

In Christ

Text: Ephesians 1:1-2

Introduction:

1. In this message we will seek to set the scene for the study of the Book of Ephesians.
2. How some theologians have labelled the Book of Ephesians: Coleridge called it the “divinest composition of man.” Other accolades label it the “Holy of holies” in Paul’s epistles, the “Grand Canyon” of Scriptures, the “crown of Paul’s epistles,” and the “Queen” of the epistles with the highest reach of New Testament thought. (N.T. Bible History by R. Hester)
3. For this introductory message, we will consider two headings:
 - An Introduction to the Book of Ephesians
 - The Salutation of the Book of Ephesians

I. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

A. The Historical Background to the Epistle

1. The **Authorship** of Ephesians (Eph. 1:1; 3:1)
 - a. The Person who wrote Ephesians – Pauline authorship is crystal clear, Paul’s name appearing twice in the letter (Eph. 1:1; 3:1). The early church was almost unanimous in support of Pauline authorship. “There is no portion of the New Testament the genuineness of which the church has from the beginning, with more cordial unanimity, acknowledged, than that of this epistle.” (Charles Hodge)
 - b. The Place where Ephesians was written – Paul wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome (See Acts 28:16-31). Paul refers to himself as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ” (3:1), the “prisoner of the Lord” (4:1) and as “an ambassador in bonds” (6:20). Philippians, Colossians and Philemon were also “prison Epistles” written during the same time period.
 - c. The Period when Ephesians was written – a date of A.D. 61 is well accepted for the writing of this Epistle. This is approximately 10 years after Paul planted this church (Richard Hester).
2. The **Area** of Ephesus (Eph. 1:1) Consider the background of Ephesus...
 - a. Geographically – Ephesus was situated on a plain near the mouth of the river Cayster, on the Aegean Sea on the western shores of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). David Cloud writes, “It was the chief city of the region of Lydia in the Roman province of Asia Minor at this time. Its prestige and wealth came largely from its strategic location.” It had a population of some 350,000 people which was very large for that time in history (John Phillips).
 - b. Politically – Robert Boyd writes, “Ephesus was the capital of the province of Asia, rich in commerce and industry, a port city through which Orient trade passed.” According to theologian

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Charles Hodge, Ephesus under the Romans, to a great extent, had the right of self-government. "Its constitution was essentially democratic." "The 'townclerk' or recorder was an officer in charge of the archives of the city, the promulgator (publisher, teacher) of the laws and was clothed with great authority." It was the townclerk who put a halt to the riot that took place in the theatre (See Acts 19:35-41).

- c. Commercially – Ephesus was a wealthy city on account of its sea port and because it lay at the intersection of important ancient roads and trade routes. According to Richard Hester, "Ephesus ranked among the top three centers of international trade along with Alexandria of Egypt and Antioch of Pisidia. The wide and deep Cayster River provided Ephesus with a protected artificial seaport which would accommodate the largest ships of the day, thus making it one of the great ports in the ancient world." Robert Thomas adds, "Ephesus was a thriving metropolis by the end of the first century A.D. Commercially, it was the largest city in the Roman province of Asia...Highways connected it with most of the important cities of the Roman provinces composing Asia Minor. The combination of accessibility from land or sea made the city the prominent commercial center of Asia for a long time." There was a large commercial marketplace (agora) next to the port. Paul would have worked there in his tent-making business with Priscilla and Aquila. (Hester) Joh Phillips writes, "Centrally located on the western coast of Asia Minor, Ephesus was positioned midway between two continents. Here east met west. Here oriental luxury, extravagance, and sensuality met occidental enterprise, discipline and ambition. Here sensual oriental religion blended with lofty and progressive Greek culture and firm, but on the whole fair, Roman government. Here crowds of government officials, Roman soldiers, and Jewish businessmen rubbed shoulders with Eastern pilgrims flocking into Ephesus to worship at the notorious temple of Artemis."
- d. Religiously – Ephesus was a hotbed of paganism and its associated licentiousness. Religious life "centered around the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis (Diana – See Acts 19). Her 425-foot-long (142m) by 220-foot-wide (73m) temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Each of its 120 columns was donated by a king. The image of Diana was one of the most sacred objects of worship in the ancient world...It was a grotesque, squat, black, many-breasted figure that was reputed to have fallen from heaven (Acts 19:27, 35)...Prostitution thrived there because the immoral activities were looked upon as sacred, and the prostitutes themselves were viewed as priestesses." (Robert L. Thomas) Due to the multitudes of people who would pour into Ephesus to participate in the feasts to Diana, "the temple became one of the largest and most wealthy banks in the ancient world. Along with this wealth came crime. Ephesus made a law that allowed immunity

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to any one who got within a bowshot of the temple walls.”

(Hester) This temple was central to Ephesus. To illustrate, if I was to say to you, “Oxford England”, which famous institution comes to mind?

3. The Assembly (Church) at Ephesus (Eph. 3:10; Acts 19). Consider three truths concerning the establishment of the church in Ephesus:
 - a. The Planting of the Church (Vs. 1-10). Paul visited the city while returning from Corinth to Jerusalem at the close of his second missionary journey about A.D. 52 (Acts 18:19-21). On his third missionary journey Paul returned to the city (Acts 19:1) and spent three years there (Acts 20:31). The planting of the church involved:
 - i. The Establishment of Believers (Vs. 1-7)
 - ii. The Evangelization of Unbelievers (Vs. 8-10). So powerful was Paul’s witness in Ephesus that not only was the city of Ephesus impacted, but the whole region in Asia Minor – “And this continued by the space of two years; so that **all they which dwelt in Asia** heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” (Vs. 10)
 - iii. Paul’s ministry in Ephesus had a powerful ripple effect on the surrounding region as the glowing embers from the Gospel fire in Ephesus were carried by the wind of the Spirit to cities like Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis.
 - b. The Power in the Church (Vs. 11-20)
 - i. Apostolic power (Vs. 11-12; 2. Cor. 12:12)
 - ii. Counterfeit power (Vs. 13-17)
 - iii. Life-transforming power (Vs. 18-20). This is what is known as the great Ephesian bonfire! Salvation for the Ephesians meant a new life! The ‘books’ were likely what were known in antiquity as the “Ephesian letters” which “appear to have been amulets, inscribed with strange characters, which were carried about the body for the purpose of curing diseases, expelling demons, and preserving from evils of different kinds.” (Adam Clarke)
 - iv. Challenge: Much of today’s technology has changed but the principle is the same. For you it might mean a purge of the DVD cabinet, a cleanup of your iTunes account, a wipe of a hard drive, deleting songs and movies that dishonor the Lord, discontinuing your Netflix subscription and disconnecting from destructive social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It means a clean up of the wardrobe and a clean up of the home. Books, posters, pictures, statues; all must be reviewed in the light of God’s truth and holiness.
 - v. Illustration: Chris Killen (Northern Ireland) – Excerpt from chapter entitled “Gallons of drink all down the sink”.

The astounding thing was that he seemed to be seeing everything in a new and different light. It was a strange, almost startling, sensation. On reaching the kitchen in his lingering tour-of-the-downstairs,

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Chris stopped suddenly in the doorway, as though pulled up short by an invisible but nonetheless powerful set of reins, and focused fixedly on the fridge.

The memory of what he had last seen in there jarred him to the bottom of his now saved soul. He took three or four steps across the kitchen with as much haste as the spent state of his body would allow. Then he opened the door of the fridge. What a sight met his gaze! The fridge was jam-packed full, of alcoholic drink of all kinds! There were cans and bottles of beer and lager. They seemed to be fighting for a place in the tray on the door and in six-packs on the shelves. One shelf had been removed to allow the bigger bottles of wine, gin and vodka to stand up straight and tall at the back. Small bottles of schnapps, like rows of little toy soldiers, lined the front of the shelves and other single bottles filled in all the remaining available spaces. There had never ever been much food for food in the Killen fridge. Just drink.

Christ stood stock still. Rooted to the spot. Spellbound. Where once the sight of so much booze all in the one place would have excited him, he now found that it sickened him. He didn't want it. Had no desire for it. Felt he must dispose of it. And at once! "Before I do anything else, Linda, the first thing I must do is get rid of all this drink!" he shouted to his wife, not realizing that she was standing in the doorway he had just left, three yards behind him. "All right, Chris," she replied. If that is what you want to do, go ahead!" She then stood back and watched in total amazement as Chris emptied their fridge. Can after can was ring-pulled open and their contents poured, foaming and frothing, down the sink. Bottle after bottle was uncorked or unscrewed, and their contents followed, foaming and frothing down the sink.

When, after about ten minutes, Chris had finished his banish-the-booze offensive he was left with three distinct and different things. He had a bench littered with empty bottles and cans, a kitchen that smelt worse than any pub he had ever been to in his life, and a deep settled peace in his soul."

c. The Protest against the Church (Vs. 21-41)

- i. The Source of the Protest (Vs. 21-28). Charles Hodge writes, "One of the most lucrative occupations of the people was the manufacture of miniature representations of the temple, wrought in silver, which found an extensive sale, both foreign and domestic."
- ii. The Site of the Protest (Vs. 28-34)
- iii. The Silencing of the Protest (Vs. 35-41)
- iv. Principle: When the work of the Gospel is going forward and lives are being transformed, expect opposition! Satan will not let a genuine work of God go on unchallenged and unopposed. But in the end, Satan cannot stop a Divine work of God. The Bible is an unstoppable Book and the Gospel, an unstoppable Message.

B. The Theme of the Epistle (Eph. 1:3; 2:6)

1. The key phrases are "in Christ", "in him" and "in whom". Paul writes to unveil to the Ephesian believers the glory and wonder of God's saving grace. Paul's prayers reveal that his heart's desire, as moved by the Holy Ghost, was that the believers might know the riches of their salvation (See Eph. 1:16-23; 3:14-21) and the dimensions of God's love. "The great design of Ephesians is to unfold the glories of the plan of redemption, as embracing both Jews and Gentiles, and designed to be the great medium for the manifestation of the grace and wisdom of God to all intelligent creatures." (Hodge)
2. Ephesians gives us a heavenly view of things. Another key phrase is "heavenly places", occurring 4 times (1:3, 20; 2:6, 3:10). In Ephesians, we follow the river of God's grace all the way to its Divine source at the throne of God and in His Eternal heart.

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3. Pastor Richard Hester summarizes the purpose for writing as follows:
 - a. To instruct them of their privileges and responsibilities in Christ.
 - b. To explain more about the mystery of the church, which was God's institution to take out a new people from all nations and make them one in Christ.
 - c. To prepare them for Christian warfare.
4. In Ephesians we see God's ultimate purpose is His own glory. "In chap. 1 our blessings in Christ are for "the praise of his glory"; in chap. 2 Jew and Gentile are made alive "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace"; in chap. 3 through the church the manifest wisdom of God is displayed.

