always hidden and restricted.

But with Christ’s death the temple veil was torn in two “*from the top to the bottom*”. Perhaps even the direction it was torn indicates God as the initiator of it. And the Lord now bids us to come boldly “*through the veil*” to His very “*throne of grace*” (Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22). Unrestricted! Free access to all who are in Christ. For at last our sin has been *removed* in justification not just covered.

*Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

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*“By one Spirit unto the Father”* – Again the great work of grace in our behalf is a combined work of the Trinity. *“Through Him [the Son]...by one Spirit unto the Father”*. The Son sacrificing, implementing. The Spirit stirring, convicting. The Father initiating.

*“Unto the Father”* – This displays again the purpose and movement of the whole. All is to the end that we might be children of the Father, as our own Abba, Father. Jesus spoke to Mary of ascending to *“My Father and your Father”* (Jn. 20:17). Such is the nature of our great benefit in Christ by God’s grace.

Vs. 19 – Things are different *“now”*. Now in Christ no more the *“aliens”* and *“strangers”* (vs. 12) of our past days of hopeless darkness, but *“fellowcitizens”*. And even closer than this we have become children of the King’s own family! Not only have we received immigration rights *“into the kingdom of His dear Son”* as full citizens, but we have even been granted adoption into the very *“household of God”*!

*Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

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Vs. 20 – The figure now changes from inclusion in a household to construction of a house, from the church as Christ’s *body* to the church as God’s *building*. God has built His work of redemption on the foundation of His Word through His spokesmen. His written Word and those who wrote it are the footer, preparing the way, laying down the foundational truths. His living Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:1), is the Head or “*chief corner stone*”, literally the tip or top corner. Perhaps we could picture Jesus as the keystone of the arch comprised of Jews on the one side and Gentiles on the other. He is that Stone which crowns and supports and unites the structure together, finishing, completing, fulfilling it. Compare I Peter 2:6; Isaiah 28:16. All believers individually are the “*lively [living] stones*” Peter wrote in I Peter 2:5, being “*built up a spiritual house*” or “*holy temple*”, the very “*habitation of God*”. The word “*temple*” there is *naos* (ναος), indicating particularly the inner sanctuary or holy place, the very dwelling place of God, within the larger temple complex. True believers in the church combine to form the holy place or dwelling place of God on earth.

*Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together  
groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

*Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an  
habitation of God through the Spirit.*

*Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus  
Christ for you Gentiles,*

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Vs. 21-22 – “*In whom...in the Lord...n whom*” – How notably and frequently Jesus features throughout Paul’s entire discussion here. He permeates all, and all is in Him!

Again the Trinity is highlighted in vs. 22. In the Son we are built together for the Father’s habitation through the Spirit.

## **Chapter 3**

**3:1-6** – “*The Mystery of Christ*”.

Vs. 1 – “*The prisoner of Jesus Christ*” – Paul saw himself not as a prisoner of Rome, but of Jesus. Rome was merely the earthly vehicle by which the Lord was accomplishing His purpose through His servant. Compare Philemon 1, 9.

Vs. 2 – “*The dispensation of the grace of God*” – Paul speaks of his stewardship or office as minister of the grace of God to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7).

*Eph 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:*

*Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

*Eph 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

*Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

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Vs. 3 – *“By revelation He made known unto me the mystery”* – Of his gospel Paul said in Galatians 1:12, *“I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ”*.

*“As I wrote afore in few words”* – Not a previous letter now lost, as some suggest, but as he had briefly mentioned earlier in this epistle in 1:9-10 & 2:13ff.

Vs. 5 – We are told what a mystery is. It is something *“not made known” “in other ages...as it is now revealed”*. Or perhaps something only dimly revealed. For *“the Scripture”* did foresee *“that God would justify the heathen through faith”* (Gal. 3:8). In fact Paul said in Galatians that the Lord was essentially proclaiming the gospel when He told Abraham, *“In thee shall all nations be blessed”* (Genesis 12:3). It was not as clear and extensive a message as is now available by any means (I Pet.

*Eph 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

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1:10-12), but it was there with a dimmer glow. A hint of the mystery now revealed can be seen in Isaiah's promise of Messiah set "*as a light of the Gentiles*" that He "*shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth*" (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47). Compare Psalm 18:49 & II Samuel 22:50 with Romans 15:9. Compare Deuteronomy 32:43 with Romans 15:10. Compare Psalm 117:1 with Romans 15:11.

Vs. 6 – We are told what *this* mystery is. It is God's plan of redemption in and around Jesus Christ. It involves God's purpose mentioned earlier, to gather all things together under the single Head, Jesus Christ (1:10, 22). It involves the intimate union of all believers in Him, in the church "*which is His body*" (1:22-23). This union is in some sense pictured in the physical union of husband and wife (5:30-32). Yet it is not only a matter of you in Christ as a member of His body, but as well much of "*the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles...is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col. 1:27). You in Christ and Christ in you are both a part of the mystery. It also involves the fact that "*Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same*

*body*” (2:13 & 22), that those once “*far off*” would also be “*made nigh by the blood of Christ...to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace*”. This mystery includes God’s gracious gift to Gentiles that they might partake of all benefits in Christ’s body on an equal standing with Jews. Again, something of this factor was hinted at of old, but little of the mechanics of it were given. This certainly would have been a stunning concept in Paul’s day, a message running right across the grain of exclusive Jewish thinking.

“*By the gospel*” – Through no other means! Through no other message! By “*the mystery of the gospel*” alone (6:19).

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Other references to “mystery”;

- Jesus taught only His disciples “*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 13:11).
- Paul spoke of the mystery of “*blindness in part*” happening “*to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in*” (Rom. 11:25).
- There is “*a mystery*” in that “*we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump*” (I Cor. 15:51-52).

- Believers acknowledge *“the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ”* (Col. 2:2; 4:3).
- In this age *“the mystery of iniquity”* [lawlessness] is already at work (II Thess. 2:7).
- The great *“mystery of godliness”* is that *“God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”* (I Tim. 3:16).
- There are mysteries in Revelation;
  - Of the seven stars and candlesticks (1:20).
  - Of *“BABYLON THE GREAT”* (17:5).
  - Of *“the woman”* wearing this name, *“and of the beast that carrieth her”* (17:7).

“To the intent that now  
unto the principalities and powers  
in heavenly places  
might be known by the church  
the manifold wisdom of God”

(Eph 3:10)

## Class 5 – Ephesians 3:7-21

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*Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*

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### **3:7-9** – Minister of the Mystery.

Vs 7 – “*Whereof I was made a minister*” – Compare Colossians 1:25. “*Whereof*” refers to the mystery of which Paul has been speaking. He had been appointed by God as the “*minister*” of it, and “*minister*” not so much in the official sense of representative. From the word behind it we get our English word “*deacon*”, meaning an active servant. Paul gloried in his appointment as God’s busy servant in making known the mystery of God’s grace. This same word is often used of God’s gospel preachers (6:21; I Cor. 3:5; II Cor. 3:6; 6:4; Col. 1:7; 4:7; I Thess. 3:2). Such an appointment is to be much more a work of humble, diligent service than a position of honour.

“*According to the gift of the grace of God*” – Do not miss how Paul saw his opportunity to proclaim God’s words as a “*gift of the grace...given unto me*”. He saw God’s work as more blessing than burden. In I Timothy 1 Paul marvelled that God would

*Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

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commit to such a one as he His “*glorious gospel*”, that he would be so mercied and counted faithful to be put into God’s service when he was what he was before receiving Christ, “*a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious*” (vs. 11-13). We deserve nothing of the opportunity we have from the Lord to be servants in His work. We are not wise to brush aside such an opportunity as if below our ability or interest.

“*By the effectual working of His power*” – Compare vs. 21. Again this is a reference to God’s power in bringing us what we have from Him. It is that wonder working power that transformed Paul from bitterest enemy of the gospel to greatest promoter and servant of Christ.

Vs. 8 – “*Unto me*” – Even to me! Paul speaks with a touch of emphasis here. He marvelled still that God would so grace him with ministry. We might look upon this man as one of the most qualified of men ever, but he just did not see it that way.

“*Who am less than the least of all saints*” –

Interesting the word Paul uses here, found nowhere else in the N.T. If we should take the word “small” and add the suffix “er” we get the word “smaller”. Grammar would call “smaller” the *comparative* of “small”. If we should add the ending “est”, grammar would call “smallest” the *superlative*. You do not get smaller than smallest. Not normally. Just a small limerick?

“Smaller” is smaller than small  
And “smallest” is smaller than all  
But an impossible puzzler  
Would be the term “smallester”  
Yet not so unlikely with Paul

The term Paul uses to describe himself here is like taking the superlative “least” and adding the comparative ending “er”, giving the impossible term “leaster”, translated “*less than the least*”. It is an expressive, intensive form characteristic of Paul. The man did not see himself as possessing lofty status among the saints, where we would tend to put him, but as lower than the lowest of them, leaster than the least. Remember that interesting progression in Paul’s self-image through his years of ministry;

- I Corinthians 15:9 – “*I am the least of the*

*apostles*” – Written 56 A.D.

- Ephesians 3:8 – *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints”* – Written 5 years later in 61 A.D.
- I Timothy 1:15 – *“Sinners; of whom I am chief”* – 63 A.D.

Over a period of several years Paul progressed in his own thinking concerning himself from the lowest of the apostles, to lower than the lowest of all saints, to the chief of sinners, the very lowest of the lowest of men. Did he arise in his self-esteem as he matured in Christ? Quite the opposite. He in fact became lower in his own eyes, seeing himself as more and more unworthy of God and His grace. And did such self-awareness dump him into the pit of emotional despair? Not at all! *“Unto me...is this grace given”*, he enthused. In the context of every one of the above statements the grace of God is the theme. The more a man is humbled to see himself for what he is before God, the more he sees what the God of grace is for him. A fair and proper self-image of our hearts *“deceitful above all things and desperately wicked”* serves to turn our attention to that One who should be the centre of our focus, pressing us more deeply into God’s bosom, moving us to ever deeper love for the God who would love

us still, in spite of what we are. The modern encouragement to self-esteem is really an encouragement to self-deception. Self-esteem, like the opposite extreme of self-hate, is a selfish, sinful deviation from a properly low self-esteem and high God esteem.

*“The unsearchable riches of Christ”* – This phrase has been like that rock cut without hands in my own heart lately. Upon landing it has swelled to fill me with the great mountain of God’s mercy (Dan. 2:34-35). Here was the grand theme of all of Paul’s purpose and preaching. The word translated *“unsearchable”* is found only here and in Romans 11:33, where again Paul was expressing the ecstasy of all that is ours in Christ. *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”* This word speaks of what simply cannot be traced out or fathomed by human minds. *“Riches”* or wealth is a term Paul employs many times in this epistle. We have seen it three times already (1:7, 18; 2:7). Our God does not give sparingly from the wealth of His grace. *He has made us rich in Jesus!* Believe it, believer!