C. The Structure (outline) of the Epistle

1. One suggested outline of the Book is as follows:
 - The Believer's Wealth in Christ (Eph. 1-3) – these chapters introduce us to the immense wealth we have "in Christ" through salvation.
 - a. For example, we are chosen (1:4), predestinated (1:5), accepted (1:6), redeemed (1:7), forgiven (1:7), given an inheritance (1:11), sealed (1:13), quickened (2:1, 5), raised with Christ (2:6), seated with Christ (2:6), saved by grace through faith (2:8-9), ordained to good works (2:10), made nigh by the blood (2:13), reconciled to God by the cross (2:16), made a fellow citizen with the saints (2:19); and made a part of God's household, the church (2:19-22).
 - b. Riches in Ephesians:
 - i. Riches of grace (1:7; 2:7)
 - ii. Riches of glory (1:18; 3:16)
 - iii. Riches of mercy (2:4)
 - iv. Riches of Christ (3:8)
 - c. Illustration as told by Wiersbe: Hetty Green went down in history at "America's Greatest Miser" ('miser' means "a person who lives in wretched circumstances in order to save and hoard money"). She ate cold oatmeal because it cost to heat it. Her son had to suffer a leg amputation, because she delayed so long in looking for a free clinic that his case became incurable. She lived like she was poor but when she died in 1916, she left an estate valued at over \$100 million. She was so foolish that she hastened her own death by bringing on an attack of apoplexy (stroke) while arguing about the value of drinking skimmed milk! "But Hetty Green is an illustration of too many believers today. They have limitless spiritual wealth at their disposal, and yet they live like paupers."
 - The Believer's Walk with Christ (Eph. 4-6:9) – the word 'walk' occurs 6 times in the second half of the book (Chap. 4-6). See 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15. We are to walk...
 - a. Worthy (4:1)
 - b. Differently (4:17)

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- c. Lovingly (5:2)
- d. Purely (5:8)
- e. Circumspectly (5:15)
- The Believer's Warfare for Christ (Eph. 4:10-24)
- 2. Another suggested outline of the book is as follows:
 - Sit (Our Position) (Eph. 1-3)
 - Walk (Our Practice) (Eph. 4-6:9)
 - Stand (Our Posture) (Eph. 6:10-24)
- 3. A simply two-point outline is:
 - Doctrine (Eph. 1-3)
 - Duty (Eph. 4-6)

II. THE SALUTATION OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS (VS. 1-2)

A. The Author (Vs. 1a)

- 1. His Ambassadorship for Christ
 - a. The word 'apostle' in its general sense = means "a sent one, one sent on a mission".
 - b. The word 'apostle' in its official sense = means one of the twelve, chosen to a special and temporary office for the establishment of the church (Eph. 2:20)
- 2. His Appointment by Christ

B. The Audience (Vs. 1b-2)

- 1. The Position of the Ephesian Christians (Vs. 1b)
 - a. The word 'saint' means "set apart, holy". The word is translated 'holy' 161 times in the N.T. and 'saints' 61 times.
 - i. Nine times in this brief letter, Paul addresses his readers as saints (1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18).
 - ii. Warren Wiersbe: "Many thing 'saints' are dead people who have achieved such spiritual eminence that they have been given that special title 'saints'. But these saints are alive (Eph. 2:1-3)!"
 - iii. Phillips: "To be a saint at Ephesus was to be like a lovely lily in a stagnant pond. Ephesus rivaled Corinth as the "filth capital" of the Roman world."
 - iv. Note: It is of interest that Paul uses the word 'temple' to describe the Ephesian church (2:21).
- 2. The Prayer for the Ephesian Christians (Vs. 2)
 - a. Prayer for Grace = the word occurs 12 times in this book. The word means "God's kindness towards undeserving people" (Wiersbe).
 - i. Saving Grace
 - ii. Sanctifying Grace
 - b. Prayer for Peace
 - i. Saving Peace
 - ii. Sanctifying Peace

Conclusion: Are you in Christ? Are you walking the separated path as a believer now that you are saved?

Blessed in Heaven for Life on Earth

Text: Ephesians 1:1-3

Introduction:

1. Paul writes Ephesians around A.D. 61 during his first imprisonment in Rome (See Acts 28:16-31). Paul refers to himself as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ” (3:1), the “prisoner of the Lord” (4:1) and as “an ambassador in bonds” (6:20). Philippians, Colossians and Philemon were also “prison Epistles” written during the same time period.
2. Outline of the Book:
 - Our Wealth in Christ (Chp. 1-3)
 - Our Walk with Christ (Chp. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare for Christ (Chp. 6:9-24)
3. The theme of Ephesians can be summarized in the phrase “in Christ”. Ephesians has been given such titles as “the believer’s bank”, “the Christian’s checkbook”, and “the treasure house of the Bible.” Knowing our position and who we are in Christ is essential to Christian living.
4. In these opening verses of Ephesians, we are introduced to the author (Paul), the audience (the Ephesians) and the aim (the theme).

I. THE AUTHOR (VS. 1a)

A. His Ambassadorship for Christ – “an apostle”

Consider the word Apostle in its...

1. General sense
 - a. The word Apostle means “a sent one, one sent on a mission, a messenger”. The idea in the word “not only included the sending of the messenger but more importantly the authorization of the messenger.” (Hoehner)
 - b. There is a sense where we are all sent ones, ambassadors for Christ sent to a lost and dying world (2 Cor. 5:20).
2. Official sense
 - a. The word refers to one of the twelve Apostles of Christ, chosen to a special and temporary office for the establishment of the church (Eph. 2:20). The foundation is the first part of the building. It only needs to be laid once and then the structure can be built on top.
 - b. The qualifications for an Apostle are outlined in Acts 1:21-22. To qualify as an Apostle, you had to have been with the Lord in his earthly ministry and be an eyewitness of His resurrected body. Paul qualified as He saw Christ (1 Cor. 9:1), was one “born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8) and was commissioned as the “Apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13).

B. His Appointment by Christ – “by the will of God”

1. Paul was not a self-made man who entered on this ministry because he thought it was a good idea. He was Divinely set apart for His calling by God.
2. Paul therefore writes with Apostolic authority.

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II. THE AUDIENCE (VS. 1B-2)

A. The Position of the Ephesian Christians (Vs. 1b)

They are described as...

1. Saints at Ephesus

a. "the saints"

- i. Nine times in this brief letter, Paul addresses his readers as saints (1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18). The word 'saints' comes from the root word 'hagios' which means "set apart, holy, dedicated to". The word is translated 'holy' 161 times in the N.T. and 'saints' 61 times. The words saint, sanctify, sanctification, hallow, holy and holiness are all translations of the same root word.
- ii. Historical background: Wuest explains, "Paul took this word right out of the terminology of the pagan Greek religions. In Greek it meant "devoted to the gods." For instance, a Greek worshipper would bring an offering to the god as a gift. He devoted it to that god. Or a temple would be built and devoted to a certain god. The building was thereby set apart from any secular use, and separated to a religious one. The building was therefore holy (not in the sense of pure) but holy in the sense of being non-secular, and therefore religious in nature. The term was also used of persons who were devoted to the service of a god." For the believer then it means "a set apart for God person, a consecrated person."
- iii. A saint is "not a sinless person but a separated person – separated to God in Christ Jesus." (Harry Ironside)
- iv. The teaching of the Bible is that the believer is holy and therefore is to live holy (1 Peter. 1:14-16)! "It is not what we do that determines who we are. It is who we are that determines what we do." (Dr. George T. Crabb) "We do not become saints by saintliness, but we should be characterized by saintliness because we are saints." (Ironside)
- v. Legalism says "to be holy in Christ you must do this or that". License says "because you are in Christ and have experienced God's grace, you don't have to do this and that." Neither position is correct. The Biblical position is that I am holy in Christ and because of that, I live differently. In fact, every area (all manner of conversation) is affected. E.g. what I will and won't say, what I will and won't think, where I will and won't go, what I will and will not watch, what I will and will not listen to, what I will and won't drink, who I will and will not fellowship with and what I will and won't wear.
- vi. Wuest writes, "It is easy to see that this set apart position of separateness demands a separation of life in his (the believer's) experience, separation from the age system of evil, separation in his own sphere of life from everything

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that would interfere in the least from the worship and service which is due to the God to whom he is set apart.”

- b. “at Ephesus”
 - i. They were both “at Ephesus” and “in Christ”. The believer operates in two spheres: the human and the Divine, the visible and the invisible.
 - ii. Ephesus was a wicked place but they were holy, separated ones in the midst of that evil place.
 - iii. Phillips: “To be a saint at Ephesus was to be like a lovely lily in a stagnant pond. Ephesus rivaled Corinth as the “filth capital” of the Roman world.”

2. Faithful in Christ Jesus

- a. ‘faithful’ = means believing. They were believers in Jesus Christ and that distinguished them from the pagan, idolatrous city in which they lived.
- b. “in Christ” = the key phrase of the Epistle. These believers were in Christ and therefore were recipients of all the riches of Christ. Every individual is either in Adam or in Christ (see Rom. 5:12-21). **Are YOU in Christ?**

B. The Prayer for the Ephesian Christians (Vs. 2)

- 1. Prayer for Grace – “grace be to you”
 - a. The word occurs 12 times in this book. Wuest explains that in classical Greek, grace was “something conferred freely, with no expectation of return, and finding its only motive in the bounty and free-heartedness of the giver. It was also used to describe an act that was beyond the ordinary course of what might be expected. This favor was always done to a friend, never to an enemy.” The grace of God is infinitely higher as it was shown to those who were his enemies (Rom. 5:6-10). The word therefore means, “God’s kindness towards undeserving people” (Wiersbe). It is God’s unmerited, undeserved favor.
 - b. There are two experiences of grace in the believer’s life:
 - i. Saving Grace – experienced at the moment of salvation. Grace means there is no room for earning one’s salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). Think of it, we were bitter enemies, sinning against God and yet out of bounty and free-heartedness of His great heart, Christ came and died in our place that we might be redeemed. The Ephesian Christians had already experienced this grace.
 - ii. Sanctifying (serving) Grace – experienced day by day in the Christian life as God enables us to obey and serve Him. The Christian experience from start to finish is all of God’s grace. We are saved by grace and we live by His grace! It was this sanctifying grace that Paul desired for the Ephesian believers.
- 2. Prayer for Peace – “and peace”
 - a. The word ‘peace’ “comes from the root word meaning “to join.” That is, when things are disjointed, there is a lack of harmony and well-being. When they are joined together, there is both.” Through the “blood of His cross” (Col. 1:20) Christ “bound

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together again the believing sinner and God, thus making peace.” (Wuest)

- b. There are two experiences of grace in the believer’s life:
 - i. Salvation Peace – peace with God that is enjoyed at the moment of salvation. Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.” You will never experience this peace unless you first received God’s gift of grace.
 - ii. Sanctifying (serving) Peace – the peace “of God” ministered to us each day by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Col. 3:15 “And let **the peace of God** rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” Philippians 4:7 “And **the peace of God**, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Peace is “a spirit of rest in all the changing circumstances of life.” (William Macdonald)
3. The Source of grace and peace – “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ”. These virtues are stated as coming equally from both the Father and the Son. This means Christ is co-equal and co-eternally with the Father.

III. THE AIM (VS. 3)

Verse 3-14 is a single long sentence in the Greek. It has been described as “a magnificent gateway” to the Epistle and a “golden chain of many links.” Verse 3 marks the introduction to this whole section. Consider four truths about the spiritual blessings we have received through salvation:

A. The Source of our Blessings – “blessed be the God...who hath blessed us”

1. The Blessed One – “blessed by the God”
 - a. ‘blessed’ = “has the idea of someone deserving appreciation, honor and praise.” (Harold Hoehner) The word is made up of ‘lego’ (to speak) and ‘eu’ (good), thus to speak well of (our word eulogize). Paul is praising God for all the riches of His grace.
 - b. “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” = “Christ proceeds from the Father by eternal generation in a birth that never took place because it always was.” (Wuest)
 - c. “our Lord Jesus” = God becomes our Father and Christ becomes ours when we are saved.
2. The Blessor – “who hath blessed us”
 - a. In the O.T. God is said to bestow blessing over 400 times (Hester).
 - b. Our blessing of God is in word, His blessing of us is in deed. He confers benefits upon us.

B. The Scope of our Blessings – “all spiritual blessings”

1. ‘all’ = “God cannot give us more than He has already given us in His Son.” (MacArthur)
2. This means that in Christ you possess everything you need for the Christian life!

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3. Col. 2:9-10 "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. **And ye are complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power:"
4. 2 Peter 1:3 "According as his divine power hath given unto us **all things that pertain unto life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
5. Macarthur: "Because we are in Christ, Christ's riches are our riches, His resources are our resources, His righteousness is our righteousness, and His power is our power. His position is our position; where He is, we are. His privilege is our privilege: what He is we are. His possession is our possession: what He has, we have. His practice is our practice; what He does, we do."

C. The Sacredness of our Blessings – "spiritual blessings"

1. "Spiritual" is in contrast to that which is natural and material. It refers to the things of the Spirit of God, the blessings related to heaven rather than earth (heavenly places).
2. God does bless us with His provisions for our daily needs in this life but the greatest, most precious blessings are heavenly rather than earthly.

D. The Sphere of our Blessings – "in heavenly places in Christ"

1. "in heavenly places"
 - a. As Christians, our lives are centered in heaven. We are citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20) and our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20) and therefore, our focus is to be on things in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20; Col. 3:1).
 - b. Wiersbe: "The Christian really operates in two spheres: the human and the divine, the visible and the invisible. Physically, he is on the earth in a human body, but spiritually he is seated with Christ in the heavenly sphere – and it is this heavenly sphere that provides the power and direction for the earthly walk."
2. "in Christ"
 - a. This truth ought to captivate our hearts and minds. Christ is in us (Col. 1:27) and we are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
 - b. Chafer: "To be in Christ, which is the portion of all who are saved, is to partake of all that Christ has done, all that He is, and all that He ever will be."

Conclusion:

1. Are you in Christ? Have you repented of your sin and received Christ as your Saviour?
2. Are you in Christ? If so, what effect is that truth having on your life? Are you living differently from the world?
3. Are you in Christ? If so, do you worship, praise and thank God for His amazing grace?