Vs. 9 – *“To make all men see”* – Here is that purpose toward which Paul was *“made a minister”* or

*Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*

*Eph 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*

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servant. He sought to enlighten all concerning the mystery hidden in God from creation. Of course not everyone will see, for a man cannot be made to see what he will not see. But Paul's work was simply to shine the light of God's truth that it might be available to all, that those willing or wishing for the light of God might have access to it.

### **3:10-13** – Purpose of the Mystery.

Vs. 10 – We see here indication of God's wider purpose beyond the scope of earth only. "*The principalities and powers in heavenly places*" must refer to the ranks of good angels under the Lord's employ. To these created beings as well God is busy demonstrating the wealth of His wisdom through His earth works, involving all of the ways God has worked in history since man's fall to sin; first working through a nation, and then even more widely through the church as a result of the Jewish rejection of Christ. Thus God has shown Himself no respecter of persons, even bringing those two main

people groups at last to His presence on an even par. And yet in the working of His great plan of redemption He has remained just while becoming justifier, compassion without compromise. The whole is a veritable showcase of divine wisdom, foresight, grace, and love, from which the angels benefit as well. Peter referred to the same when speaking of hidden aspects of salvation, “*which things the angels desire to look into*” (I Pet. 1:12). The term used there behind “*look into*” presents an image of stooping low and stretching the neck to closely examine a breath-taking sight. Angels bend low alongside eagerly inquisitive prophets, looking closely over their shoulders as they write. For they are equally earnest in their desire to fully know all the mystery and meaning of the sufferings of Christ and the following glories, intensely curious concerning the wonders of what God is doing with men in His great work of salvation. They are not uninvolved students by any means, but actively intrigued with every detail of the great object lesson of God’s dealing with lost mankind, because such are lessons on God, the object of their greatest devotion and love. An individual in love is greatly interested in every smallest item relating to that one they love. God has in fact written that intense angelic intrigue right into the old covenant as well. Do you remember what was on the cover of the old

*Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he  
purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*

*Eph 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with  
confidence by the faith of him.*

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Ark of the Covenant? Two cherubim bending low over the mercy seat, the point of their focus there at that place of God's merciful meeting with man in forgiveness through the sprinkled blood of the sacrifice.

*"Manifold"* is literally "much-varied". God's wisdom is revealed in many multi-faceted ways, ways both obvious and more subtle. It is something of the wonder of what the Lord was suggesting to Job from chapter 38 of his book.

*"According to the eternal purpose"* – Again, God's work of grace extends back to *"before the foundation of the world"* (1:4). From eternity past to eternity future God's work is to bring all together for good to them that love Him. And what He has purposed in grace He has accomplished *"in Christ Jesus our Lord"*.

Vs. 12 – *"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence"* – As mentioned in 2:18, all is toward our restoration to God's presence and

*Eph 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

*Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*Eph 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

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fellowship, toward a freedom of access to Him with our sin removed in justification. This approach is not to be entered into with hesitancy but “*with confidence*”, with a confident trust. The same word is used in Hebrews 4:16, “*let us come boldly unto the throne of grace*”.

### **3:14-21** – Paul’s Prayer for Growth.

Vs. 14 – That Paul speaks of bowing his knees in prayer here does not make kneeling the only appropriate prayer position. Though kneeling is common, elsewhere we see God’s people praying while lying on their face, or standing, or with hands lifted. Compare Acts 20:36; 21:5; I Timothy 2:8.

Vs. 15 – “*The whole family in heaven and earth*” – This describes all of those who belong to God of all ages, those still living in Christ’s righteousness with those who have died in righteousness. The phrase brings together all the fruits of God’s works of grace from the world’s foundation, likely taking in God’s good angels as well.

*Eph 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*  
*Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

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Vs. 16-19 – “*That*”, found 5 times in these next 4 verses, expresses the purposes for which Paul prayed for the believers there. “*That*”;

- God would strengthen their inner man “*by His Spirit*” (vs. 16).
- “*Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*” (vs. 17) – Not that they were unsaved and thus without Jesus dwelling within. Paul’s prayer for these believers was that Jesus Christ would become more supreme and central and sovereign to the very core of their being and affections and will.

Again as we have seen several times before, see how the Trinity of God permeates Paul’s prayer (1:17; 2:18, 22). It was “*unto the Father*” he prayed (vs. 14), for the *Spirit’s* strengthening work (vs. 16), and now for the *Son’s* central place within them (vs. 17).

- They “*may be able to comprehend*” the full extent of God’s love. “*Rooted*” like a tree and firmly “*grounded*” or founded like a building

*Eph 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

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express images of strength or steadiness. Compare the same idea of enduring strength pervading that portrait of a righteous man in Psalm 112. Notice how it is as if love were the soil in which the stable believer is firmly rooted or grounded. The “*breadth*” of Christ’s love is not exclusive to the Jews, but wide enough to take in the whole of mankind. The “*length*” of Christ’s love reaches from before “*the foundation of the world*” and into “*the ages to come*”. The “*depth*” of Christ’s love reaches to earth, to man in his pitiful, fallen condition. The “*height*” of Christ’s love touches even heaven, bridging the great gulf between man and God, and leading fallen man to the heavenlies. The full scope of His love is “*unsearchable*”!

That you might “*know the love of Christ*” (vs. 19). The experience of Christ’s love comes of knowing, feelings arising from awareness of the facts. As we saw in 1:17-18 as well, much of what Paul prays was aimed at the increasing *knowledge* of the saints. This is an interesting quest in contrast to more modern

*Eph 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

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religious tendencies to lay aside the Bible and sound preaching and seek rather to join in the emotion or event or experience, or to discover more tangible “manifestations” of God, or to chant and prance in prolonged, mantra-like “praise & worship”, or to provide sufficient comforts and entertainments for the goats among God’s sheep. Where went the consuming passion from God’s church to know God and His way and will? This core aspect for which Paul so earnestly prayed for others has been sidelined, together with the Bible, in modern church trends.

*“Which passeth knowledge”* – It is as if Paul was going in two directions. He would have them “to know”, but then acknowledges a God and a love that just cannot fully be known by man. Only “*in part*” can we know in this life. But there comes a glorious day when I shall “*know even as also I am known*” (I Cor. 13:12). Paul’s prayer for them extends beyond this life, this age, and into the next when his prayers would be fulfilled.

*Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*

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- “*That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God*” (vs. 19). This would involve;
  - Fullest knowledge of God.
  - Awareness of His love.
  - Hearts consumed and committed to His perfect will.
  - Likeness to Him in our responses.
  - A continual return to thoughts of Him and communication with Him.

Vs. 20-21 – Again, as in 1:20-23, Paul’s prayer in behalf of the saints sent his heart into a doxology of praise. Far from emotionless, droning drudgery, this is the way our prayers are meant to be. From intercession to worship to intercession and back to worship.

*“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly”* – Listen to the intensity of Paul’s words. Literally something like “to the One able above all things to do hyper-abundantly”.

“His love has no limit,  
His grace has no measure,  
His power has no boundary known unto men.  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again”

“(Annie J. Flint, “He Giveth More Grace”)

Paul’s obvious indication here is of this super-abounding ability of God to do in our behalf. This is oriented toward us, concerning “*all that we ask*” of Him, and even things we might “*think*” to ask before we put our thoughts into request. This of course would not include ridiculous prayers for absurd things, or things the Lord knows would harm us. But “*if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him*” (I John 5:14-15).

“*Unto Him be glory in the church*” – To Him and Him alone. “*Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (I Cor. 10:31). Now if all is to be done to God’s glory in the church this of course includes the *means* as well as the *end*, right? It is one of the distinctives of our church. We have made the determination together to not compromise on the means, even toward a

*Eph 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

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good end. So we are not going to introduce the kind of music the pagan world enjoys as a means to the good end of getting them here and under the preaching of God's words. Because that is a defiled means, one that cannot glorify God, even if some might seem to genuinely be saved as a result of such a method. We are not going to follow the tradition of Billy Graham and unite the funding and involvement of Catholics and Protestants in the effort to preach the gospel and get some saved. Zerubbabel would not even allow the Samaritans to help them in the good cause of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 4). Paul's resolve to become "*all things for all men that I might by all means save some*" does not violate his principle here. His purpose did not include means or methods that do not glorify God.

May all glory be to God in all done "*in the church...throughout all ages*". Literally "into all the generations of the age of the ages". This is an intensely strong term incorporating "*the whole family in heaven and earth*", ascribing all glory to God into the eternal ages of the ages.

With Paul's "*Amen*" he brings an end to the more doctrinal portion of this epistle describing our heavenly position in Christ. He turns now to the more practical concerns of our earthly walk, that it be according to the way of our Saviour, whose surpassing love we have now come to know more completely.

## **Class 6 – Ephesians 4:1-20**

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*Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

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### **Chapter 4**

Paul having dealt with more doctrinal concerns in the first three chapters now turns to practical considerations, the outworkings of what we are and have in Jesus Christ.

#### **4:1-6** – Keeping the Unity of the Spirit.

Vs. 1 – Interesting the subtle expression here. Paul says, “I am encouraging you, even I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthy”. Obviously a prisoner is normally one who has not walked in a way worthy of society’s standards, therefore his captivity. But Paul walked according to a different standard, a higher standard, one that does not mesh with the world’s way, therefore his captivity. With head held high he now exhorts every true disciple of Jesus to follow in the same tradition or calling.

Vs. 2 – “*With all lowliness and meekness*” – Though

*Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with  
longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

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it be an honour to suffer with our Lord, there must never be an attitude of arrogance involved. “*Lowliness*” is humility of mind. “A deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness” is the way my lexicon puts it. Not self-esteem. Not self-hate. But a fair, unassuming assessment of our personal smallness before God, esteeming others “*better than*” ourselves (Phil. 2:3). “*Meekness*” does not mean weakness. The term behind the English was used of breaking a horse. A broken horse has lost no strength, but is now strength under control. The picture behind the word is of strength that is useable, able to be directed. Child rearing follows the same principle. Leading a child to submission and good habits and responses does not ruin a child’s self-expression, but rather channels his natural abilities to become useable, for the good of himself, his God, and others.

“*With longsuffering, forbearing one another in love*” – It is pride that has no time for those we consider lesser or in some way more foolish than ourselves. *Personality* conflicts are usually *pride* conflicts. But God is calling us to His kind of love, a love that is willing to patiently endure those we find annoying,

*Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

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just as God has so patiently endured us in our pursuit of ways that have so often been against Him. Will you hear that call to loving patience toward others? To deny it is to deny God. It is to refuse to be the children of your Father. It is to deny forgiveness to another of his relatively tiny debt to you when God has forgiven you an impossibly massive debt to Him (Matt. 18:23-35). Such an enduring response involves willingly giving up our rights for the sake of others, rights you and I have no right to hold onto before God when He is calling us to let go of them. We must remember that were it not for the grace of God, He who calls us to endure one another in love, we would be dead men! We would long since have received what we fully deserve, an eternity in hell.