Our Wealth in Christ (Part 1)

Text: Ephesians 1:4-7

Introduction:

1. Outline of the Book:
 - Our Wealth in Christ (Chp. 1-3)
 - Our Walk with Christ (Chp. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare for Christ (Chp. 6:9-24)
2. Verse 3-14 are all one sentence in the Greek text indicating that they are one unit of thought. They reveal the many facets of our salvation. It is like picking up a beautiful jewel, holding it to the light and looking at it from different angles, and enjoying its various sparkles and flashes of color. In these verses we have the golden chain that links our salvation with eternity past and eternity future. The whole truth is immense and beyond our comprehension. Little did we know in that moment when we believed, that we had been swept into the eternal plan of God.)
3. The Three Persons of the Godhead are seen in these verses, each performing a role in my salvation.
 - Blessings from God the Father (Vs. 3-6)
 - Blessings from God the Son (Vs. 7-12)
 - Blessings from God the Spirit (Vs. 13-14)
4. For our outline, we will study 4 key words in the verses before us today.

I. CHOSEN (VS. 4)

A. The Person in whom we are Chosen (Vs. 4a)

1. What Election does **not** mean:
 - a. Election does not mean God does not desire all men to be saved.
 - i. 1 Tim. 2:4 “Who will have **all men to be saved**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
 - ii. 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.”
 - b. Election does not mean man does not have a genuine choice to receive God’s offer of salvation:
 - i. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - ii. Rom. 10:13 “For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
 - iii. Rev. 22:17 “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever** will, let him take the water of life freely.”
 - c. Election does not mean Christ only died for the elect and not the whole world:

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- i. 1 Tim. 2:6 “Who gave himself a **ransom for all**, to be testified in due time.”
 - ii. Heb. 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death **for every man**.”
 - iii. 1 John 2:2 “And he is the propitiation for our sins: **and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world**.”
2. What Election **does** mean
- a. Election means we are chosen in accordance with God’s attribute of foreknowledge – 1 Peter 1:2 “**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” The word foreknowledge comes from the Greek word προγνωσις (prognosis) which means “to foreknow, to know before.”
 - i. Vine notes, “God’s foreknowledge involves His electing grace, but this does not preclude human will. He foreknows the exercise of faith which brings salvation.”
 - ii. In relation to my own salvation, I am at rest in this truth, namely, that before the foundations of the world were laid, God the Father, looking down through the ages to come, saw me as a five year old boy under conviction of the Holy Ghost, repenting of my sin and receiving by faith the Son of God as my personal Saviour. On the basis of His foreknowledge, His justice, His mercy, His love, His holiness, and every other divine attribute, God chose me and made some plans concerning my life in time and in eternity.
 - iii. Part of our problem in understanding this truth is the fact that we are finite and God is infinite. We are time bound creatures but God inhabits eternity. “Since God lives in the present tense, there is to Him no time difference between the moment He chose me and the moment I chose Him.” (Phillips)
 - b. Election means we are chosen in Christ – “in him”. This is key to understanding our election. Christ is the chosen One of the Father and because we are in Christ as believers, we are also His chosen ones.
3. Illustration by Harry Ironside – Imagine the door of salvation, the entrance into the narrow way that leads to life eternal. On it is plainly depicted the text, “Whosoever will, let him come.” Every man is invited, no one need hesitate. God’s invitation is absolutely sincere. For those who enter that door, they find written on the inside of the door the words, “Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.”

B. The Period when we were Chosen (Vs. 4b)

1. “before the foundation of the world” = salvation finds its source in the heart of the eternal God in eternity past. This is impossible for

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us to fully comprehend as finite, time bound creatures. But it means that in eternity past, God foreknew that I would respond to the call of the Gospel and chose me on that basis. These words breath with the truth of the believer's eternal security. If I am truly saved, it is impossible for me to lose that.

2. Jesus Christ is described as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8)

C. The Purpose why we were Chosen (Vs. 4c)

1. "that we should be" = we are chosen to a blessed position in Christ. Election and Predestination primarily have in view my privileged position in Christ after salvation.
2. 'holy' = set apart (same root word as 'saints' in Vs. 1). We are separated unto God. "Thus, we are in our character as Christians, a separated people, separated from evil and dedicated to the worship and service of God."
3. "without blame" = the word means to be without defect or blemish. The same word is translated "without blemish" (Eph. 5:27; 1 Peter 1:19); 'unblameable' (Col. 1:22); "without spot" (Heb. 9:14); 'faultless' (Jude 1:24); "without fault" (Rev. 14:5). In Christ, so far as my position before God is concerned, I am without spot or blemish, clothed in the perfect garments of His pure righteousness. This standing will be fully realized when I am glorified with a new body.
4. "in love" = God's choice was made out of His love.

II. PREDESTINATED (VS. 5-6A)

A. The Position of our Predestination (Vs. 5a)

1. "predestinate" = means "to mark out the boundary or limits of any place or thing. When used of persons it means to determine his destiny." (Wuest). It means "to appoint beforehand" (A.T. Robertson), "to predetermine" (Wuest). The word refers primarily to what God does for saved people and it has to do with our predestination to a special position of blessing in Christ. It is not God from eternity saying, "This man goes to heaven and this man to hell."
 - a. John Phillips writes, "This word is not used in connection with the lost. God does not predestinate certain people to go to hell and others to go to heaven. The concept of predestination is reserved in Scripture for those who are in God's family."
 - b. Harry Ironside adds, "There is no such thing taught in the Word of God as predestination to eternal condemnation. If men are lost, they are lost because they do not come to Christ. When men do come to Christ, they learn the wonderful secret that God has foreknown it all from eternity, and that He had settled it before the world came into existence that they were to share the glory of His Son throughout endless ages. D. L. Moody used to say in his quaint way, when people talked about the subject of election, — 'the whosoever wills are the elect, and the whosoever wont's are the non-elect.' And so, you can settle it for yourself whether you will be among the elect of God or not."
2. 'unto' = with a view to, indicates the purpose of our predestination.

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3. “adoption of children” = the word is made up of “to place” and “an adult son”. Thus, the word refers to the act of God placing these selected ones as adult sons.
 - a. The word literally means the full placing as sons (Ironside). In the N.T. adoption “means placing a believer in the family of God as a mature, adult son with all the privileges and responsibilities of sonship (Gal. 4:4-7).” (Macdonald)
 - b. Historical background as explained by Harry Ironside: “In the day when our Bible was written a man might have a number of wives and some who were really his slaves. He would have to select those children among whom he wished to divide his estate...He would take those whom he selected down to the forum (public square), and there confess them openly before the proper authority as his sons and then go through a ceremony of adoption. From that day on they were recognized as his heirs. We have been born into the family of God by regeneration and thus made children of God. We have received the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of adoption, and God has marked us out as those who will share everything with the Son for all eternity. We are adopted sons and born-again children.”
 - c. Illustration: A business sign that reads Henry Brown and Sons. It implies Henry Brown’s sons are partners in their father’s business with positions of responsibility and privilege.
 - d. Through salvation we enter into the privileged standing of our adoption now but there is also a future aspect of our adoption when we will receive a resurrection body. Romans 8:23 “And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for the adoption, to wit**, the redemption of our body.”

B. The Person of our Predestination (Vs. 5b)

1. “by Jesus Christ” = Christ is the channel, the agent through whom we are brought to this standing of mature sons and daughters before the Father.
2. Again, we see the truth of the mediatorial ministry of the Son of God (1 Tim. 2:5). Christ is everything and everything is in Christ for the believer.

C. The Purpose of our Predestination (Vs. 5c-6a)

There are two Divine purposes behind this truth of the believer’s predestination both introduced by the preposition ‘to’:

1. For the Pleasure of God (Vs. 5c)
 - a. “to himself” = for Himself, for His own satisfaction. What blessed words! God is the focus and the grand purpose of it all. The desire in the heart of the eternal God is that I might be for Him, that I might be His.
 - b. “the good pleasure of His will” = this answers the question, “Why did God do it?” “The word “good pleasure” means “because it pleased him.” The word ‘will’ means a desire which proceeds from one’s heart or emotions.” (Wuest)

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- c. John Bunyan: "Oh, this Lamb of God! He had a whole heaven to himself, myriads of angels to do His bidding, but these could not satisfy Him. He must have sinners to share it with Him."
2. For the Praise of God (Vs. 6a)
 - a. "to the praise" = God is working for His own glory, that He might be praised and magnified for His glorious grace.
 - b. "of the glory" = glory is an attribute of grace. In the New Testament, 'glory' has the idea of the reflection of the essence of one's being, the summation of all of one's attributes. In reference to God it refers to His splendour, power and radiance."
 - c. Challenge: How often do we praise God for His saving grace?

III. ACCEPTED (VS. 6)

There are two points in relation to our acceptance. We are...

A. Accepted in God's Grace – "wherein"

1. The word 'wherein' means "in which" and refers to the previous word 'grace'. We are only accepted on the basis of God's grace and never on the basis of our own works. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone.
2. 'accepted' = also comes from the root word 'grace' (charis). "The word means to bestow with grace, to begrace with grace and refers to an abundant demonstration of grace." (Hoehner) The same word is translated "highly favoured" in Luke 1:28 (Gabriel's words to Mary).

B. Accepted in God's Son – "in the beloved"

1. Jesus Christ is the Beloved One of the Father.
 - a. Mark 1:11 "And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my **beloved** Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - b. John 17:24 "...for thou **lovedst me** before the foundation of the world."
 - c. Jesus could say concerning His relationship to the Father, "...I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29)
 - d. Col. 1:13 "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his **dear Son**:" (lit. the Son of His love)
2. Because as a believer I am in "the beloved" that means I am also the object of the Father's eternal love. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, **and has loved them, as thou hast loved me.**"
3. The world by and large works on the principle of conditional acceptance. As long as you perform to a certain standard the world will accept you among its company. God's acceptance of the believer is on the basis of his relationship in Christ, the King's Son.

IV. REDEEMED (VS. 7)

With the mention of Christ in Verse 6 ('beloved'), the focus now turns to the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son. Observe three truths concerning our redemption:

A. The Picture of our Redemption (Vs. 7a)

1. "we have" = present tense. "This redemption is an abiding fact from the past, through the present, and into the future. The fact of redemption is always a present reality with the believing Christian." (Wuest)
2. 'redemption' = the word is made up of 'apo' (away from) and 'lutrosis' (to be free, loosed). So, it literally means "to be loosed away" from something. We have been loosed away (set free) from sin, condemnation and the law's curse. (Ironside) It means "to redeem one by paying the price, a releasing effected by payment of ransom." (Wuest) It means "to purchase and set free by paying a price." (Wiersbe)
3. Webster defines the word as follows – "To purchase back; to ransom; to liberate or rescue from captivity or bondage, or from any obligation or liability to suffer or to be forfeited, by paying an equivalent; as, to *redeem* prisoners or captured goods; to *redeem* a pledge."

B. The Price of our Redemption (Vs. 7b)

1. "through his blood" = the price that was paid for our salvation. Salvation is free but it is not cheap. We are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
2. The blood speaks of atonement – it is more than just death that is in view here. It is sacrificial death that involves the shedding of blood as the payment for sin. The blood of bulls and goats provided a temporary covering for sin but could never wash away sin (Heb. 10:4). Christ's blood provided a perfect and eternal covering for our sin.
 - a. We are purchased by the blood (Acts 20:28)
 - b. We are justified by the blood (Rom 5:9)
 - c. We are redeemed & forgiven by the blood (Eph 1:7, Col 1:14)
 - d. We are cleansed by the blood (Rev. 1:5; 7:14)
 - e. We have peace by the blood (Col 1:20)
3. The blood speaks of life – Lev. 17:11 "For the **life** of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: **for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.**" Don't you see? Christ gave His life for you that you might live.

C. The Power of our Redemption (Vs. 7c)

1. 'forgiveness' = means to send or carry away. "In classical literature the word was used to describe the cancellation or release from a legal charge, financial obligation, or punishment. The basis meaning is 'release'. In the New Testament it refers to the permanent cancellation of or release from the punishment for sin because it has been paid for by Christ's sacrifice." (Hoehner)
Forgiveness is the fruit/result of our redemption. We can be forgiven because the price of our sin was paid when Christ's blood was shed

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on Calvary. God's forgiveness was so complete, we stand before His throne as clear as if we had never committed a sin.

a. Illustration: The scape goat (goat of departure) in the O.T.

Leviticus 16:21-22 *"And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and **confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities** unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."*

b. "As far as the east is from the west, **so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.**" Psalm 103:12

c. John 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which **taketh away** the sin of the world."

2. "riches of his grace" = the measure of our forgiveness. "The degree of this forgiveness was controlled, dominated by the riches, wealth, abundance, plenitude of God's grace." (Wuest) "If we can measure the riches of God's grace, then we can measure how fully He has forgiven us. His grace is infinite! So is His forgiveness!" (Macdonald)
Can you estimate the riches of God's grace?

Conclusion:

1. Have you received God's gift of grace?
2. Are you saved? If so, are you praising God for His grace? Are you living a holy life consistent with your new position in Christ?
3. Where are you getting your sense of worth and acceptance from? Does it come from your position in Christ or are you seeking it from men?

Our Wealth in Christ (Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 1:8-14

Introduction:

1. Verse 3-14 are all one sentence in the Greek text indicating that they are one unit of thought. They reveal the many facets of our salvation. It is like picking up a beautiful jewel, holding it to the light and looking at it from different angles, and enjoying its various sparkles and flashes of color. In these verses we have the golden chain that links our salvation with eternity past and eternity future. The whole truth is immense and beyond our comprehension. Little did we know in that moment when we believed, that we had been swept into the eternal plan of God.)
2. The Three Persons of the Godhead are seen in these verses, each performing a role in my salvation.
 - Blessings from God the Father (Vs. 3-6)
 - Blessings from God the Son (Vs. 7-12)
 - Blessings from God the Spirit (Vs. 13-14)
3. Review of last lesson: We saw that we were chosen in Christ, predestined to adoption (sonship), accepted and redeemed (Vs. 3-7).
4. For our outline, we will use 4 words to summarize our wealth in Christ described in these verses.

I. ENLIGHTENED (VS. 8-10)

The blessing in these verses concerns the fact that God has revealed His will to us. "Paul is now going to discuss God's grace that is given to enable believers to understand his will." (Harold Hoehner)

A. The Richness of it (Vs. 8)

1. 'wherein' = refers back to the previous word 'grace'. God's grace is the basis of everything He does for us as His children.
2. 'abounded' = has the idea of lavished, overflowed. Same word also translated 'abundance' (Lk. 21:4; 2 Cor. 9:2); 'excel' (1 Cor. 14:12), 'exceed' (2 Cor. 3:9), 'increase' (1 Thess. 4:10).
 - a. "It means God's grace was manifested to us in superabundance. It is an oversize grace. It is more than enough to save and keep saved for time and eternity, every sinner who comes to God in Christ Jesus." (Wuest) It means "God poured this grace unsparingly on us." (Hoehner) As the hymn Here is Love puts it, "Grace and love like mighty rivers poured incessant from above, and heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love."
 - b. Between the phrases "riches of his grace" and "abounded toward us" we get a sense of just how immense and boundless our salvation is. Rom. 5:20 "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did **much more abound.**" Like the hymn says, "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt."

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3. "in all wisdom and prudence" = the specific point in view. God in grace has made us wise concerning His eternal plan. He has revealed it to us.
 - a. 'wisdom' = in the N.T., it refers to the highest and noblest in wisdom (Trench). It is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense (Wuest). It has more of a theoretical knowledge in view.
 - b. 'prudence' = understanding. In particular the ability to rightly apply wisdom, hence more of a practical knowledge. Webster states, "Prudence is principally in reference to actions to be done, and due means, order, season and method of doing or not doing."

B. The Revelation of it (Vs. 9-10)

1. The Mystery Declared (Vs. 9)
 - a. "made known" = revealed
 - b. 'mystery' = not something eerie or mysterious but a truth previously concealed and now revealed (See Eph. 3:5). It is a sacred secret, once hidden but now revealed to God's people. The word occurs six times in Ephesians. It refers to New Testament truth revealed through the Apostles. There are a number of mystery doctrines in the New Testament such as the rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51); the church (Eph. 3:5-6); the believer indwelt by Christ (Col. 1:27) and the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16). Which mystery is Paul speaking about here in Ephesians 1? That is explained in the next verse.
 - c. "according to his good pleasure" = same as back in Vs. 5. We see God acting in accordance with His perfect wisdom, will and purposes. "This glorious plan finds its origins in the eternal will of God, apart from any outside influences." (William Macdonald)
2. The Mystery Detailed (Vs. 10)
 - a. What is this dispensation?
 - i. 'dispensation' = means a stewardship or administration. Our word 'economy' comes from this word. It means "the management of a household, or of household affairs, the management, oversight, administration of others property, the office of a manager, overseer, stewardship." (Wuest) We refer to "government administrations" which gives us a sense for the meaning of the word. It refers to God's management or administration of a particular period or age of time. We believe there are 7 discernible dispensations in the Word of God. An obvious one is the dispensation of law which went from Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary. Now we are in the dispensation of grace, the church age.
 - ii. "fulness of times" = the word fulness has the sense of "to bring to a completion, having reached the goal" and the word 'times' means 'seasons' as opposed to time in general. "By the fulness of these seasons is meant the time when the succession of the ages has come to a close in the plan of God. We are now living in the age of Grace. The season or dispensation which will complete

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the succession of seasons is the Messianic Kingdom.”
(Wuest) So it is in reference to an administration by God of a certain period of human history designated as “the fulness of times.”

- b. What happens in this dispensation?
 - i. “gather together in one” = means to gather again under one head, to sum up, to gather up into one. (Linguistic Key) “Sin has created a disharmony, a division in every part of the universe like myriad strands contradictory to each other. But God has His plan and will gather all these strands up into one unified result of reconciliation in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ.” (Richard Hester)
 - ii. “all things” = all created beings and things. See Rom. 8:19-22. “God contemplates a regathering, a restoration to that former condition when all things were in perfect unity...The mystery of God’s will includes the restoration of this unity in and through Christ; one kingdom on earth and in heaven – a new heaven and a new earth in which shall dwell righteousness, and ‘the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God’” (Wuest)
 - iii. Col. 1:20 “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him **to reconcile all things** unto himself; by him, *I say, whether **they be things in earth, or things in heaven.***”
 - iv. It seems to refer to the future Millennial reign when the cosmos will be under the headship and rulership of Christ. Ultimately, it looks beyond that to the new heaven and new earth and the eternal reign.

II. ENRICHED (VS. 11-12)

A. The Provision of our Inheritance (Vs. 11a)

1. “in whom” = in Christ. We have this **inheritance** because through salvation we are in God’s Son. We both have an inheritance and we are ourselves an inheritance (Psalm 2:8). Romans 8:17 tells us, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”
2. The Apostle Peter gives us further insights into the magnitude of this inheritance – “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance **incorruptible**, and **undefiled**, and that **fadeth not away, reserved** in heaven for you,” (1 Peter 1:3-4)

B. The Predestination to our Inheritance (Vs. 11b)

1. The word ‘predestinated’ means to mark out beforehand, to predetermine. It is translated “determined before” (Acts 4:28) and ‘ordained’ (1 Cor. 2:7). In Vs. 5 the word was used in relation to our adoption (sonship), now it is used in relation to our inheritance. We

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were previously marked out for this inheritance according to the purpose of His will.

2. The wonderful truth conveyed by the word 'predestination' is that in His love and grace, God Almighty made plans for His children to enter into glorious blessings in Christ. God predetermined that all who trust in Christ as Saviour be blessed with:
 - a. Adoption – made a part of God's family with all the rights, privileges and blessings of adult sons and daughters in full standing (Vs. 5; Rom. 8:23)
 - b. Inheritance (Vs. 11) – granted a glorious inheritance in the gift of God's Holy Spirit at salvation (Vs. 14) and much more awaiting us in heaven.
 - c. Christlikeness (Rom. 8:29) – God determined that his children would become like Christ. I need to cooperate with the working of the Spirit in the process of sanctification but let us remember that "...it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) and that we can be "...confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Phil. 1:6). So, stop trying to live for Christ and rather let Christ live through you. Stop trying to work for Christ but rather let Christ work through you.
3. "according to the purpose" = This predestination was according to God's Divine purpose. The word 'counsel' has the idea of intelligence and deliberation. It again highlights that God's Sovereign choices were not random, thoughtless exercises but were in accordance with His Divine wisdom. God works all things according to the standard of the counsel of His will.

C. The Purpose of our Inheritance (Vs. 12a)

1. This is the second time this truth is mentioned in these verses (See Vs. 6). The grand design and purpose of it all is the glory of God, that He might receive praise.
2. Expositors: "This clause states the ultimate end which God had in view in foreordaining us to be made His inheritance. It was not for our own privilege but that through us His glory might be set forth."
3. Isaiah 43:21 "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."

III. SAVED (VS. 12b-13a)

Paul now speaks about the salvation both he and his readers had experienced. We note the simple steps of salvation in these verses:

A. They Heard the Message of Salvation (Vs. 13a)

This was the hearing of faith (Rom. 10:17). The message they heard is described in two ways:

1. The Word of Truth – Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6), the Word of God is truth (John 17:17) and the Gospel is the truth (Col. 1:5). Truth is the opposite of lies and falsehood. Truth is reality.
2. The Gospel of Salvation – the Gospel means good news (1 Cor. 15:1-4) and it's the good news of salvation. Salvation means to rescue, save, deliver. The good news is that you can be rescued,

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you can be saved from your sin because Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried and then rose again the third day. Salvation comes through faith in the Gospel, not through baptism or any other good work.

B. They Believed the Message of Salvation (Vs. 13b)

1. They Trusted – the word ‘trust’ means to rely or depend upon, to have confidence in. They had trusted in Christ.
2. They Believed – the word ‘believed’ means to put one’s faith in. It is a humble reliance upon Christ for salvation. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith is the hand that reaches out to receive God’s gift of salvation. Faith is the channel by which salvation is received into the life.

C. They Received the Gift of Salvation (Vs. 13b)

1. Note the phrase “**your** salvation”. This is the Gospel message made personal. Upon hearing the Gospel, the individual must make a decision to personally receive the offer of salvation.
2. They acted upon the message of salvation, making a choice to receive God’s gift of grace. It is not enough to simply ‘believe’ in the sense of accepting facts in your mind. That is important, but you must not only believe about Christ in your head, you must receive Him into your heart.
3. John 1:12 “But as many as **received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that **believe** on his name:”
4. Challenge: Have you taken Christ as your personal salvation? Has the message of the Gospel become the message of your salvation? Has it become personal? Has it transformed you? You need to **turn and trust, repent and receive, believe and be born again.**

IV. SEALED (VS. 13B-14)

The focus now turns to the work of the Holy Spirit who is the One who makes salvation a reality in the repentant, believing sinner. Observe three truths about this sealing we receive at salvation:

A. The Person of our Sealing (Vs. 13b)

1. “heard...believed...sealed” = “the two participles (heard & believed) show contemporaneous time with the main verb ‘sealed’. This means that the “sealing with the Holy Spirit” happens when we hear and believe.” (Hester) In other words, they received the Holy Spirit and His work of sealing the moment they were saved. They did not need a second experience after salvation for this to happen (e.g. speaking in tongues, laying on of hands by a preacher etc...).
2. ‘sealed’ = to set a seal on one as a mark or stamp; marked and authenticated as God’s heritage. (A.T. Robertson) A seal was like an ancient stamp. Illustration: NBC’s Common Seal
3. “Holy Spirit” = the third Person of the Holy Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.
4. “of promise” = He was the promised Holy Spirit. For example, Christ promised the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:7; Luke 24:49).

B. The Point of our Sealing (Vs. 13c)

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What does it mean to be sealed with the Holy Spirit? The word 'sealed' speaks of several truths. To be sealed means...