Vs. 3 – *“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit”* – We are to be striving together with the Spirit in that which He earnestly seeks to effect. Behind *“endeavouring”* is a word expressing the most careful, focused attention. We simply do not have the right to initiate or maintain any measure of disunity within God’s church. “Well, I quite frankly just do not like so-and-so, because he said thus-

*Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

*Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

*Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

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and-so to me, and I did not like that!” “Yeah, well I find this and that one the hardest old birds to tolerate, because they are just too this and that way, which I find so annoying”. Such irritations, wilfully, pridefully maintained and fostered in our hearts, become divisions in the making, roots of bitterness. Our individual mission is to be peace makers and keepers within God’s family. If there are ways in others that annoy us we must be willing to humbly give and receive correction, striving with honest effort to do all in our power to keep the unity, in all of the individual bonds or bands of peace between members.

Vs. 4-6 – Here is more in the way of reasons why. Because all that we are and have in Christ is shared with each other;

- Christ’s body of which we are a part.
- The Spirit who indwells all the saved. Note that Paul makes no distinction between those with and those without the Spirit’s indwelling presence within God’s family. All of the saved

*Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace  
according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

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are indwelt. It is a point of unity not disunity as many have made it.

- The calling and hope that is ours.
- The Master of us all.
- The faith that motivates our walk.
- The baptism in the Spirit we share.
- We are children of the same heavenly Father, Who is over all things, through all things, and in all of us.

#### **4:7-16** – Gifts for Edification.

Always where spiritual gifts are discussed, within the context are these same elements of unity and peace found. Compare Romans 12 & I Corinthians 12.

Vs. 7 – “*Unto every one of us*” – There is a touch of emphasis here taking in each individual. Each one of us has been graced with gifts, and these gifts vary from individual to individual as to the type of gift and the measure of it. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 12 that the Spirit divides out the gifts “*severally as*

*Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*  
*Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)*

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*He will”* (vs. 11). He indicates in Romans 12 that God parcels out the gifts in a differing measure “*according to the proportion of faith*” (vs. 6).

Vs. 8-9 – Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18, describing a conquering captain returning with a host of captives and laden with spoils, returning to distribute his take among his people, sharing the spoils of his victory with all. This is the image applied to Jesus Christ in His coming, death, resurrection, and ascension. In His descending to earth, and even to “*the lower parts of the earth*”, to that holding place of the dead, Jesus came as the Invader of Satan’s domain. In His resurrection from death He arose the Victor over the evil one. “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Col. 2:15). In His ascension He has succeeded in taking from “*the god of this world*” a vast spoil in the great company of the redeemed. Jesus, like Joshua before Him, has made a wonderfully winning foray into the terrestrial to lead a “*captivity*” to His celestial home. Then after the figure of distributing

*Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

*Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

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gifts to His people from the spoils, Paul applies the thought to Christ's gifting of the saints with spiritual gifts to help in that great work of winning souls, the work of helping to collect His spoils from this earth. He has left us *in* the world, not to be *of* the world (John 17), but that we might join God's great purpose of winning from among those still captive to the evil one, winning them to the true freedom of "captivity" to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus, through death, succeeded in destroying "*him that had the power of death, that is the devil*", and in so doing He is able to "*deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*" (Heb. 2:14-15).

Vs. 10 – "*Ascended far above all heavens*" – Jesus has ascended to "*heavenly places*" where we have been given a place with Him (2:6).

Vs. 11 – "*And He gave some*" – Rather than particular gifts given to men, as in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12, the focus here is more on the

giving of *gifted men*, given by the Lord to the churches. In fact there is a touch of focus to this effect behind the English, literally “He Himself gave”. Christ Himself gives those messengers to the churches toward the spiritual growth of the saints. And Christ Himself holds those messengers (“*stars*”) of the churches in His own right hand (Rev. 1:20).

The first two types of gifted men relate to the older era when the Bible was still being written. Apostles and prophets were men gifted to actually channel the words of God to men. The remaining gifts relate to the current era. These are gifts of interpreting the meaning of what has already been recorded from God. The construction behind the English seems to put “pastors and teachers” together as a single gift. A “pastor” is a shepherd or feeder. One of the major aspects of his role is to feed or teach Christ’s sheep. Indeed one of the qualifications of a “*bishop*” or pastor is that he be “*apt to teach*” (I Tim. 3:2), both *able* to teach and *teachable*. Compare I Peter 5:1-4. “*Evangelists*” are those more gifted at winning souls to Christ. Though we are all to “*do the work of an evangelist*” (II Tim. 4:5), such gifted men do the work with much greater visible effect. Note that those gifted at entertaining the goats are not on the list. They in fact receive their gift from quite a different source.

*Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

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Vs. 12-16 – Purpose of the gifts. There follows now a lengthy statement on the purpose for which gifted men have been given to Christ’s church on earth, both the purpose of the Word of God supplied through those who gave it, and the purpose of those who teach and apply the word given in the feeding and guidance of Christ’s sheep.

Vs. 12 – *“For the perfecting of the saints”* – It is all toward this great end. The word translated *“perfecting”* here is the same used elsewhere of mending broken nets. It carries the notions of knitting together into a unified whole, or equipping, or putting in order. Please understand that it is not that gifted men are given to do the work of the ministry alone. Read it all together, *“toward the equipping of the saints into the work of ministry into the building up of Christ’s body”*. Gifted leaders are given toward the purpose of equipping the saints and nudging them into joining in ministry, and all toward the building up of Christ’s body. Understand the progression. Jesus came down to do the work of ministry, leaving behind men gifted for the work of ministry, toward the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, that all might be

*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

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lifted to labour. Christ the great Servant of the Lord left behind servants of the churches for the work of leading all into some measure of His service. That is the purpose. That is what it is all about in this thing called the local church. If you as a child of God are not a part of Christ's ministry on this earth then you have divorced yourself from His purpose through the church. So where does God want to take us through the ample means He has provided *to* and *through* the church?

- Equipped and growing in ministry (vs. 12).
- United in faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God (vs. 13). See again how the knowledge of God and Christ factors strongly in Christian growth.
- Maturity (vs. 13-15).
- No longer gullible or easily moved by error (vs. 14). The term "*children*" here refers to babies or small children. Some Christians just never grow up for one reason or another, or are very slow to do so. Like little children, baby

*Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

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Christians are an easy prey, being easily seduced by spiritual charlatans.

- Genuinely given to truth (vs. 15). If you could take the noun “truth” and turn it to a verb, “truthing”, you would have the idea behind the English here. The thought likely runs beyond just what we speak, to what we live, what we do not say, what we imply or quietly allow to be implied.

Vs. 14 – The noxious winds of doctrine are stirred up “*by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*”. Compare Proverbs 1. This is an eye-opener. We generally have the idea of false teachers being sincere in their own deception and work of deceiving. But these words of Paul cast a much dimmer light on the reality of things. Paul could not have expressed more clearly the idea of purposefully malicious intent behind false teaching, though subtly clothed in a gracious, seemingly well-meaning façade. “*Sleight*” speaks of a cunning effort to cheat. “*Cunning craftiness*” carries the notion of the

*Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:  
Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

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specious use of false wisdom, that which might have a convincing appearance on the surface of it, but is seen for what it is when spread out in the daylight of God's truth. Compare II Corinthians 11:13-15. "*Lie in wait to deceive*" expresses a purposeful design to capture and lead astray. Compare Psalm 36:3-4.

Vs. 15-16 – See the key place and centrality of Jesus Christ, both in the body and in the growth of it.

Vs. 16 – Using the illustration of a body as a unit, Paul presents the end and purpose of the church to come to a unified whole. Such a union must involve "*every part*" and "*that which every joint supplieth*". Every joint or interrelationship between members plays a part in the ability of the church or body to function as whole. This comes of the Spirit's "*effectual working*" in every member, and the willingness in every member for that effective work of the Spirit. It comes through His Word and gifted

leaders in their effort to move each individual, and thus the whole, to unity and service. A body fighting against itself is of little use in works of service. Again it is that calling to which we are called (vs. 1), that each of us through the use of our spiritual gifts have a part in the *“increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love”*. That we have no part in fostering disunity.

**4:17-24** – Replace *“Old Man”* with *“New Man”*.

Paul now begins to relate the principle of replacement so vital to our Christian victory. The rest of the chapter has to do with putting off the old that we might put on the new, much the same as the necessity to throw down the altars of Baal before the Lord’s altar can be raised up in the O.T. era. Compare Colossians 3.

Vs. 17-19 – The way we once were before we found Christ is the way the unsaved world now walks;

- *“In the vanity of their minds”* (vs. 17). The word used here expresses vanity in the sense of utter aimlessness, that which leads to no object. The sum of man’s life and labours under the sun, if not directed toward the One above the sun, is a vast and cavernous *“for what?”* As one man illustrated, it is like

*Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

*Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*

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chasing the wind or shooting at stars or pursuing your own shadow. It is what can only result in nothing. Utterly empty pursuits. Such is the dead end that runs right to the very core of the unsaved mind and heart (Jonah 2:8). Such is the dead end of all of their empty trusts in all of their hollow gods (Acts 14:15).

- *“Having the understanding darkened”* (vs. 18). Their rejection of God’s light only leaves them in the utter darkness of *“the blindness of their heart”* concerning reality. Their every thought or imagination is tainted and twisted by the fundamental *“ignorance that is in them”* of the truth of God. All the running lights are off and their life is a groping in the thick blackness of darkness. Oh there is a keyhole of light shining in their darkness, but it is a door the unsaved refuse to open and *“neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved”*. Why? Because they *“loved*

*Eph 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

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*darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil*” (John 3:19-20). Compare in Romans 1 the progression from man’s *refusal* to use his understanding for God to his *inability* to understand. Compare II Corinthians 4:3-4, where the blindness of the unsaved is attributed to Satan’s work as well.

- *“Being alienated from the life of God”* (vs. 18). Being yet *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (2:1), they remain complete strangers to the true God. *“I never knew you”* Jesus will say to the lost in the end (Matt. 7:23). Compare 2:12.
- *“Being past feeling”* (vs. 19). They are insensible or callous, without concern for truth or shame or honour. There is warning here for we who are in Christ, to not fall to the same indifference. A dispirited, apathetic soldier is useless in war. *“It is high time to awake out of sleep”* (Rom. 13:11).
- *“Have given themselves over to lasciviousness”* (vs. 19). One *“given...to lasciviousness”* acknowledges no restraint to

the free practice of his lustful, shameless conduct. He is quite willing to dare whatever his passions might suggest.

- *“To work all uncleanness with greediness”* (vs. 19) speaks of every form of moral impurity and greed in those who have abandoned themselves to the driving passion to have what they want.

Vs. 20 – *“Ye have not so learned Christ”* – Looking well at the image of what the unsaved world is, what we were, let it be the negative example to avoid. See it for the very opposite of that holy way we are to adopt in Christ. Recognize such tendencies in yourself for the graveclothes they are, carried from our old living death in sin. Be quick to put them off, *“hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”* (Jude 23). And be quick to replace with *“the new man...created in righteousness and true holiness”* (vs. 24. This is the direction Paul will now take us.