1. Christ purchased you – a seal in the ancient world was used to signify a **finished transaction** (Jer. 32:9-10; John 17:4; 19:30). The fact we are sealed with God's Holy Spirit is a reminder that Christ paid the price for our redemption in His own life's blood.
2. Christ possesses you – a seal signified **ownership** (Jer. 32:11-12; 2. Tim. 2:19). You are Christ's precious possession through salvation. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
3. Christ protects you – a seal spoke of **security** and protection (Es. 8:8; Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66; Eph. 4:30). No one can break the eternal seal of the Holy Spirit upon you. You are Christ's forever!
4. Christ proves you – a seal was a mark of authenticity. "Just as a signature on a letter attests to the genuineness of a document, so the presence of the Spirit proves the believer is genuine." (Harry Ironside). Rom. 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**"

C. The Permanence of our Sealing (Vs. 14a)

1. 'earnest' = "a pledge, a down payment, a deposit that guarantees the full amount will be paid at the appropriate or due time." (Hester) "Earnest money" is an amount of money you put down to show you're serious about purchasing a home. It's also known as a good faith deposit. (Ironside) "It was the first instalment with a guarantee that the rest would follow." (Hoehner)
 - a. "So, the giving to us of the Holy Spirit and our being sealed by Him is a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven' and it is the guarantee that someday we will enter into full possession of the blessedness of God." (Hester)
 - b. "God's gift of the Holy Spirit is the pledge and first payment for the final inheritance in Christ." (ATR)
 - c. The giving of the Holy Spirit to the repentant believer is the first portion of the believer's inheritance and God's guarantee to us that we will receive the rest of the inheritance He has in store for us in heaven. Other verses that mention this truth are: 2 Cor. 1:22 "Who hath also sealed us, and given the **earnest** of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 5:5 "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the **earnest** of the Spirit."
 - d. Illustration: An engagement ring is a token, pledge that promises made will be kept. That is why when the bride and groom exchange rings at a wedding it is preceded by the question "What pledge do you give of the sincerity of your vows."
2. "**until** the redemption of the purchased possession" = we are redeemed by the blood of Christ at salvation but this is a reference to the future aspect of our redemption called glorification when we

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will be given a new, resurrection body. The truth of the permanence of our salvation is found in the word 'until'. The Holy Spirit will never forsake or leave us. He will be with us all the way until we reach heaven and are glorified in God's presence. It is impossible for you to lose your salvation. (See also Eph. 4:20)

3. "purchased possession" = that which is one's own. What a precious description of our belonging to Christ.
4. Our salvation is in three parts:
 - a. Justification – Salvation from the penalty of sin. This takes place the moment you trust Christ as Saviour.
 - b. Sanctification – Salvation from the power of sin. This is "a progressive work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, giving victory over the power of sin in the present and conforming us to Christ's image." (Wuest)
 - c. Glorification – Salvation from the presence of sin. This is "the act of God transforming the present bodies of believers into perfect, sinless, deathless bodies." (Wuest)

D. The Purpose of our Sealing (Vs. 14b)

1. "unto the praise of his glory" = this is the third time the praise of his glory is mentioned.
2. You will notice that this phrase finishes off each of the main sections in Vs. 4-14.
 - a. Why did God the Father choose, adopt and accept us? "To the praise of the glory of His grace" (Vs. 6).
 - b. Why did God the Son redeem us, forgive us, reveal God's will to us and make us a part of God's inheritance? "That we should be to the praise of His glory" (Vs. 12).
 - c. Why has God the Spirit sealed us and become the guarantee of our future blessing? "Unto the praise of His glory" (Vs. 14).
 - d. Let us never forget that God's main purpose in saving you was that He might receive the glory due unto Himself.

Conclusion:

1. Have you received God's gift of salvation? Will you respond to the Gospel message and put your faith in Christ, just like the Ephesian Christians did all those years ago?
2. If you are saved, you are secure for all eternity. What a message of comfort!
3. Remember, you were saved for Christ's honor and glory. Live in light of that truth!

Prayer for Spiritual Enlightenment

Text: Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction:

1. Review: Paul has outlined the golden links in the salvation chain in Vs. 3-14 – we have been chosen, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, enlightened, enriched, saved and sealed.
2. Now we come to Paul's first recorded prayer for the Ephesian Church. The second is recorded in 3:14-21. He prays that they might know the spiritual wealth they have in Christ. "Too many Christians have never "read the bank book" to find out the vast spiritual wealth that God has put to their account through Jesus Christ." (Wiersbe)
3. Harold Hoehner: "Having completed the magnificent eulogy, Paul prays for the Ephesians. It could be called the prayer for those who have everything because the believers have every spiritual benefit for their spiritual welfare...Paul's desire is for the Ephesian Christians to deepen their relationship with the God who has enriched them with every spiritual benefit and to experience those benefits in a deeper way."
4. There is much to learn from Paul's recorded prayers. In those prayers we discover the priorities Paul had in prayer for the believers. In Paul's prison prayers you will note that he does not request material things. He is concerned about their growth and development in spiritual things. Far too often our prayers do not reflect spiritual priorities. They tend to be dominated with matters relating to health and wealth. Why not wrong to pray about such matters, we must take care that our prayers don't become too heavily weighted on the side of the material rather than the spiritual.
5. For our study, we will study the prayer in 3 sections.

I. THE PROMPTING OF PAUL'S PRAYER (VS. 15-16)

A. The Report Paul Heard (Vs. 15)

Paul had heard two things about the Ephesian believers which prompted him to pray for them. He had heard of their...

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus – they had exercised saving faith in Christ and were continuing in that faith. Note that Christian faith has Christ in view. Faith is not a vague feeling with no object in view.
2. Love unto all the saints – because they were saved, they had a love for the brethren. This is a good sign of the new birth. 1 John 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because **we love the brethren**. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death." Observe that their love was not reserved for just some of the brethren but 'all' the brethren. To love all our brothers and sisters in Christ is not natural but it is something produced in us by the Holy Spirit.
3. Note: Reports of believers in other places can help motivate us to pray. That is why we read prayer letters on a Wed night.

B. The Response Paul Had (Vs. 16)

1. He prayed consistently – "cease not". Paul knew what it was to continue in prayer.

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2. He prayed thankfully – “give thanks”. Paul had much to praise the Lord for in relation to the Ephesian church. God had done a mighty work in saving them as detailed in Vs. 3-14.
3. He prayed simply – “making mention of you”. The word ‘mention’ has the sense of ‘remembrance’. So, Paul brought the believers at Ephesus up in remembrance before the Lord. You might say, how do I pray for other Christians? Bring them before the Lord in prayer, mention them before the throne of grace.

II. THE POINT OF PAUL’S PRAYER (VS. 17-18A)

Paul prays they will receive...

A. Revelation (Vs. 17)

1. The Source of It – “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory”. Note the two titles of God the Father:
 - a. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ – The Father is the God of the Son incarnate.
 - b. The Father of glory – glory is “the reflection of the essence of one’s being, the summation of all of one’s attributes.” (Hoehner)
2. The Specifics of it - “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him”
 - a. “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” = the inner workings of the Holy Spirit in the renewed human spirit, imparting knowledge of Divine things.
 - b. “in the knowledge of him” = The word ‘knowledge’ refers to a knowledge that is “true, accurate, thorough; a full knowledge.” (Wuest) Paul’s desire is that they would know God. That through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the believers would have an intimate relationship with God. They knew God in salvation as the previous verses clearly show, but he wanted them to go on from there and progress in their walk with Him.

B. Illumination (Vs. 18)

1. ‘understanding’ = reference to the mind.
2. ‘enlightened’ = means to give light, to light up, illuminate, to enlighten (Hoehner). Paul is praying for their illumination.
3. B.H. Carrol: “There are three terms — revelation, inspiration, and illumination. Revelation discloses that which we could not otherwise know. Inspiration infallibly records it. Illumination causes us to understand it. Illumination, then, is that work of the Holy Spirit which causes one to get the real spiritual meanings of the Bible.”
4. 1 Cor. 2:9-10 “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

III. THE PARTICULARS OF PAUL’S PRAYER (VS. 18b-23)

Paul prays for their illumination with a view to them entering into a deeper knowledge of three truths. It has been referred to as the prayer of three “whats”. He prays that they might know...

A. The Hope of God (Vs. 18b)

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1. 'hope' = not wishful thinking as the word is used in the world but "the absolute certainty that God will make true what He has promised." (Hoehner) Hope is a confident expectation for the future. It is faith directed to the future.
2. "of his calling" = We have hope in truths such as the rapture of the church (Titus 2:13) but the hope here is the "hope of his calling". We have a glorious future by virtue of the fact we are in Christ. We need the ministry of the Spirit to keep these truths alive and real in our lives. A hope for the future changes my life in the present. How we need our hearts fixed on the glorious things that lie ahead for us as God's children and that we might live differently in the light of that truth.

B. The Inheritance of God (Vs. 18c)

1. "his inheritance" = observe that it is not our inheritance in view but rather God's inheritance. God wants us to know that not only do we have an inheritance in Christ, but that Christ also has an inheritance in us.
2. "in the saints" = God's inheritance is located in the saints. "Because of his choosing, redeeming, adopting, and sealing us, we are his possession. Thus, his possession is located in the saints. He will fully gain his inheritance when the saints are removed from this earth and come into his presence. Therefore, not only do we have an inheritance (Vs. 14) but he also has an inheritance (Vs. 18) It shows that the believers are valuable to God because he purchased them in order to inherit them." Paul prays that we might know how precious the saints are in God's eyes as His inheritance. Eph. 5:27 "The he might present it **to himself** a glorious church..."
3. Psalm 2:8 "Ask of me, and I shall give thee **the heathen for thine inheritance**, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

C. The Power of God (Vs. 19-23)

1. The Direction of this power (Vs. 19)

- a. Look at the words that describe God's power in these verses:
 - i. "exceeding greatness" = the word 'exceeding' means "Great in extent, quantity or duration; very extensive." It means "surpassing, extraordinary, exceeding." This is power in abundant supply.
 - ii. 'power' (dunamis) = means natural ability, general and inherent.
 - iii. 'working' (energia) = our word energy comes from this word. It speaks of "energy put forth in operation." (Wuest) "It is supernatural power that is in actual operation. It is the active exercise of supernatural power." (Hoehner)
 - iv. 'mighty' (kratos) = manifested strength
 - v. 'power' (ischuos) = strength, power as an endowment
 - vi. "Paul heaps one word on another to express the greatness of God's power that is available to the believer." (Hoehner)
- b. "to us-ward who believe" = this power is directed towards us as believers. We experienced God's power in salvation but Paul is

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now praying that as saved individuals, they would know God's power working in their lives. God's power is available to the believer to live the Christian life.

2. The Description of this power (Vs. 20-23)

This power is illustrated in the Person of Christ. "Paul now shows how this power operates. God has directed toward the believers that same power that he exercised in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand, that subjected all things under his feet, and that gave him to the church as head." (Hoehner) It is...

- a. Resurrection power (Vs. 20)
 - i. 'wrought' = also comes from the word 'energia'. Christ was raised from the dead by Supernatural, Divine power.
 - ii. Think of the power unleashed in the resurrection of Christ. The most powerful element man has harnessed can't compare. The combined power of all the world's nuclear energy would be insufficient to raise one body from the grave. But God's power can raise the dead!
- b. Ascension power (Vs. 20b-22a) Not only was Christ raised by Divine power, He was seated in the heavenlies by Divine power.
 - i. Christ is exalted above all the angelic hosts, good and evil – "far above **all** principality and power..." This truth is so important to know when it comes to spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12). Christ is seated in victory about all the legions of hell and if you are saved, you are seated with Him (Eph. 2:6).
 - ii. Christ is exalted above every name – "every name that is named." "Let any name be uttered, whatever it is, Christ is above it." (Wuest) Philippians 2:9-11 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name..." He is higher than any name both in the present and in the future world.
 - iii. Christ is exalted above all things – "And hath put all things under his feet..." The term "put under" is a military term meaning "to put in subjection under one." (Wuest)
- c. Headship power (Vs. 22b-23)
 - i. The scope of his headship – "over all things to the church". Col. 1:18 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; **that in all things he might have the preeminence.**"
 - ii. The body of His headship – "which is his body". Appears to look beyond the local church to the church glorified, the great assembled body of the redeemed who will form the Lamb's bride. As our Divine Head, Christ ministers His life and leadership to the body.
 - iii. The fulness of His headship – "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The fulness of Christ abides and dwells in the church which is His body.

Conclusion: Are you praying for others? Are you relying on God's power for life?

Alive in Christ!

Text: Ephesians 2:1-7

Introduction:

1. Review: Paul has just prayed for the illumination and enlightenment of the Ephesian believers. One of his key desires expressed in prayer was that the Ephesians would know “what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Vs. 19). Paul then went on to detail that power as demonstrated in the resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Christ.
2. The Apostle now outlines how that same power has operated in our lives in saving grace. William Macdonald summarizes it perfectly, “In Eph. 1:19-23 we watched the mighty power of God as it raised Christ from the grave and crowned Him with glory and honor. Now we see how that same power has worked in our own lives, raising us from spiritual death and seating us in Christ in the heavenlies.” In Eph. 2:1-10 “Paul states how sinners, who deserve nothing but God’s wrath, become trophies of his grace.” (Harold Hoehner) These verses (Vs. 1-7) form another long sentence.
3. In this section we really see the believer’s past (Vs. 1-3), present (Vs. 4-6) and future (Vs. 7).
4. We will now study this wonderful section under 3 main headings.

I. THE PORTRAIT OF OUR FORMER LIFE (VS. 1-3)

The Apostle Paul starts by describing our lives before salvation. He gives us a full-length portrait of what we ‘were’ in time past.