## Class 7 – Ephesians 4:21-32

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*Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:*

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With chapter 4 Paul turned to practical matters of Christian living. From vs. 17 he began to develop the principle of replacement, putting off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new man in his place. In vs. 17-19 we found a description of the way we were before Christ. It is the way the unsaved world walks. We are wise to look well at the image presented, to remember and fully understand what we were, to see it for the very opposite of that holy way of life we are to adopt in Christ. We must recognize such leanings in ourselves for the graveclothes carried from our old life in sin that we might be quick to put them off. That old way must not be our way in our new life in Jesus Christ. This theme of putting off and putting on Paul now chases to greater detail.

Vs. 21 – *“The truth is in Jesus”* – This in contrast to the aimless, hollow vanities the world pursues in their *“ignorance”* and in *“the blindness of their heart”*. In Jesus resides truth. Indeed He Himself is truth (John 14:6). To know Him is to *“know the*

*Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

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*truth*” and thus to be set free (John 8:32). It is what Jonah came to at last in the belly of the fish when he concluded that, *“they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy”* (Jonah 2:8). The hollow, lying promises upon which the blind world rests their hopes are sure to let them down in the end, regardless of how eagerly or sincerely they pursue their empty interests. All such pursuits are *“lying vanities”* in that they show some promise of truth on the surface. But every soul who ever trusted in them found them useless at the last. As the mariners were let down by their false gods in Jonah’s storm on the sea. As the *“clouds without water”* of which Jude spoke (vs. 12), promising mists bringing nothing but barrenness and disappointment. But the promise found in Jesus Christ is of the very opposite quality, for the truth is in Him.

Vs. 22 – *“That ye put off...the old man”* – The verb here is written in a momentary sense, speaking of an event more than a process. The Lord’s way when it comes to departure from evil is not a foot-dragging way. It is a decisive casting off sort of way,

as one would cast off the disgustingly vile clothes of his old grave existence. Our former self, the way we were when dead in sin, was a corrupt way given to “*deceitful lusts*”. Hear again the indication of the false nature and deceptiveness of our former trusts and pursuits. A life lived after our lusts may seem to promise the best course for our existence, it may seem to suggest the greatest possible pleasure life could offer. But this is a lie! This is the bait in the carefully laid trap of the evil one. Remember the sweetness of “*bread of deceit*”, turned then to a mouth full of gravel (Prov. 20:17). Though there may be a momentary measure of pleasure in sin, there follows a lifetime of heartache that pays a thousand-fold in terror, torment, and trouble. The purpose of our God for us is that we “*awake to righteousness, and sin not*” (I Cor. 15:34).

Vs. 23 – “*And be renewed*” – It is a word speaking of the same kind of transformation as in Romans 12:2; “*And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*”. God would have us to be spiritually transformed, to take on a whole new mind or way of thinking. Again, we see contrast here with the way of the world already

*Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after  
God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

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presented. Where their mind is given to vanities and their understanding darkened (vs. 17-18), the believer in Christ is to be renewed to purity of thought, enlightened by the light of a new day's dawning. Compare Philippians 4:8.

Vs. 24 – “*That ye put on the new man*” – The new man within the believer is a new creation of God, a new being come to existence where there was only spiritual death before. Yet though God has done the wonderful creative, resurrection work in us in our new birth, see here how there is a personal application of this reality that *we* must make good through our own effort. In the same way God gave the victory to the nation of Israel under Joshua, but still they must get up and cross the river and take the land God had given to them. Still they must climb the mountains and ford the streams and fight the foe. In Christ you are created anew “*in righteousness and true holiness*”, now put on the new. The Lord has miraculously swept together the junk heap of our old Christless life and has presented us in Christ with a brand new existence. Now it is ours to learn to live this renewed life through His help and power. Compare Colossians

*Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

*Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

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Vs. 25 – Paul gets more to the point now with detailed examples. Where fallen men are naturally given to speaking lies, such a selfishly defensive response must be cast off and replaced with truth speaking, that way consistent with our renewal in Christ. *“Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are His delight”* (Prov. 12:22).

*“For we are members one of another”* – Lying is an expression of hate and thus by its very nature sets one against another (Prov. 26:28). No body can stand healthy when divided against itself. Remember Paul’s great push for unity in the body within this epistle.

Vs. 26-27 – *“Be ye angry and sin not”* – Here is an interesting verse, which tends to send interpreters in differing directions. What did Paul mean by *“let not the sun go down upon your wrath”*? Does this mean that we should not go to bed still angry with

each other? These are actually commands, “be being angry and do not be sinning”. Paul seems to point to a kind of righteous anger that is not sin, and in fact is a necessary element in the Christian life. Though we are instructed of the Lord through James to “*be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*” (1:20) he does not say *no* to wrath. Compare Proverbs 14:29; 15:18. Though we understand that God’s kind of love “*is not easily provoked*” (I Cor. 13:5) He does not say *never* provoked. Jesus was sometimes angry, yet without sin (Mk. 3:5). He cleared the temple in righteous anger, inwardly compelled by “*the zeal of Thine house*” (Jn. 2:17; Ps. 69:9). Paul was provoked to action in Athens with a right kind of burning frustration or anger when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry (Acts 17:16). “*God is angry with the wicked every day*” (Ps. 7:11). So the equation anger = sin is not always a valid sum. There is a place for righteous anger in the Christian life, when channelled into the solving of problems rather than self-serving ventilation or bitter internalisation, when used as a driving force in *helping* others rather than *hurting*, when *solution* oriented rather than *problem* oriented. Paul in this context is dealing with the givenness of our old

corrupt nature to sin and the need to replace this with the renewed nature of our “new man”. Thus it seems the command here is to *remain* righteously indignant against sin, whether in our own lives or in the lives of others. We must not allow the heat of our righteous wrath toward sin to diminish, as if the sun setting and no longer burning in its strength. The Lord’s command through Joshua was similar. The combined army of Israel under his leadership broke the back of Canaan’s resistance, just as Christ’s death and resurrection has broken the back of sin’s dominion in the believer’s life. But then after dividing the land to the tribes God’s people were meant to carry to completion the task of driving out the Canaanites within their tribal areas. They were not to allow the heat of their determination to diminish until the job of annihilation of the old was finished. The presence and influence of the corrupt Canaanites was too great a danger to leave within. Paul seems to say something of the same here. In dealing with our sin nature, in personally effecting the transformation of putting on the new man within us, do not allow your love for righteousness and purpose for perfection to die. Keep ever before your heart God’s command, “*Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*”. This personal fight for righteousness of heart and life must continue in full heat to the grave. To cease

that battle is to allow the enemy of our old sin nature to dwell with ease within, and to “*give place to the devil*” through it. To quietly allow the presence of evil within leads on to acknowledging the right of its presence. To acknowledge occupation rights opens the way for the invasive influence of evil to grow and spread, just as developed in the days of the Judges. This simply cannot be allowed! So maintain your diligent demand to keep a tight control over your heart, to keep all the weeds of ruin rooted out. For as soon as you allow those wicked weeds to grow they will be dropping seeds toward further growth until the whole of your Christian life becomes a choked mess (Matt. 13:22). The moment you end your fight against the Canaanites within they will be strengthening themselves together to press their borders wider in an effort to take back what once was theirs. Keep up the pressure for right within you. Keep the heat of your wrath against evil turned up. “*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23). Do not ever give up the fight for right, ever strong against wrong. This I believe is our God’s admonition here through His apostle.

“*Neither give place to the devil*” – Paul warned of the same in II Corinthians 2:11 in the context of failing

*Eph 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

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to forgive, “lest Satan should get an advantage of us”. The idea of “*advantage*” is something like occasion or opportunity or perhaps toehold. We give the evil one a handle or opportunity when we sin, like allowing Tobiah a room in God’s temple (Neh. 13). What did godly Nehemiah do? He simply, appropriately pitched Tobiah out! No discussion, no questions asked! We do not *dialogue* or *delay* with evil (or evil associations), we *dump* it with all haste!

Vs. 28 – “*Let him that stole steal no more*” – As lying must be replaced with its corresponding opposite, using the tongue rather to speak only truth, even so stealing must be replaced with its opposite of helping others with our goods (rather than helping ourselves to their goods). Selfish taking replaced by selfless giving. See how the Lord does not just demand the end of wrong behaviour, but the replacement of wrong with right. An evil spirit cast out but not replaced by God’s Spirit only opens the door for a return to the old state, or worse (Lk. 11:24-26).

Vs. 29 – “*No corrupt communication*” – Back to sins

*Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

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of the tongue, where Paul puts greatest focus in this portion. This time we are called to replace corrupt words with grace. “*Corrupt* [rotten] *communication*” extends beyond just the filthy swear words of any language to include all that opposes “*that which is good*”, all that hurts or cuts others down rather than building others up.

To “*minister grace*” is to bring some benefit. It is a good guiding principle for our choice of words. Does what I am about to say build up or tear down? Will my words honestly help anybody? (Prov. 12:18; 16:24) Could any be wrongfully hurt by them? Using such a measure to weigh our words would probably greatly reduce their quantity, making us a whole lot wiser (Prov. 17:27-28) and keeping us from a world of trouble (Prov. 12:13; 13:3; 18:6-7; 21:23).

“*Proceed out of your mouth*” – We do not have to put our thoughts into words. Though we may think negatively concerning others it is often best to express our heart only to the Lord and simply refuse to let it pass out of our mouth in the form of words.

*Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

*Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

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Vs. 30 – “*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*” – The Personhood of the Holy Spirit is seen here, in that He can be grieved or made sad. We are called upon to be ever mindful of His heart. The context here relates *how* we grieve the Spirit. On either side of this admonition are encouragements away from inward bitterness toward others and the outward expression of it. When we choose to hurt others with our words it is in fact the Spirit we grieve as well.

“*Whereby ye are sealed*” – Though we may grieve the Spirit by our actions, Paul immediately repeats his assurance from 1:13-14, lest we think we could grieve the Spirit away. Our fixed position in Christ of having been sealed by the Spirit is the assurance of our eternal salvation.

Vs. 31-32 – Again the principle of replacement, but now all of the old inward hatred and icy wish for hurt upon others is to be driven out by a newfound graciousness and tender will to forgive, that we may

*Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,  
forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake  
hath forgiven you.*

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be children of our Father who has handled us in the same way.

*“Bitterness”* – Bitter hatred that *“speaketh like the piercings of a sword”* (Prov. 12:18).

*“Wrath”* – Anger in the sense of violent, explosive outbursts. A woman once sought to justify herself before Billy Sunday, suggesting that her moments of violent rage were only brief explosions before she returned to reason. Mr. Sunday responded that a shotgun blast is the same, only the briefest explosion. But oh the irreparable damage done by such a violent discharge!

*“Anger”* – In the sense of settled, festering indignation.

*“Clamour”* – Noisy outcry, referring to the raucous tumult of controversy.

*“Evil speaking”* – The reviling blasphemy or slander of words that hurt another’s good name.

“*Malice*” – A burning, spiteful intent to cause hurt upon others.

“*For Christ’s sake*” – Only in Christ is God able to forgive man. The righteous demands of His violated law must be satisfied, and so they were satisfied upon Christ in our place. The horror of His wrath must be poured upon sinners, and so it was poured out upon the Friend of sinners instead. Again, if I be forgiven the “*ten thousand talents*” of my great sin debt to God through His sacrifice of His very best for me, then how could I irritably demand the “*hundred pence*” of the relatively tiny trespasses of others against me? (Matt. 18:23-35)

The word behind “*tenderhearted*” is literally good bowels, expressive of the emotion of compassion toward others we desire to bless. Emotion is much more closely connected to and dependent upon decision than we realize. Make the decision to love, accept, tolerate, and forgive, and good inward feelings toward others are sure to follow.

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

(Eph 5:15-16)

## Class 8 – Ephesians 5:1-21

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*Eph 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

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### Chapter 5

#### 5:1-7 – Walking in Love.

Vs. 1 – “*Be ye therefore followers of God*” – This is a command to be responding like God does. Behind the English word “*followers*” is the word from which we get “*mimic*”. We are to set for our target nothing less than God’s own nature. When folks are “*measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves*” they “*are not wise*” (II Cor. 10:12). We cannot be happy merely to be a better person than the next guy. Our purpose must be what the Lord Himself has laid before us; “*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*” (Matt. 5:48).

“*As dear children*” – Paul does not say “*as if dear children*”. He speaks not of our perception or of things imagined, but of the reality of our place with the Father in Christ. We are indeed “*dear children*”

*Eph 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us,  
and hath given himself for us an offering and a  
sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

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to Him, “accepted in the Beloved”, those truly loved and received by God as His own children. *Believe it, believer!* It is yours in Jesus.

Vs. 2 – “*Walk in love*” – As God has chosen to love we who are unlovely, so He commands *us* to love the unlovely, even those who are the hardest to love. Consider the great focus upon love seen so far in this book;

- Eph. 1:15 – Paul heard of their “*love unto all the saints*”.
- Eph. 3:17 – Paul prayed that they would be “*rooted and grounded in love*”.
- Eph. 4:2 – Part of a worthy walk is “*forbearing one another in love*”.
- Eph. 4:15-16 – Helping others in growth and the body in “*the edifying of itself in love*” comes of “*speaking the truth in love*”.
- Compare Galatians 5:6, 13-14, 22

And all such encouragements are within the context

*Eph 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or  
covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as  
becometh saints;*

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of God's abundant love. It was "*the Son of God who loved me*" first (Gal. 2:20) "*for His great love wherewith He loved us*" (Eph. 2:4), "*that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*" (Eph. 1:4), and that we might "*know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge*" (Eph. 3:19), for our "*walk in Christ*" is according "*as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us*" (5:2). Great, great emphasis here on God's love in gracing man, and man's appropriately loving response in return, toward God and toward others, especially brothers. For Jesus to give Himself in our behalf as an offering to God was "*a sweetsmelling savour*". It is implied that for us to give ourselves in behalf of others is to God a sweet offering as well. Compare Philippians 4:18.

With vs. 3 begins a shortlist of contrasting negatives, things expressing the opposite of love. "*Fornication*" speaks of all forms of immoral involvement with others. "*Uncleanness*" speaks of all forms of lustful impurity, not necessarily involving others directly, but including shamefully unspeakable "*things which are done of them in*

*Eph 5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting,  
which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*

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*secret*” (vs. 12). “*Covetousness*” is the burning desire to have more without regard for others in acquiring it. All such shades of selfishness are not fitting for those who have believed on the holy Lord Jesus Christ, and should not be found among the congregation of saints. These are not expressions of love. To be immorally involved with others is a form of hate or mutual abuse (I Thess. 4). To be stained with uncleanness hinders our usefulness in blessing others. To covet is to wish to remove from others what we wish to have for ourselves. The implication here is that if found among the saints, such defiling practices should be properly dealt with for testimony’s sake.

Vs. 4 – “*Filthiness*” refers to depraved acts that are the opposite of honour, deeds full of shame and disgrace. Next come two interesting sins of the tongue. “*Foolish talking*” speaks of weightless, worthless talk; trite, idle things proceeding out of the mouth of those showing themselves to be fools. “*Jesting*” refers to one who turns words well, but in a negative sense, for no good use. This is a refined, quick-witted sort who uses his ability in the service of self and sin. Compare Christ’s warning that

*“every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment”* (Matt. 12:36), because our words are the expression of either *“the evil treasure”* or *“the good treasure of the heart”*. Paul has warned in this context against *“corrupt communication”* and *“evil speaking”* (4:29, 31). What would such *“foolish talking”* and *“jesting”* involve? Entertaining others with foolish or vulgar speech. Class clown. Finding humour in things sinful. Making light of things sacred (“Hey, did you hear about when ol’ van der Merwe and Siphon arrived together at the gates of heaven...”). Proverbs indicates that a sense of humour is perhaps a good thing, certainly that *“a merry heart doeth good”* (Prov. 17:22; 15:13). The Preacher suggests there is *“a time to laugh”* (Eccl. 3:4). Yet a certain gravity or dignified bearing is a good thing too, and a sought after quality in spiritual leaders (I Tim. 3:4; Titus 2:2, 7). Jesus did not tell jokes, nor did His apostles. Theirs was a dignified seriousness far less given to idiotic hilarity than our modern world would encourage. The King’s business is a solemn, serious affair. Our redeemed tongues should rather be dedicated more to praise and *“giving of thanks”*. Compare Abraham’s servant in Genesis 24, sent by his master in the task of finding a bride for his son. His was no jolly or jovial demeanour. He was serious and focused on his master’s business. He

*Eph 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

*Eph 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

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was sincere and very earnest in the task given to him. He refused the suggestion of entertainments until the deal was closed. Yet he was so quick to rejoice with thanksgiving at every evidence of the Lord's help. It is a lesson on what our way should be in the Lord's business of filling up Christ's bride in the church.

Vs. 5 – *“For this ye know”* – Not that the believer who falls to such practices will lose his salvation, but Paul now turns our attention to the world, making the point that such are the practices of the unsaved.

*“Nor covetous man, who is an idolater”* – To live in longing and lust for more of this world's goods is essentially to erect such things as idols in the heart. Those who sincerely make God their God are cured of all consuming interest in *“all that is in the world”*.

Vs. 6-7 – *“Let no man deceive you”* – Do not allow any quick-witted, smooth-tongued sort to convince

*Eph 5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*

*Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

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you otherwise and thus seduce you to partake in the godless pursuits of the unsaved world. “*Ye have not so learned Christ*”. The world’s way is not for us. “*Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*” (II Cor. 6:17). We are not to compromise or incorporate evil with God’s good. The darkness is not meant to overwhelm the light (John 1:5), but the light to scatter the darkness.

### **5:8-14** – Walking in the Light as Light.

Vs. 8 – “*Ye were...but now*” – Things are different now! Let your walk or lifestyle reflect that glorious change. You were darkness before Christ but you are not so anymore, so walk according to what you have become. Walk as a light with He who is in the light. Jesus says to His followers “*ye are the light of the world*” and “*let your light so shine*”. How do we do this? By letting the world “*see your good works*”, thus moving them to “*glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 5:14-16). Our light shines through our good works, through our good and godly responses to whatever life brings. Remember Paul’s

*Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)*

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point in 2:10, that we are “*created in Christ Jesus unto good works*”. From the beginning God has “*ordained that we should walk in them*”. When the world proposes to involve us in immorality we say “no thanks!” When the world wishes to involve us in dishonesty we say “I do not do that anymore”. When the world would influence us to hate, we say “I will love!” When circumstances suggest we fall to despair, we say, “*Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation*” (Hab. 3:18).

Vs. 9 – When we are walking “*in the light, as He is in the light*”, finding both fellowship with God and cleansing through “*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son*” (I Jn. 1:7), this is the branch abiding in the Vine (Jn. 15), with the natural (supernatural) result that the fruit of the Spirit begins to form. Out of such a close walk with the Lord will arise a sincere goodness in our dealings with man, a true righteousness in relation to God’s standard, and a genuine love of truth and hatred of all that is false. The Spirit’s fruit “*is in all*” of these things. Not just a couple of such fruits, but a branch weighed down with Spirit fruit. This is where the Lord would bring us.

*Eph 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*  
*Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

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Vs. 10 – “*Proving what is acceptable*” – Such a walk in the light that feeds upon God’s eternal words grows in us an ability to discern what pleases the Lord. Compare Romans 12:1-2. With the unreserved presentation of ourselves to the Lord, followed by our nature transformed according to His Word, there arises in us an inherent understanding of “*what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*”.

Vs. 11 – “*Unfruitful works of darkness*” – Listen to it now! Dark ways and deeds of evil are “*unfruitful*”. These have no ability to bear fruit for the Holy One, only for the evil one. Such works, and those who practice them, are “*without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots*” (Jude 12). Thus any notion of mingling dark works with light, impurity with the pure, in an effort to make God’s light more palatable to those in darkness only introduces *fruitlessness* in the same proportion to the darkness mixed in.

“*But rather reprove them*” – Beyond our responsibility to avoid involvement with “*works of darkness*”, we are called as well to reprove or expose

*Eph 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things  
which are done of them in secret.*

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such dark works. The beginning of compromise or involvement with evil is the refusal to speak out against it. Active opposition to evil declines to uneasy tolerance of evil, which then descends to happy integration of evil, which leads down to intolerance of all who are intolerant of evil! This is the typical slide, repeated countless times throughout history. Reproof of evil ensures a righteous intolerance of it, and tolerance of evil rules out reproof of it, ensuring eventual involvement in it. It is never an easy thing to speak out against wrong, but there was never a more vital response to evil from true believers in Jesus Christ, and never a more important time to do it than *right now!*

Vs. 12 – *“Things...done of them in secret”* – Romans 1 offers some exposure of such shameful practices of men and women and the declining pathway leading down to them. Jesus warned that *“there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known”* (Matt. 12:2). The clamorous foolish woman of Proverbs offers the pleasantries of *“bread eaten in secret”* without giving the rest of the story, the results of partaking

*Eph 5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*

*Eph 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

*Eph 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

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(Prov. 9:17-18). The wise Preacher warned that God will bring “*every secret thing*” into judgment (Eccl. 12:14).

Vs. 13 – The light of God’s word is that means by which every work of darkness is exposed, as if floodlights suddenly turning darkness to daylight.

Vs. 14 – “*Awake thou that sleepest*” – Here is God’s call to His sleeping church to arise to the great task of His war against sin. Compare Romans 13:11.