A. The Condition of our Past Life (Vs. 1)

1. We were dead – we had no spiritual life and were separated from God. It refers to spiritual death, not physical death. It is a living death. This world is one vast grave-yard filled with people who are dead while they live (1 Tim. 5:6). A good illustration of this living death is the prodigal son who was described by the Father upon his return as “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” (Luke 15:24, 32)
 - a. Man is a tripartite being – body, soul and spirit. Because of sin, our spirits are dead even if we are living in the realm of the body and soul. Every one without Christ is dead, the only difference between men is the degree to which they have decayed!
 - b. Illustration: Adam and Eve died spiritually the very day they took the forbidden fruit; they were cut off from God. Gen. 2:16-17 “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: **for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**” The devil came and in essence told Eve that she could really live if she went her own independent way from God. In reality, it would end in spiritual and physical death.
2. We were defiled – we were dead in “trespasses and sins”

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- a. 'trespasses' = the violation of a definite law (Ironsides). It is "more than an inadvertent mistake. It is a conscious and wilful action against God's holiness and righteousness." (Hoehner) "The word means a slip or fall. It is used for a man losing the way and straying from the right road. A trespass is taking the wrong road when we could take the right one." (Richard Hester) Illustration: A no trespassing sign.
- b. 'sins' = the word is "a shooting word. It literally means a miss. A man shoots his arrow at the target, but the arrow misses; that is hamartia. Sin is the failure to hit the target of life; the failure to be what we ought to be: to miss the glory of God." (Hester) "Romans 3:23 expresses the truth plainly. The mark or target was the glory of God. Man was created to glorify God. His attempt, where the attempt is made, to live a life pleasing to God, falls short of the target." (Wuest)

B. The Course of our Past Life (Vs. 2)

Our past lives were lived according to and dominated by...

1. The Sins of this World (Vs. 2a)
 - a. 'wherein' refers back to the "trespasses and sins" in the previous verse. The word means "in which". The idea is "in which trespasses and sins ye walked."
 - b. 'walked' = our conduct, way of life. It is not that we occasionally slipped up, we lived our lives in the realm of sin and corruption.
2. The System of this World (Vs. 2b)
 - a. 'course' = the age. The English word 'course' means "the path, route, or channel along which anything moves." Our lives were dominated and directed by the spirit of this present sinful age.
 - b. Trench defines this word as "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again to inevitably to exhale."
 - c. "this world" = "the satanically organized system that hates and opposes all that is godly" (Hoehner). This world system is made up of both political and religious elements but it is all a part of that one world system that at heart is opposed to God and His way of salvation.
 - d. Challenge: As born again, blood washed children of God, our lives are no longer to be shaped and moulded by this present age. We are called to walk in separation from it!
3. The Spirit of this World (Vs. 2c)
 - a. "the prince of the power" = a description of Satan and the domain of his authority. He is called "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). Christ called him "the prince of this world" (John 16:11). In the temptation of Christ, Satan offered Him the "kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matt. 4:8), revealing the control and power he has over this world system. 1 John 5:19 reminds us that "the whole world lieth in wickedness."

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- b. “of the air” = “the lower, denser atmosphere as opposed to the rarer atmosphere above the mountain tops. The kingdom of Satan is in this lower atmosphere where we human beings are...The unsaved order their behavior according to his dictates and those of his demons.” (Wuest)
 - c. “the spirit that now worketh” = the principle or power that comes into men from Satan, the spirit that is operative in the unsaved. (Wuest) The word ‘worketh’ is the word ‘energy’ and means “operative, to be at work”. Satan is pictured in 1 Peter 5:8 as a roaring lion, on the move and on the prowl. Satan has much influence in the lives of the lost. They are “taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim. 2:26).
4. The Standard of this World (Vs. 2d)
- a. “children of disobedience” = disobedience is what characterized our lives before we were saved. Sin started with disobedience (Rom. 5:12, 19).
 - b. Note the link between being “children of disobedience” (Vs. 2) and “children of wrath” (Vs. 3).

C. The Conduct of our Past Life (Vs. 3)

1. The People of our Conduct (Vs. 3a)
- a. “among whom” = refers back to the “children of disobedience” in the previous verse. Before we were saved, we lived and moved in this same lost world.
 - b. ‘conversation’ = behaviour, manner of life, lifestyle.
2. The Practice of our Conduct (Vs. 3b)
- The word ‘fulfilling’ has the idea of doing, performing and accomplishing. Our lusts were carried out in action. We indulged ourselves in the following:
- a. The lustful desires of our flesh – the world lives by the mantra, “if it feels good, do it”. This is the outworking of our sinful nature. We live in a hedonistic¹ society where pleasure is the chief end and goal of life. The word ‘lust’ means “strong passion or desire” and the word ‘desire’ has the idea of “desires that come from the emotions”. The life of the unsaved is swayed by the emotions rather than the reason. (Wuest)
 - b. The lustful desires of our minds – the sins of the thoughts and reasoning processes. Sins such as pride, self-love, secret lust and so on. F.B. Meyer warns, “It is as ruinous to indulge the desires of the mind as those of the flesh. By the marvellous gift of imagination, we may indulge unholy fancies, and throw the reins on the neck of the steeds of passion – always stopping short of the act. No human eye follows the soul when it goes forth to dance with satyrs (forest gods) or to thread the labyrinthine maze of the islands of desire. It goes and returns unsuspected by the nearest. Its credit for snow-white purity is not forfeited. It is still permitted to watch among the virgins for the Bridegroom’s advent. But if this practice is unjudged and

¹ Hedonism is “the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the highest good.” (Dictionary.com)

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unconfessed, it marks the offender a son of disobedience and a child of wrath.”

3. The Problem behind our Conduct (Vs. 3c)
 - a. “were by nature” = the word ‘nature’ refers to what is innate. The reason we sin the way we do is because we inherited a sinful nature from Adam (Rom. 5:12, 19). We were simply living according to the dictates of our fallen, depraved nature. We are sinners by nature and practice. To illustrate, a dog behaves like a dog because it has a dog’s nature. Praise God when we get saved, God imparts to us a new nature, the new man “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).
 - b. “the children of wrath” = because of our sin, we were under the righteous wrath of God. John 3:36 “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but **the wrath of God abideth on him.**”
 - c. This dark, bleak picture forms the backdrop for the display of God’s amazing grace.
 - d. Challenge: Does this describe you? If you are not yet saved, if you haven’t been born again, this is your condition.

II. THE POWER OF OUR FATHER’S LOVE (VS. 4-6)

Despite our sinful, depraved condition, God had compassion on us, reached down and rescued us.

A. The Intervention of His Compassion (Vs. 4a)

1. “But God” = what glorious words! God took the initiative in salvation. Without His gracious intervention we would have been left in our sins and to suffer the eternal wrath of God for those sins. We were sinners on our way to hell “but God”! We were lost in the darkness “but God”! We were slaves to sin and Satan “but God”!
2. This wonderful conjunction ‘but’ can be traced in the Scriptures in relation to our salvation:
 - a. Romans 5:7-8 – “For when we were yet without strength...**But God** commendeth his love toward us...”
 - b. 1 Timothy 1:12-15 “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord...**but** I obtained mercy...”
 - c. Titus 3:3-7 “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish...but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared...”

B. The Description of His Compassion (Vs. 4b-5a)

1. Mercy – consider two points about God’s mercy.
 - a. The Definition of Mercy – it means to take pity on someone, to show compassion. It means “kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them” (Strongs). Mercy is not giving me what I deserve. Grace is giving me what I do not deserve. Aren’t you glad God took pity on you as a lost sinner and that rather than giving you the just wrath you deserved, He gave His life for you?
 - b. The Depth of His Mercy – God is described as being “rich in mercy”. This is another one of the Divine riches in Ephesians.

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We have already read of “the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7) and the “riches of glory” (Eph. 1:18) and now we have the “riches of his mercy”. God didn’t show you a little mercy; He showed you an abundance of mercy. The word ‘rich’ means ‘exhaustless’.

2. Love – consider three truths presented about God’s love for us.
 - a. The magnitude of His love – “For his great love”. The word ‘for’ means “because of, on account of” and gives the reason why God showed mercy. He showed mercy because of His great love toward us. This love is a “love that seeks the highest good in the one loved” (Hoehner).
 - b. The moving of His love – “wherewith He loved us”. The word ‘wherewith’ means “with which” (Webster). God’s love was active towards us. Despite our sin, He loved us. One of the greatest needs of the human heart is to be loved. There is no love like the love of God.
 - c. The marvel of His love – “Even when we were dead in sins”. What a marvellous and glorious statement. This is the mystery of Divine love that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8). It’s not that God looked at our lives and said, “I am pleased with their efforts and achievements. They are on my side so I will send my Son to die for them.” The opposite was true. We were ‘enemies’ (Rom. 5:10) and “alienated and enemies” in our “mind by wicked works” (Col. 1:21).

C. The Action of His Compassion (Vs. 5b-6)

We have had a description of who God is and now we see what God did for us through His Son Jesus Christ. We have been:

1. Quickened together with Christ (Vs. 5b)
 - a. The word ‘quickened’ means “to cause to live, to make alive, to give life”. Do you see the picture? We were dead in sin, walking in the way of the world, fulfilling our own lustful desires but in mercy God made us alive in Christ. You were a sinner dead now you are a saint alive!
 - b. This is what it means to be born again (John 3:1-7). “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the **Spirit** is spirit.”
 - c. Illustration: Christ’s raising of the widow of Nain’s son (Luke 7:11-17). “And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.**” (Vs. 14)
 - d. “(by grace ye are saved)” = The Apostle then adds this little parenthesis to remind us that our salvation was made possible by God’s grace.
 - i. The word grace means “unmerited, undeserved favour.” Grace means “salvation apart from any merit or works on our part. Grace means that God does it all for Jesus’ sake!” (Wiersbe)
 - ii. The word ‘saved’ means “to deliver, rescue from danger.” Interestingly, it is in the perfect tense which describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. We are

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saved “once for all” not ever needing to be saved again. It means “we are now in a permanent saved state as a result of saving action in the past.” (Hester)

- iii. “Since we have not been saved by our good works, we cannot be lost by our bad works.” (Wiersbe)
2. Raised together with Christ (Vs. 6b)
3. Seated together with Christ (Vs. 6c)
4. Summary: As a believer, because I am in Christ, God sees me as one who died with Christ, was buried with Christ, raised with Christ, ascended with Christ and seated with Christ.

III. THE PURPOSE OF OUR FUTURE LIFE (VS. 7)

The word ‘that’ introduces the grand purpose of it all. God saved us that in the ages to come He might continue to unfold for us the length, depth, breadth and height of our salvation. In eternity we will know:

A. The Revelation of God’s Grace (Vs. 7a)

1. “the ages to come” = literally “in the ages that are coming one upon another,” that is, in the eternal ages that roll in, one after another in the future eternity after the universe is returned to its pristine glory.” (Wuest) “It consists of untold millions of ages running on forevermore.” (Ironsides) As the ages of eternity roll forward, we will be further amazed and wondered at “the exceeding riches of his grace.”
2. ‘shew’ = to show forth, to display openly
3. “exceeding riches of his grace” = Look at that description of grace! It means “the surpassing wealth of his grace.” No man can fully explain it. The limitless grace of the All-Powerful, Infinite God. We will need eternity to plumb its depths. “Eternity will be filled with exciting news and activities as He displays and explains all that He has and is doing for us in our salvation.” (Hester) At the present time our understanding and appreciation of God’s grace are limited because of the constraints of our human, sinful nature.
4. Expositors: “God’s purpose is that in the eternal future, the grace of His ways with those once dead in sins should be declared and understood in all the grandeur of its exceeding riches.”

B. The Revelation of God’s Goodness (Vs. 7b)

1. ‘kindness’ = also translated ‘goodness’ (Rom. 2:4; 11:22) and ‘gentleness’ (Gal. 5:22). God has been good, gentle and kind towards us.
2. “toward us” = this kindness is directed toward us. We are the recipients of God’s overflowing grace and wonderful kindness.
3. “through Christ Jesus” = it has all been made possible through the mediatorial ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessing of salvation is only available in Christ. Outside of Him, there is no eternal life, only eternal separation from God in hell.

Conclusion:

1. Have you been made alive in Christ or are you still dead in your sins?
2. As a Christian, is your life being influenced by this world’s system?

Saved by Grace through Faith Alone

Text: Ephesians 2:8-9

Introduction:

1. Review: The Apostle Paul has just outlined in another long sentence (Vs. 1-7) how the Ephesian Christians had experienced the supernatural power of God in raising them to spiritual life.
2. Now Paul further expands on the theme of the riches of God's grace in Vs. 7 and his brief mention of salvation by grace in the parenthesis of Vs. 5. In these verses he explains that salvation is all of God's grace and has nothing to do with human works or efforts.
3. These verses contain one of the most powerful and succinct summaries of the Gospel in the New Testament. They answer the age-old question asked by the Philippian jailor to Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30)
4. What do we mean by the terms 'salvation' and 'saved'? These are Bible words that describe being delivered from sin and hell. The word 'saved' means "to deliver, rescue from danger."
5. In these verses we will note four truths about salvation.