### **5:15-21** – Walking in Wisdom.

Vs. 15 – There is a bit of a word play in this command to “be seeing that you are walking circumspectly”, for “*circumspectly*” literally means “looking around”. Be seeing that you are seeing around as you walk through life. Not only is God calling us to be *awake*, He is calling us to be *aware*. He would have us to “be seeing” accurately the

*Eph 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*  
*Eph 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding  
what the will of the Lord is.*

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reality of what is happening around us. The wise are aware. The prudent foresee evil and are able to hide from it (Prov. 22:3; 27:12). The unwise pass through life largely unconnected with the truth of things around them.

Paul commands three kinds of walking in this portion;

- Walk in love (vs. 2).
- Walk in light (vs. 8).
- Walk “*as wise*” (vs. 15).

Vs. 16 – “*Redeeming the time*” – The sense here is grasping the opportunities, for the brevity of our lives actually offers so little of it. Carpe Diem – Seize the day! Take hold of the chance you have now to live and walk in the light, because of the good effect you can bring by this means on our evil day, and because of the souls to be won to life eternal, and because of the many you might be used to turn “*from iniquity*” and “*to righteousness*” (Mal. 2:6; Dan. 12:3). Do not miss the chance to make a

difference. Here is God's will for our brief existence here below.

Vs. 17 – *“Be ye not unwise, but understanding”* – As Paul prayed for their understanding (2:17-18), so he now labours for the same in them, seeking to lead them through to good understanding. That for which we pray we are often soon motivated to *do* something about. Even as Christ commanded His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest for labourers in Matthew 9, and then sent them out in Matthew 10 as the labourers for which they had prayed. Paul would have us to be understanding, aware, clearly discerning darkness from light, wrong from right, and not allowing anybody to convince us otherwise, or even to introduce enough doubt in us to dull the intensity of our reproof of their evil. The evil practices of our day are wrong! It matters not who gives them legal approval or how many tolerate them or how loudly the other side clamours in support of them.

Again, we come to this wise awareness of *“the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”* by our presentation of ourselves to God (Rom. 12:1), and by our transformed nature through *“the washing of the water by the word”* (12:2).

*Eph 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;  
but be filled with the Spirit;*

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Vs. 18 – “*Be not drunk with wine*” – This command against drunkenness is put in contrast to Spirit filling to demonstrate a similarity of influence. Alcohol does not fully control but certainly has a powerful effect on the way one behaves. Even so one filled with the Spirit, though not strictly controlled by the Spirit, finds in His vibrant presence a powerful influence toward right behaviour. God has said, “*the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets*” (I Cor. 14:32). Never is it right for the believer in Jesus to be out of his mind or to allow his spirit to be given to the control of another, whether through some intoxicating substance or hypnotism or the follies of misguided Charismatic passion.

Though this prohibition is given as an object lesson for understanding Spirit filling, we must not lose sight of the prohibition. God forbids drunkenness in His children! For it represents the riotous excess of the world’s selfish way. “*Whosoever is deceived*” by wine or strong drink “*is not wise*” (Prov. 20:1).

“*Be filled with the Spirit*” – This is a command to make it our continual practice to “be being filled

with the Spirit”. Thoughts on what Spirit filling is and is not;

- It is not the same as Spirit baptism. Every saved soul is baptized with the Spirit into the body of Christ from the moment of salvation (I Cor. 12:13), resulting in our new forever *position* in Christ. Spirit baptism is never commanded nor are we ever commanded to seek it. Spirit filling on the other hand is commanded, is not always the experience of all believers, and is a repeated experience (Acts 4), resulting in *power* in our Christian experience. We are commanded to *do* Spirit filling, not to seek it, marking this as a matter of decision more than a matter of prayer.
- Spirit filling brings God’s empowering for special works (Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9), after the fashion of Samson upon whom “*the Spirit of the Lord came mightily*” and he levelled the lion or flattened the Philistines or gathered the Gaza gates or whatever mighty deed needed doing.
- Spirit filling is a direct result of yielding to a life of loving service and living Scripture (compare Col. 3:16; Gal. 5:13-15). Compare Paul’s focus on loving service from chapter 4 of this book. Remember how the context

*Eph 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns  
and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in  
your heart to the Lord;*

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displays Spirit grieving as the result of loveless bitterness (4:29-32). Note how the command of Spirit filling here follows on with loving relationships in the home. Compare the thrust in I Corinthians 12-14, where the gifts of the Spirit are given for the edifying of others and are to be exercised in love (chapter 13).

There now follows detail on attitudes and responses that will be evident in and around one filled with the Spirit.

Vs. 19 – A life lived in the light, walking in the Spirit, will manifest the Spirit fruit of “*love, joy, peace*” (Gal. 5:22) expressed in praise and song. David said of the Lord in the joy of his salvation, “*He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD*” (Ps. 40:3). A “new song”! Are you listening? Not songs still carrying the stench of the graveclothes of our old living death. Every word for songs and singing is used here in 5:19, describing the rich variety of good and godly music available to

*Eph 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God  
and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

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the redeemed, not only the Psalms of David but other holy expressions of praise and worship as well. We do not need the world's raucous cacophony of "musical" expression to lift our hearts to God.

Note the three directions in which God's songs apply;

- "*Speaking to yourselves*" expresses ministry to one another in music.
- "*In your heart*" relates personal worship in song.
- "*To the Lord*" shows the direction of all good music, as an expression of worship and praise and joy in our God.

Vs. 20 – "*Giving thanks*" – A life lived in the Spirit is more given to bright gratitude than bitter griping. And such a spirit of thankfulness is to be "*always for all things*", both good and bad. Compare Paul's command in I Thessalonians 5:18, "*In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*". Not in *some* things, or even in *most*

*Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

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things, but “*in everything*”. Together with worry, here is one of Christianity’s greatest points of rebellious disobedience (Phil. 4:6).

Vs. 21 – “*Submitting yourselves one to another*” – A life lived in the Spirit is void of pride and filled with humility. There is no score kept or grudge maintained in those who are Spirit-filled. There is in them no ego or image to uphold. In fact there is no self focus at all in them, but only the earnest desire for the good of others. Though there is to be a biblical authority structure in the home and church and society, as Paul will now touch on, there is to be no lordly attitude in any (I Pet. 5:3). Knowing our God is watching, wishing supremely to please Him, fearful of losing His smile, the one walking in the Spirit willingly esteems others better than himself (Phil. 2:3), thus ensuring peace, in his own heart and in whatever setting life finds him.

## Class 9 – Ephesians 5:22-6:4

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*Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

*Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

*Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

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### **5:22-24** – Wives Submit.

“*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands*” – “*Submit*” has become rather a dirty word in the minds of some in our modern humanistic societies. But are we wise to cast this command of God aside or redefine it? Consider the prevalence of the theme in the Bible;

- Genesis 2:18 – The first woman was created as a fit helper for her husband. This is her God-given role from the beginning.
- Genesis 3:16 – God directly gave the husband rule in the home.
- Colossians 3:18 – Wives are commanded to submit “*as it is fit in the Lord*”.
- I Timothy 2:12 – Women are not to “*usurp authority over the man*” in a church context,

with reasons given.

- Titus 2:3-5 – Titus was to teach the aged women to “*teach the young women to be...obedient to their own husbands*”.
- I Peter 3:5-6 – Sarah is held up as a godly example of submission to her husband, even “*calling him lord*” (Gen. 18:12).

So this command to the saints at Ephesus is no isolated, oddball passage by any means.

Submission is;

- A voluntary attitude of cooperation.
- Willingly conforming our will to the will of another.
- A givenness to “*do him good*”, as seen in the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 (vs. 12).
- The active study to discover what is pleasing to the one in authority, with the will to carefully and fully carry it out. Submission runs beyond just the spoken request. Even as Rebekah went beyond only the spoken request of Abraham’s servant for a drink of water (Gen. 24:17-21), and won a prominent place in history as a result of her right heart

and actions. Compare Christ's heart expressed in His words, "*My meat [food] is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish [carry through completely] His work*" (Jn. 4:34). These are the words in the heart of submission.

The natural response toward one with such a submissive heart is as the husband's of Proverbs 31, "*the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her*" (vs. 11). Loyalty is easy to trust and love.

"*As unto the Lord*" – Submission is submission regardless of the authority figure to whom it is rendered. There is no lesser submission appropriate to an earthly authority or greater submission appropriate to our heavenly authority. Therefore the Lord through Paul illustrates submission to the husband with our proper attitude toward the Lord. As the wife would view her responsibility to the Lord, in the same way she should view herself responsible to her husband. In vs. 23-24 God's apostle hammers a couple more nails into that thought to pin it down good and tight, so it cannot easily be carried off and buried by feminist types.

Perhaps the thought is here as well for the wife to

submit to her husband as an act of submission to the Lord. Not only “as” in the sense of in the same manner, but in the sense of “as if to the Lord” as well. Look upon that submission to him as to the Lord. Even as good Christian servanthood adorns God (Titus 6:1) and bad servanthood blasphemes God (I Tim. 6:1), so the principle follows that to live in submission to her husband a wife is in fact serving the Lord. Thus submission is lifted out of mere menial service to the man, to become a service of worship to God, “*knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord*” (6:8). Nothing done for the Lord ever goes unseen. This lifts submission above circumstances as well. It is a service rendered to the Lord regardless of the nature of the authority or the difficulty or ease of submission to such a one. The same principles are true of all of us in our attitude toward authority (6:5-8). The genuine servant of God will express his heart for the Lord by his loving service of man.

So God would counsel, yea He commands the wife to give her heart in full surrender to the Lord, and then to turn her sights to that husband God has given her, and to give herself in full submission to him out of a heart of surrender to her God.

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## **Q & A**

Question – What if my husband wants me to sin?

Answer – Submission does not mean obeying him in sin, for God is the higher authority.

Question – What about a domineering, demanding, confining husband?

Answer – Submit, pray, and trust and wait upon God for His work of deliverance.

Question – Would submission not make me inferior?

Answer – It is a subordinate position, not an inferior person. Willing submission frees you from responsibilities not meant to be yours, that you might give yourself to things for which you are gifted and called.

Question – What about physical abuse?

Answer – Help should be sought from outside of the marriage in the case of violent abuse.

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**5:25-33** – Husbands Love.

*Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

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Vs. 25 – “*Husbands love your wives*” – The word of command here is *agape*, that word so extensively defined in I Corinthians 13. This love is the active purpose to seek the very best for others regardless of returns. As the wife’s submission, so the husband’s love is an ongoing command. And in commanding this of the husband the Lord is not requiring anything of him He has not already required, for that central Bible command concerning others and issued to all is “*thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*”. A man has no closer neighbour than that one who sleeps beside him. There is great value in this passage in the comparisons given, which describe what this love looks like and lifts it to the highest standard. The Lord describes the love of the husband as;

- Christlike.
- Patterned after God’s love.
- Self-forgetful.
- Self-sacrificing, even unto death.

*“Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it” – Love gives. It does not take, use, or*

*Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

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abuse. It does not weave submission into a doormat. It is sacrificial (I John 3:16). This is its primary characteristic. Thus this whole love-submission relationship between a husband and wife fits together like hand in glove. From both sides it is the complete giving of self to the other. In neither case is the command in any way dependent upon anything else. The husband is not to love his wife *if* she is submissive, nor is the wife to submit *if* she is loved. These are commands from God without regard for returns. God's kind of love dies to self and selfish desires or demands. It "*seeketh not her own*" (I Cor. 13:5). This will involve a daily measure of self-denial, dying to cherished rights. It is the way our God loved us when we were unlovely. Sacrifice is the ultimate expression of love. True love is willing to endure a great deal of personal hurt and loss in order to preserve the opportunity to pursue the good of the other.

Consider as well that the man who truly desires to walk in fellowship with his God will get right with his wife (I Pet. 3:7).

Vs. 26-27 – "*That He might sanctify and cleanse it*"

*Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

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– Now we find that a man’s love for his wife is to be like Christ’s love for the church in His purpose to sanctify. *“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”* (Rev. 1:5). Love washes. Compare Ezekiel 16 (vs. 9). Just as the sanctification or cleansing of His bride, the church, is Christ’s present purpose, so the same is to be the purpose of a man for his bride, borne out of his love. The *“washing”* or bath the Lord uses for this purpose is *“the word”* (John 17:17). To *“sanctify”* means to make holy. The concept is simply to be set apart completely for the Lord. Nothing of my way, all His way, down to the smallest detail. Not the least bit of holding out against His way or ignoring His way to allow for my way. To be holy is to be wholly set apart as God’s own possession, and that forever! If ever there was a single word to be written as a title over the life of every believer it is the word *“HIS”*. It is that yielded walk to which the loving husband should be intent upon bringing his wife. Not her complete surrender to his own will as much as her complete surrender to the Lord’s will. We ought to pray to that end for our wives, gentlemen. We ought to be mindful of her spiritual

growth, taking due action to do something about it. A wife must recognize her husband's responsibility toward her maturity and respond with respect and submission. To be sure this goal of sanctification in your wife (and children) is not going to happen apart from some measure of immersion in the bath of God's words. Why then do most men leave the family responsibility for spiritual growth to the wife? Why do the men leave the teaching of Junior Church to women?

In vs. 27 the same purpose is highlighted by repetition, both negatively and positively. Christ's purpose for His bride is that she be "*a glorious church*", a splendid, most honourable bride, held in highest esteem. Even so a man's aim should be that his wife be a glorious saint, held in highest esteem by the wise, that she might become what God intends for her. Many a man is busier about cutting his wife down through slanderous words than upholding her honour. He seeks to show himself greater rather than lifting her high. This sanctifying purpose of which Paul speaks means as well;

- That a man would not bring shame upon a woman through immoral involvement with her before marriage.
- That a man would not shame his wife's name

*Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

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through illicit relationships with others.

- That he would shun all immoral stains.

Marriage is meant to be a place of growth, and the man is the one responsible before God to see to it. True love always enriches, builds, and holds the best of goals for the other. Selfishness is oriented exactly the opposite. Wisdom builds while selfishness tears down (Prov. 14:1). So a man's love for his wife is firstly *sacrificial*, and secondly aimed at her *sanctification*.

Vs. 28-33 – Paul turns his point of comparison in vs. 28 to a man's natural care for himself. The love of a husband for his wife is consistent with his love for self, showing the self-fulfilling nature of his love.

Vs. 28 – “*He that loveth his wife loveth himself*” – Paul now shifts figures from the church as Christ's bride to the church as Christ's body, “*for we are members of His body*” (vs. 30). Again, a very common N.T. picture (Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 6:15; 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24). The church is Christ's body, not only in the sense of a “group” of people He

claims for His own, but also in the sense of actual connection, “*of His flesh, and of His bones*” (vs. 30). Paul agrees that it is a puzzling concept (“*a great mystery*”), that all believers of this age somehow make up the body of Christ as individual members of that body. With the coming of the Holy Spirit in a very new and special way in Acts, every believer at the moment of their salvation is now indwelt and baptized with the Spirit into Christ’s body. So perhaps the Lord is not using two separate figures in this context, for they really are one and the same in a sense. Christ’s bride, the church, is also His own body. Even so a man’s bride has become as if a part of his own body, as if an extension of himself. Therefore the “*one flesh*” quote of Genesis 2:24 here in vs. 31. There is a union between a man and his wife that goes far beyond just their physical relationship. In marriage they become as if one body, one flesh, an organic unity in some sense. The same is suggested as well in the woman’s creation, for she was formed from a physical part of Adam’s body rather than through a separate creation. It is what Adam was saying upon the presentation of Eve, “*this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*” (Gen. 2:23), expressing this very special oneness. There is something of a mysterious return to this union in marriage. The same idea is behind Paul’s instructions concerning

*Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

*Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

*Eph 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

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marriage in I Corinthians 7:4, that a husband and wife have entered into a kind of mutual co-ownership of each other. For this cause divorce is more like tearing a body apart than we realize. For this cause we are wise to be cautious about who we choose to date and marry. Neither marriage nor the entrance into it is meant to be taken lightly or irreverently. It is the mysterious formation of a new entity from two separate individuals. There is simply no other human union like it on earth. Therefore Paul's point in vs. 28-29. Consider how foolish then for a man to mistreat his wife. For in the wonder of their union it is essentially the same as punishing *himself!* And the one loving his own wife is loving himself.

Vs. 29 – *“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh”* – At least no normal man. We are all rather naturally given to the careful care of our own body. Therefore we should be equally given to the same concerning

*Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

*Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

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our wives. To see to her best interests is to see to our own. In marriage we cannot really make separation between her interests and his. For a man to abuse his wife, to abuse her trust, is a kind of self-destruction. Compare the Lord's words in Proverbs 6:32; "*Whoso commits adultery with a woman...destroys his own soul*". The adulterer is not only cheating his wife but himself, as if slashing at his own soul. Because the one he hurts is somehow a part of him, "*of his flesh and of his bones*". For a man to love and care for his wife is as sensible a response as for him to care for himself. To love her is self-fulfilling, to hate or hurt her is soul-destroying.

## **Chapter 6**

### **6:1-4 – Children Obey.**

It has been wisely said that parental wisdom consists of bringing up your children in such a way that others will like them as much as you do.

*Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

*Eph 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)*

*Eph 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

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Vs. 1-3 – “*Children obey your parents in the Lord*” –

This command of the child’s obedience and honour of his parents is of course founded upon the bedrock of the 10 Commandments from which Paul quotes. It is the simplicity of a command with a promise for obedience, and the obvious implication that the promise does not hold when the command is disobeyed. Compare the end of Hophni and Phinehas, who would not hear their father’s feeble reproofs (I Sam. 4). God is not pleased with rebellion in a child (Deut. 21:18-21). Consider that the way of wisdom in child rearing is not to sidestep this relationship of authority/command and submission/obedience as our modern world would advise, even now busy churning out young rebels by the millions! Compare Abraham’s good example in Genesis 18:19.

“*Honour thy father and mother*” – This speaks of an attitude of sincere reverence. These are not optional, if-I-feel-like-it responses but *commands* from the mouth of God. And these are not

*Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

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commands only for the saved but for all mankind.

*“Which is the first commandment”* – The 10 Commands are set up in two sections, originally written on two separate stone tablets. The first 4 commands on the first tablet relate to God, and the remaining 6 on the second tablet relate to man. This command was not the first of all, but *“the first commandment”* on that second tablet relating to man’s dealings with man.

*“That it may be well with thee”* – Life will tend to go well. Compare Proverbs 3:6.

*“Thou mayest live long on the earth”* – Earthly life will tend to last longer.

Vs. 4 – *“And ye fathers”* – As the man is responsible for his wife’s development, even so he is responsible for his children. The verb translated *“bring them up”* here is the same as that rendered *“nourisheth”* in 5:29.

*“Provoke not your children to wrath”* – To provoke is

to exasperate or stir to frustration. What provoking is not;

- It is not about never making mistakes. Children will likely respond better to an honest father than to some super-Dad. Better to be one willing to say “I’m sorry, I blew it”, than to seldom admit mistakes.
- It is not about the firm, guiding restrictions of good discipline, limitations, or boundaries. In fact children are more likely to be provoked to wrath when there are few boundaries, no guidance, nobody to tell them what they already know in their heart of hearts they need to be told, what they know someone *would* hold them to if they were really loved. Wisdom is not in backing off on right and proper boundaries in a cowardly effort to preserve good will. That is called weakness!

Examples of provoking fathers;

- Laban’s abuse of his daughters (Gen. 31). They were used like bait in their father’s trap to secure Jacob’s continued service. They were handled more like possessions than people. Laban was more concerned for his own future than for theirs. Were it not for God’s intervention Laban would have left

them with nothing, rather than helping to provide for their well-being into the future.

- Saul's children were rightly provoked through his unreasonable response to David (I Sam. 19:4ff; 20:24-34).

Examples of nourishing fathers;

- David's caring encouragements spoken to Solomon (I Chron. 22:10-13; 28:9-10; 29:19).
- The proverbial father's wise and caring words to his son (Prov. 1:10, 15; 2:1; 3:1; 4:10; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; etc.).
- Paul's charge to his spiritual children (I Thess. 2:11-12).

“Finally, my brethren,  
be strong in the Lord,  
and in the power  
of His might”

(Eph. 6:10)

## Class 10 – Ephesians 6:5-24

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*Eph 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;*

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In expressing something of the practical outworking of Spirit filling in Ephesians 5 & 6, Paul has dealt with the home concerns of a wife's submission (5:22-24), a husband's love (5:25-33), and the obedience of children (6:1-4). Now the Spirit lifts us up as the prophets of old, carrying us from the home setting to the work place.

### **6:5-9** – Servants and Masters.

Vs. 5 – “*With fear and trembling*” – See how those under the authority of another must not only be willing to do the will of those over them, but to do it with the right heart as well, “*as unto Christ*”. This is a return to the same comparison in describing the wife's submission to her husband in 5:22-24. “*Fear and trembling*” speaks of a goodly measure of earnest concern that we not displease those over us. Where is any trace of harboured resentment in such a right attitude toward authority? It is excluded in the same way that we would be wrong to resent *the*

*Eph 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

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Lord's authority over us. Where is any measure of sneaking around behind the back, hiding from that one over us what we do against their will or word or law? This is not merely fear of being found out or caught, but sincere dread of displeasing that one.

*"In singleness of your heart"* speaks of the complete absence of anything fake or false. Just a simple, wide-open honesty that holds no selfish, ulterior motives. Here is the kind of servant or employee our God would have us to be in the work place. We are wise to ponder long on how this would play out in our own work situation.

Vs. 6 – *"Not with eyeservice"* – Not picking up speed and focus when the boss/teacher walks in (or reducing speed when spotting the speed trap), but the same high standard of work at all times. Not dropping the nail file into the desk drawer or quickly minimizing the computer game (or worse). We are not to be working under the eye of men *"as menpleasers"*, but under our heavenly Father's eye *"as the servants of Christ"*. We should ever be working to please Him, knowing that our God really

*Eph 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

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is pleased with our good and honest and diligent work. The Lord is not only interested in our heart worship, but our hand work as well. We worship through the way of our work in a sense. Genuine Christianity filters right through to the smallest details of our lives. It *does* matter to God even how we conduct ourselves in our job. He would have us to do everything we do in a devoted, loyal manner. *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might”* (Eccl. 9:10).