I. THE GRACE THAT PROVIDES SALVATION (VS. 8a)

A. The Definition of Grace

1. The word occurs 12 times in this book. Wuest explains that in classical Greek, grace was "something conferred **freely**, with no expectation of return, and finding its only **motive** in the bounty and free-heartedness of the giver. It was also used to describe an act that was **beyond the ordinary course** of what might be expected. This favor was always done to a friend, never to an enemy." There is a human grace of this character that is exhibited amongst those whom we love.
2. The grace of God is infinitely higher than any sort of human exercise of graciousness as it was shown to those who were His enemies (Rom. 5:6-10). The word therefore means, "God's kindness towards undeserving people" (Wiersbe). It is God's unmerited, undeserved favor.
3. Mercy is not giving me what I deserve (a withholding) whereas grace is giving me what I do not deserve (a bestowing). Praise God, He is rich in both (Eph. 1:7; 2:4) which means they are in abundant supply.

B. The Action of Grace – 'saved'

1. The word 'saved' is in the passive voice, meaning the action was performed on our behalf, we were acted upon.
2. The word 'saved' is in the perfect tense which speaks of action completed in the past which remains true in the present. Hence why the translators express it "**are** saved." God views our salvation as something that is finished and complete. It is not "being saved" or "saved eventually."

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3. Because grace is the basis of salvation and not my works, it means it is impossible to lose my salvation. My forgiveness (Eph. 1:7) is “according to the riches of his grace”. Not “out of” but “according to”. My salvation is backed by all the riches of God’s eternal, infinite grace.

II. THE GRASP THAT RECEIVES SALVATION (VS. 8b)

The next key word to consider is the word ‘faith’.

A. The Definition of Faith

1. “through faith” = this means that faith is the channel by which we receive salvation. Grace is the basis for my salvation and faith is the means of receiving it. The fact Christ died for you doesn’t make you saved automatically. If that was the case, we would believe in universal salvation. You are saved when you personally put your trust in Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. God’s grace made provision for our salvation but we must make a personal choice to avail ourselves of the salvation He offers to us.
2. The word ‘faith’ at its core means ‘trust’, ‘confidence’ and ‘reliance.’ This reveals that faith is not a vague feeling with no object. Faith has Christ and His finished work on the cross as its object. It is not faith in my faith but faith in Christ.

B. The Illustrations of Faith

1. Faith is the hand that receives – John 1:12 “But as many as **received** him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that **believe** on his name.” This verse makes it plain that believing involves more than just an acceptance of facts in my heart, as important as that aspect of believing is. To know the facts of what Christ has done for me in my mind is not enough. I must receive Christ into my heart.
2. Faith is the eye that looks - John 3:14-15 “And **as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness**, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (Num. 21:8 – Look and live). Isaiah 45:22 “**Look unto me**, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is none else*.” Salvation comes by looking to Christ, and Christ alone. Not by looking to a church or a religious system, not by looking to a religious practice or ritual but by looking to Christ and Christ alone.
3. Faith is the heart that rests – Acts 16:31 “And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Just as one trusts in a chair for support because it is trustworthy, so one trusts in God’s gracious salvation because God is reliable and trustworthy.

III. THE GIFT THAT PICTURES SALVATION (VS. 8c-9)

“To make it clear, Paul not only presents the source of salvation, but he also states the opposite, namely, what is **not** the source of salvation.” (Hoehner)

A. What Salvation is Not (Vs. 8c & 9)

The text plainly states that salvation does **NOT** come from two sources:

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1. It is not found in an individual's person (Vs. 8b)
 - a. The word 'of' is the Greek word 'ek' meaning "out of". Salvation does not come out of you! There is no hope to be found in yourself!
 - b. Yet this is exactly the message that is proclaimed in our culture which has largely forsaken God's Word and the Gospel. It is proclaimed widely that the solution to one's addictions and failures is to believe in themselves, to discover the champion within and all will be well. But looking within to yourself is a fool's errand that will bring no victory, deliverance or peace. Salvation is not in self!
2. It is not found in an individual's performance (Vs. 9)
 - a. "not of works" = works are our own efforts, what we can do. Words could not be plainer and clearer. No human efforts, no matter how sincere, can save us from sin and earn us eternal life in heaven. "If you work, you put the one by whom you are employed into your debt, and he does not get out of your debt until he has paid for your labour. If by works we could earn salvation, we would put God in our debt." (Harry Ironside)
 - i. Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." If God sees my good works as filthy and offensive to Him, how much more serious must my sin be!
 - ii. Romans 4:4-5 "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that **worketh not**, but **believeth** on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Righteousness is received, not earned.
 - iii. Romans 11:6 "And if by grace, then *is it no more of works*: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be of works*, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."
 - iv. Titus 3:5 "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"
 - v. The Roman Catholic Church is an example of adding works to salvation. "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12).
 - b. "lest any man should boast" = boasting is an expression of pride; it is pride verbalized. The word means "to glory". Here it refers to a prideful glorying in oneself and one's own achievements. God will not have any boasting in His presence. His glory he will "not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8).

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- i. If salvation were by our achievements that would be cause for us to boast in God's presence. Romans 4:2-3 "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to **glory** (same word as 'boast'); but **not before God**. For what saith the scripture? Abraham **believed** God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."
 - ii. Romans 3:27 "Where *is* **boasting** then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."
 - iii. Ephesians has already made it abundantly clear that God's grand design and purpose in the plan of salvation was to glorify Himself – "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (1:6), "that we should be to the praise of his glory" (1:12), "unto the praise of his glory" (Vs. 14), "that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace" (2:7).
 - iv. The true believer makes his/her boast in the Lord – Psalm 34:2 "My soul shall make her **boast** in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad."
 - v. The true believer glories in the cross – Galatians 6:14 "But God forbid that I should **glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
 - vi. Jeremiah 9:23 "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: **But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me**, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD."
- c. The Scriptural equation of salvation is: Eternal life = salvation by grace through faith +/- nothing. Faith and works cannot be mixed. If you trusted in Christ's work on the cross but also believed your baptism or some other work played a role in your salvation, that wasn't saving faith.

B. What Salvation is (Vs. 8c)

1. "it is the gift of God" = salvation comes from God as a free gift. The Word of God makes it abundantly clear that salvation is given, not earned.
 - i. Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death; but **the gift of God** is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - ii. 1 John 5:11-12 "And this is the record, that God hath **given to us eternal life**, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."
 - iii. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he **gave** his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
2. This gift must be received – John 1:12 "But as many as **received** him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to

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them that **believe** on his name.” The word ‘received’ means “to take with the hand, lay hold of” (Strong’s).

3. Remember the simply salvation sequence of Eph. 1:13? They **heard** the Gospel, **believed** it and **received** it. The very moment they exercised saving faith, the Spirit of God indwelt and sealed them.

IV. THE GOAL THAT FOLLOWS SALVATION (VS. 10)

This further expands further on the theme of our salvation not being by works (note the word ‘for’). It also reveals the goal God had in view when He saved us. There are two key words in the verse – ‘workmanship’ and ‘walk’. Let’s consider each of those in turn.

A. The Workmanship God Created (Vs. 10a)

1. ‘for’ = a further explanation of the previous statement (Vs. 9). The conjunction ‘for’ tells us why this salvation is not of human origin or by human works. We cannot be saved by our works when we are ourselves a work, a Divine work of God.
2. ‘workmanship’ = “the word was used in classical times for the work of a craftsman, such as the making of a crown.” (Hoehner)
 - a. Our English word ‘poem’ comes from this word. A poem is developed by someone with special talents and requires deliberate thought and meditation. In like manner, our all wise, loving God has re-made us in Christ through the work of salvation. Ironside writes, “Creation is God’s first poem, but redemption is His second poem, and you and I who are saved constitute the syllables in God’s great poem of redemption.”
 - b. The only other time this word is used in the New Testament is in Romans 1:20 where it speaks of “the things that are **made**”, referring to the physical creation. The first reference (Rom. 1:20) speaks of the physical handiwork of God and the second refers to the spiritual recreation of God in the believer’s life.
3. ‘created’ = further expands the figure of God’s workmanship. This word is used to describe God’s acts of creation in both the physical and spiritual realm. For example:
 - a. Mark 13:19 “the creation which God **created**”.
 - b. 1. Cor. 11:9 “Neither was the man **created** for the woman...”
 - c. Eph. 3:9 “who **created** all things by Jesus Christ”
 - d. Eph. 4:24 “the new man...**created** in righteousness”
 - e. Note: In Christ, we are a new creation! 2 Cor. 5:17 “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
4. “in Christ Jesus” = we are made new creatures in Christ. Outside of Christ, there is no salvation. We are not made new in baptism or any other work, only in Christ.

B. The Walk God Ordained (Vs. 10b)

1. “unto good works” = the word ‘unto’ “denotes the purpose of goal. God’s workmanship was not achieved by good works, but it should result in good works as God has purposed them (Titus 2:14).” (Hoehner) We were not saved by our works but we were saved

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unto good works. As someone wisely put it, “you aren’t saved by works, but if you are saved, you’ll work!”

- a. ‘good’ = These works are truly ‘good’ in the sight of God because they are produced in our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit as opposed to our own efforts which were tainted by sin and therefore offensive and filthy to God.
 - b. Note: Good works are an evidence of salvation but let us always remember that the emphasis of the passage is on God’s work, not ours. Therefore, let us be careful not to bruise new babes in Christ by expecting that they will automatically exhibit within a short time frame the maturity level of someone who has been saved for 10 years! If they are truly saved, there will be fruit but it may be small and gradual to start with. “Since we have not been saved by our good works, we cannot be lost by our bad works.” (Wiersbe)
2. “before ordained” = the word means “to prepare before, to make ready beforehand.” (Wuest) The same word is translated “afore prepared” in Romans 9:23. Vincent says, “God prearranged a sphere of moral action for us to walk in.” “His final object was to make good works the very element of our life, the domain in which our action should move.” (Expositors)
- a. Ephesians strongly emphasises that we were saved with a purpose. We were chosen to be holy and blameless (1:4) and predestinated to adoption (sonship) and to an inheritance (1:11).
 - b. Now we see that God’s plan of salvation took into consideration my walk on this earth, my present life. He pre-planned our service, how we should live for Him now. Titus 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works.**”
3. “walk in them” = we have already seen how we used to walk before we were saved (Vs. 2). Now we learn of the new walk God has for us as His children. This walk will be outlined in detail in the section of the Book (Chap. 4-6) where the believer’s walk is the dominant theme. See 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15. We are to walk...
- a. Worthy (4:1)
 - b. Differently (4:17)
 - c. Lovingly (5:2)
 - d. Purely (5:8)
 - e. Circumspectly (5:15) The word literally means looking on all sides; looking round and therefore means to be cautious, prudent, vigilant and watchful. (adapted from Webster)
 - f. Note: We don’t in them, we walk in them. These works are produced in and through us by His grace and power as we walk with Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not about you doing a work for God but about God doing a work in and through you. Phil. 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Conclusion: Have you received God’s gift of grace? Are you 100% sure of your salvation or are you resting on an unclear profession? How is your walk going?

Reconciled to God & to Each Other

Text: Ephesians 2:11-19

Introduction:

1. Review: In verse 1-10 of this chapter Paul has described the salvation experience of individuals. Now he expands the theme further, exploring how that as believers we are not left by ourselves but are united with other believers into one body, the church.
2. Harold Hoehner summarizes it well, "Individual sinners have obtained the gracious gift of salvation on the basis of God's grace by faith. That is not the end. They are not left alone but are united with other believers into a corporate unity. In Eph. 2:11-22 Paul discussed this union of redeemed Jews and Gentiles in the church, Christ's body." Or as Harry Ironside puts it, "We have already examined the past, present and future of the individual believer. In this section the Apostle addresses converted Gentiles collectively and speaks of converted Jews collectively."
3. These verses delve further into other facets of our salvation. Central to the theme of this section is that fact that saved Jews and saved Gentiles have been united in one body. In short, we have been reconciled to God and to each other through Christ's work on the cross.
4. We will consider this theme of our union with Christ and each other in 3 headings:

I. THE REALITY BEFORE THIS UNION (VS. 11-12)

In these verses Paul again reminds the Gentile believers of their past before they were saved. Notice the phrases "in time past" and "at that time". They were...