*“Doing the will of God from the heart”* – Literally “out of the soul”. No mere surface obedience like Jonah’s grudging work at Nineveh will do, but a sold-out, sincere servant to the very core of us. With a heartfelt “yes sir”, seeing Jesus Christ looking on, standing behind that boss of yours, and seeing God’s smile in a job well done.

Vs. 7 – There is great repetition here, on both our actions and the attitude behind them.

*“With good will”* – Literally with a good mind, with good and happy thoughts, refusing thoughts of annoyance or resentment over tasks or purposes

*Eph 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

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not preferred. The Greek word behind the English here is used elsewhere only in I Corinthians 7:3, where God requires husband and wife to make themselves physically available to each other with the same happy good will.

Vs. 8 – By faith there is something that we know. “*Whether it be good or bad*”, every man shall “*receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done*” (II Cor. 5:10). When it is the Lord we serve, and serve with good will and good works, it is from the Lord that we shall receive. And none could ever reward like He does.

“*Whatsoever good thing any man doeth*” – It does not matter what thing it is that someone might do, as long as it is a “good thing”. It does not matter *what* the “*good thing*” done out of sincere service of God and man, but “whatsoever”. It does not matter *who* is doing that “*good thing*”, but in fact “any man”. It does not matter what one’s station might be, whether underling or overling, “*whether he be bond or free*”. Our position or status in life neither hinders nor helps our ability to do good things for

*Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

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God and man, and to receive from God for them, both in this life and in the life to come. The “Oh if only I were...” sort of moan is invalid with God. A woman, a child, a servant is just as able to find the blessing of reward from God for faithful service as anyone in a position of earthly authority. For this reason Korah’s rebellion was completely unwarranted (Num. 16). A Levite had no lesser ability to gain reward and favour with God than a priest. But through pride it was not really favour with *God* that the sons of Korah were seeking, but prominence before men “*as menpleasers*”. It is before our God that we are to “*live and move and have our being*”.

Vs. 9 – “*And ye masters*” – Those in places of authority are to “*do the same things unto*” their servants, handling them with the same awareness that our Master is in heaven. Just as a servant is to see the Lord as his Master more than the man, even so the master must have an eye to the Master of all as well.

*Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord,  
and in the power of his might.*

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*“Forbearing threatening”* – Lighten up on the use of harsh speech. Seems there should be a difference in the way a believing boss handles his workers, and the way a Christian husband and father deals with his family. When it turns to cutting, abusive speech, such *“corrupt communication”* proceeding out of the mouth should be the warning of something not right within.

*“Neither is there respect of persons with Him”* – God is no easier on the master than on the servant in judgment. He does not lean more to the side of the one in authority in matters of unfairness. He is fair in His dealings with all. In Korah’s rebellion the Lord stood with the sons of Aaron because they were in the right. In the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve the Lord sifted between all actors, assigning fault fairly. Regardless of Adam’s efforts at blame-shifting, he was judged for his own fault. As there is no respecting of persons with the Lord so there is no hiding of the stark truth from that great *“Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”*.

**6:10-17** – The Panoply of God.

*Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

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Vs 10 – Paul commanded of these saints the strength he had prayed upon them (3:16). He would lead us to continual, conscious dependence on God’s power to defeat the foe. Compare vs. 18.

Vs. 11-12 – *“The wiles of the devil”* – The cunning ways of the evil one, which are beyond man’s ability to sense or avoid without the Lord. God would have us to understand that there are powers and methods in the unseen world of evil against which man is a helpless pawn without God’s great resources of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, His Word, and prayer.

*“We wrestle not against flesh and blood”* – As we labour for the Lord behind one in authority over us, even so the difficult struggles we may face with people are really much bigger than the people involved. Wicked men and movements are in fact raised up and empowered by the evil one and his demonic host. The ranks of evil spiritual beings are displayed in vs. 12, these operating behind and

*Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

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through the earthly rulers on the ground in working out Satan's subtle purposes. Earth and its occupants are the arena in which the spiritual powers of "high places" are battling out their hateful conflict against God. Men are the soldiers, spies, traitors, and leaders, on one side or the other in that great conflict of the ages. Compare the glimpses into this clash in Daniel in 10:13, 20.

Vs. 13-17 – "*The whole armour of God*" – The complete suit of Christian armour, both defensive and offensive, is given;

- "*Loins girt about with truth*" speaks of some protective clothing about the belly and loins (vs. 14), such as chain mail. Both our knowledge of the truth and our commitment to the use of it are involved. We are to be clothed with Christ, who is truth.
- "*The breastplate of righteousness*" speaks of Christ's righteousness given or accounted to

*Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

*Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

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the believer. The position of the believer in righteousness, as well as his commitment to the practice of it, is his protection from the enemies of God. Compare Joseph's commitment to righteousness becoming his deliverance from the temptress and ruin through her (Gen. 39). Compare in Daniel's resolve to do right his deliverance from obscurity and uselessness for God (Dan. 1).

- The *"feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"* (vs. 15) expresses a readiness to speak the gospel, and a willingness to carry the message over the mountains upon *"beautiful...feet"* (Isa. 52:7).
- *"The shield of faith"* (vs. 16) speaks of that way of entrance into life and righteousness, and that principle *"the just shall live by"* as well. Faith is our means of quenching *"all the fiery darts of the wicked"*. Faith fends off every inroad of error into head and heart. Faith stands firm under the crushing onslaught of life's trials. Compare the example of Job.

*Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

*Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

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Compare Habakkuk 3:17-18; I John 5:4).

- *“The helmet of salvation”* (vs. 17) suggests our eyes and understanding opened from the moment we were saved.
- *“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* (vs. 17) is our offensive weapon. How effectively Jesus used this sword, both in offence and defence, against Satan’s wilderness attack (Matt. 4).

### **6:18-20** – *“Praying Always”*.

Vs. 18 – This is the principle of *“all prayer”*. N.B. the flurry of all’s here;

- *“Praying always”* – Not just sometimes, but literally “in all times”. In every kind of season, both in good times and bad, we are to cast our cares upon Him.
- *“With all prayer and supplication”* – Every manner of petition.
- *“With all perseverance”* – Not just when we

*Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,*

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feel the urge.

- “For all saints” – Not just for some. Not only for yourself.

“*In the Spirit*” – Some among the Charismatic crowd would insist that this “*praying...in the Spirit*” refers to tongues-speaking. Beware the danger of pulling Bible verses from their context, finding “support” for our personal views. The Apostle Paul renounced the all too common human tendency to handle “*the word of God deceitfully*” (II Cor. 4:2). This is only support for praying in tongues for those desperate to find biblical justification for such a teaching. Paul rather speaks here of the prayer of one who is walking in the Spirit, walking in the light “*as He is in the light*”.

Vs. 19-20 – How interesting to hear Paul’s earnest request for prayer that he might be bold to speak as he should. We may tend to think that Paul was surely one who was *always* bold to speak. But obviously he saw such courage as a gift from God. He was just as dependent upon God as you and I are to be the kind of mouthpiece he should be. In

essence Paul's request was for prayer that he might exercise his gift from God as he should. This is something we could and should be praying for each other, "*for all saints*". Does it not seem odd that the Lord would do it this way? Seems He does not just give His servant all the boldness he needs to do His work. In some measure the Lord holds back on a man's boldness or opportunities, waiting for His saints to pray them in. Is that not what is implied here? God has somehow made His work on earth, and the measure of its success and furtherance, dependent upon the asking of His children. Remember King Joash of Israel, striking the ground with the arrows at Elisha's dying request? (II Ki. 13:14ff) The king stopped too soon, striking only three times, bringing Elisha's rebuke for not striking more (vs. 19). As it turned out, each hit represented a victory for God's people over their enemies. Listen my friend, if there is victory for the people of God for every hit we make, then by God's grace let's be busy making continual hits on heaven, pleading for God's glory and victory till the day we die!

Look well at the focus of Paul's interest while a prisoner in Rome. Does he express concern for his personal plight? Not in the least. Is his heart given to finding a way out, as most folks would be? Did

*Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

*Eph 6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:*

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he ask prayer for deliverance? Not at all. His only concern was that he be bold to exercise his gift as he should right where he was. Ask less for deliverance from your own personal trauma or bondage and more that you may be used of God in the midst of it. Ask, as Paul, that you might exercise your God-given gifts to the fullest for the glory of God and the good of man right where you are.

Vs. 20 – Paul portrays himself as a venerable old ambassador in chains. But though he be in physical chains God’s word through him has flown across the sea, around the globe, and through the centuries. *“But the word of God is not bound”*. Every effort of the evil one to bind God’s words by shackling His preacher has always *“fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel”* (Phil. 1:12).

### **6:21-24** – Closing Comments.

Vs. 21-22 – Part of Paul’s thoughtful purpose in writing was to let the church at Ephesus know how he was doing. But this he left to Tychicus, the one

*Eph 6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*

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who carried this letter, to communicate to them. For Paul the important matter, and therefore the entire content of his letter, was that which would bring them comfort and joy in their spiritual strength and victory. Paul did not give much effort to personal concerns of how he or others were doing in the brief window of this life. The focus of his interest was ever upon the Lord, with the centre of the reader's gaze kept there as well.

*“A beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”* – How free Paul was with praise for a good and godly man. It is a good thing to express such kind words of appreciation where due. It is not good to neglect such commendations through our natural, competitive tendency to pride and selfishness.

*“Whom I have sent unto you”* – What a privilege it must have been for this man to serve Paul and God's church in this way, to be considered worthy of the task. Such opportunities come of faithful loving service where we are. What Paul said of this man could only have come out of his ongoing demonstration of loving faithfulness in his life,

*Eph 6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith,  
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Eph 6:24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord  
Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

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resulting in further opportunities to serve. Timothy's faithful service right where he was led to greater opportunities later on in the same way. Serve right where you are with all of your heart, and leave all growth and promotion with the Lord.

Vs. 23 – *“Peace...and love, with faith”* – Here are three great elements of true Christianity;

- *“Peace”* within the saved soul, in relation to himself and his God.
- *“Love”* in relation to others and his God.
- *“Faith”* in relation to God and His words.

In Jesus Christ, peace I have within myself, love I have toward others, and faith I have toward God, completing the triangle of the healthy Christian life.

Vs. 24 – *“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen”* – Every soul truly loving Jesus Christ will find God's grace. Have you found? Some would say they love Him, but their love is not *“in sincerity”*. They love with a false,

corrupted kind of “love”. With their mouth they show much love, but their heart is far from Him. Have you found the grace of God, offered only in “*our Lord Jesus Christ*”? Have you come to love Him “*in sincerity*”? Do not ever cease your search until with Paul you too can answer “*Amen!*”