A. Despised (Vs. 11)

1. The Uncircumcision – a reference to the Gentiles.
 - a. There was a mix of both Jews and Gentiles in the Ephesian church but it was predominately Gentile.
 - b. "who are called" = the Jews called the Gentiles 'uncircumcision' in a derogatory way. It was an ethnic slur. "The name Uncircumcision! – a name of contempt, was flung at them." (Wuest) The Jews looked down on the Gentiles because they were uncircumcised.
2. The Circumcision – a reference to the Jews.
 - a. Circumcision was given by God as a token of His covenant with the nation of Israel but it had become a point of religious pride, something God never intended.
 - b. Paul had to remind His Jewish readers elsewhere "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God." (Rom. 2:28-29)

B. Destitute (Vs. 12)

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We could summarize the past existence of the Gentiles (and our past too before salvation) in one word – **‘without’**. They were destitute of 5 blessings/privileges...

1. Without Christ – “without Christ” (Vs. 12a)
 - a. Think about how much Christ means to you as a believer. Christ is your life, your all in all. Imagine being without Him! But this is the reality of those who are unsaved and it was our reality too before we were saved.
 - b. ‘Christ’ is the N.T. word for ‘Messiah’. The Gentiles were not only separate from Christ personally they also did not have a national hope of the Messiah as Israel did. But praise God Jesus Christ came not only as the Messiah for Israel but as the Messiah for the whole world.
2. Without the Commonwealth – “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” (Vs. 12b)
 - a. ‘alien’ = the same word as ‘alienated’ in Eph. 4:18 (also Col. 1:21). The word ‘alien’ means “foreign; not belonging to the same country, land or government.” (Webster) Today we refer to “illegal aliens”. In other words, people living in a country who have no legal right to be there. They do not have the rights and privileges of citizenship.
 - b. ‘commonwealth’ = the same word is translated ‘freedom’ in Acts 22:28 in reference to being a free citizen of Rome. “The word has two main senses – a state or commonwealth, and citizenship or the rights of a citizen.” (Wuest)
 - c. Illustration: Australia is a part of the British Commonwealth.
3. Without Covenants – “strangers from the covenants of promise” (Vs. 12c)
 - a. ‘strangers’ = means “one who is not a member of a state or city, foreign to a thing, having no share in it.” (Expositors)
 - b. ‘covenants’ = likely a reference to the unconditional covenants such as the Abrahamic, Davidic and New covenants. God’s covenant to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3 did have the blessing of the Gentiles in view (“in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed”) but God had not made a covenant with the Gentiles directly.
 - i. Romans 3:1-2 “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed **the oracles of God.**”
 - ii. Romans 9:3-5 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and **the covenants**, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
 - c. “of promise” = the covenants promised blessings for the Jews. One of the mysteries that was unknown in the Old Testament

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was the fact that one day both Jew and Gentile would be united in one body in the church (Eph. 3:6).

4. Without Confidence – “having no hope” (Vs. 12d)
 - a. The word has the sense of “utterly without hope”. Historians tell us that a great cloud of hopelessness covered the ancient world.
 - b. In the Bible, hope is a confident expectation for the future. It is “an objective hope based on the promises of God” (Hoehner).
 - c. Before salvation they had no hope – no hope in this life and no hope of eternal life. “Their future was a night without a star.” (Macdonald)
5. Without the Creator – “without God in the world” (Vs. 12e)
 - a. They had many false gods and goddesses (e.g. the goddess Diana) but they did not know the One True God and Creator of all.
 - b. “in the world” = “the domain of their life was this present evil world.” (Wuest)

II. THE RECONCILIATION OF THIS UNION (VS. 13-18)

Observe four truths about this reconciliation:

A. The Payment for our Reconciliation (Vs. 13)

1. “But now” = parallels the “But God” in Vs. 4 and again highlights the gracious intervention of God in our lives to bring us out of our lost and hopeless state.
2. “in Christ Jesus” = they used to be “without Christ” and “in the world” but now they are “in Christ”!
3. “made nigh by the blood of Christ” = our sins separated us from God and kept us “far off” from Him. We could not come to God in our sinful state. But the cleansing of the blood of Christ has made it possible for us to be drawn near to God. We need cleansing because we are sinners (Rom. 3:10, 23). He did the work (note the words “**made** nigh” which are in the pass. voice) and now we are “in Christ” which means we are as close as we can be.
 - a. We are purchased by the blood (Acts 20:28).
 - b. We are justified by the blood (Rom 5:9).
 - c. We are redeemed & forgiven by the blood (Eph 1:7, Col 1:14).
 - d. We are washed in the blood (Rev. 1:5; 7:14).
 - e. We have peace by the blood (Col 1:20).
4. Consider the words of an old hymn: “So near, so very near to God, Nearer I could not be; For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He. So dear, so very dear, to God, Dearer I could not be; the love wherewith He loves the Son, such is His love to me.”

B. The Peace from our Reconciliation (Vs. 14-16)

1. Horizontal Peace (with each other) (Vs. 14-15)

Prior to salvation ‘enmity’ (meaning hostility, hatred) existed between Jew and Gentile. But through the work of salvation Christ brought peace. We note that Christ “is our peace” (Vs. 14) and that he “made peace” (Vs. 15). Christ is...

 - a. The Embodiment of Peace (“he is our peace”) (Vs. 14a)

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- i. “he is our peace” = Christ is the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6). Outside of Him, there can be no real and lasting peace.
 - ii. ‘peace’ = The word peace means “to join together that which is separated.” It “indicates a lack of hostility and a mutual acceptance between those who were hostile or appeared to be hostile. It is not only a lack of hostility but it is also acceptance or friendship.” (Hoehner)
 - iii. “who hath made both one” = both Jew and Gentile were now “in Christ” through His work of salvation. Notice the word ‘one’ is repeated 4 times in Vs. 14-18.
- b. The Effector of Peace (“making peace”) (Vs. 14b-15)
How did Christ make peace between Jew and Gentile a possibility? At the cross, he broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles. Consider...
- i. The Illustration of the Wall (Vs. 14b). The division between Jew and Gentile is described as the “middle wall of partition”. The word wall means “fence or hedge”. It could be that Paul had in mind as an illustration the 1.5-meter wall that separated the court of the Gentiles from the court of the Jews in the Temple precincts upon which an inscription was written in Greek and Latin prohibiting the entrance of a foreigner under threat of death. According to Josephus it read, “Let no foreigner enter within the partition and enclosure surrounding the temple. Whoever is arrested will himself be responsible for his death which will follow.”
 - ii. The Explanation of the Wall (Vs. 15a). Paul now elaborates on the details of this wall. This wall consisted of the Mosaic law which formed a barrier between the Jew and Gentile. At the cross it was ‘abolished’ which means nullified, rendered inoperative. The same word is translated “make void” (Rom. 3:31), “made of none effect” (Rom. 4:14), “bring to nought” (1 Cor. 1:28), “done away” (1 Cor. 13:10), “put away” (1 Cor. 13:11), ‘abolished’ (2 Cor. 3:13) etc.
 - iii. The Dissolution of the Wall (Vs. 15b). In Christ (“in himself), saved Jews and saved Gentiles have been unified (‘one’) and made a “new man”. This “new man” is a reference to the church (See Eph. 3:3-6). The word ‘make’ means “to create” (ktizo) and is the same word used in Ephesians 3:9 to describe the physical creation and again in Eph. 4:24 to again describe the spiritual creation.
2. Vertical Peace (with God) (Vs. 16)
Not only was there ‘enmity’ between Jews and Gentiles but there was also ‘enmity’ between sinners and God.
- a. To whom we were reconciled – “unto God”
 - i. “**he** might reconcile” = Christ took the initiative to reconcile us to God.

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- ii. 'reconcile' = means "to bring back together again" (Wiersbe). It contains the idea "of a restoration to a condition which had been lost." (Wuest) Sin separated us from God but the cross made it possible for us to be brought back to God.
- iii. Note: The Bible never states that God needs to be reconciled to man. He is the offended party, not an offending party. In human relationships reconciliation is needed in both directions but between the sinner and God, the reconciliation is in one direction. God is always the one who reconciles and the human being is the one being reconciled (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:20,22).
- b. How we were reconciled – "in one body by the cross"
 - i. "in one body" = the church which is Christ's body.
 - ii. "by the cross" = there is no reconciliation to God without the cross. At the cross the price of our reconciliation was paid in the life blood of the Son of God. What a price was paid! He paid it all! We can contribute nothing!
 - iii. "having slain the enmity thereby" = the word 'enmity' means hostility. It is "the quality of being an enemy; the opposite of friendship; ill will; hatred; unfriendly dispositions; malevolence." (Websters 1828) We get a sense for the meaning of the word in Luke 23:12 where it describes Pilate and Herod being made friends "for before they were at **enmity** between themselves." The same root word is translated 'enemies' in Col. 1:21. There was enmity between Jew and Gentile (Vs. 15) but even more seriously there was enmity between sinners and God.
 - iv. William Macdonald: "The cross is God's answer to racial discrimination, segregation, anti-Semitism, bigotry, and every form of strife between men."

C. The Proclamation of our Reconciliation (Vs. 17)

- 1. Notice the progression in these verses in relation to the theme of peace. It is all centered in the Person and work of Christ. He "is our peace" (Vs. 14), he "made peace" (Vs. 15) and he "preached peace" (Vs. 17).
- 2. "preached peace" = the word 'preached' means "to announce good news, to proclaim. The same word is translated "shew these glad tidings" (Luke 1:19), "bring good tidings" (Luke 2:10), "preaching the gospel" (Luke 9:6) and 'declared' (Rev. 10:7). The message that peace with God is available through Christ is good news indeed! Christ proclaimed peace to both Gentile ("you which were afar off") and Jew ("to them that were nigh"). He proclaimed peace in His earthly ministry and then by the Spirit through the Apostles.

D. The Privilege of our Reconciliation (Vs. 18)

- 1. The Picture of our Access
 - a. The word 'access' means 'entrance'. "The word was used of a solemn, unhindered approach to a deity and of access to a

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- king's presence." (Linguistic Key) The word speaks of "freedom of approach" (Hoehner) and "was used of those who secure for one the privilege of an interview with a sovereign (Wuest).
- b. The same word appears in these verses: Eph. 3:12 "In whom we have boldness and **access** with confidence by the faith of him" Romans 5:2 "By whom also we have **access** by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
 - c. Imagine having constant, unhindered, unrestricted access to an earthly monarch. Imagine you could come before them every time you had a need or burden, knowing that their disposition towards you was to come to your aid and help you with their vast resources. Dear believer, you have access into the very throne room of heaven, to the highest throne in the universe and to the King of kings and Lord of lords. He has invited you to come boldly to "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:15-16) (See also Heb. 10:19)
 - d. Illustration: Contrast this with the O.T. system where only the High Priest could enter the holy of holies. It was the privilege of one man of one tribe of one nation on one day of the year. Now in Christ every believer has access to God's presence. The veil has been rent in two signifying the way is open for us to enter.
2. The Persons connected with our Access
- We note the 3 Persons of the Trinity in this verse and the role they each play in our prayers to God:
- a. The Son is the **Mediator** of our Prayers – "through him" (Vs. 18a). It is only through Christ that we have the privilege of access.
 - b. The Spirit is the **Helper** of our Prayers – "by one Spirit" (Vs. 18b)
 - e. The Father is the **Receiver** of our Prayers – "unto the Father" (Vs. 18c)
 - f. So, the believer prays to God the Father, through Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit. Think of it! The Triune God is involved in my prayers!

III. THE RESULTS OF THIS UNION (VS. 19)

A. What we are no longer (Vs. 19a)

1. "Now therefore" = "Paul brings to their conclusion the statements made in Vs. 14-18, and draws from them the natural, comforting inference." (Expositors)
2. "no more strangers and foreigners" = all who were not citizens. This connects back to Vs. 12 where their previous life is described as them being "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise".

B. What we are now (Vs. 19b)

We are now...

1. Fellow citizens
 - a. The word means "a native of the same town, figuratively, a fellow Christian." (Strong's)

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- b. When we get saved we get a new citizenship! You are no longer a European, Asian, Indonesian, Englishman, Indonesian, Australian, Indian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, African, American etc. you are a CHRISTIAN!
- 2. Family – “the household of God”
 - a. ‘household’ = one’s own household, family. When used of persons it means “of one’s family, strictly of kinsmen, sometimes loosely of familiar friends.” (A.T. Robinson) “It implies a close intimate family” (Hoehner). The same word is translated “household of faith” (Gal. 6:10) and “those of his own house” (1 Tim. 5:8).
 - b. You might say “I am saved but I am not sure if I fit in or if I am a part of the church family.” The truth is if you are saved, you ARE a part of the family!

Conclusion:

1. Have you been reconciled to God? Have you been cleansed by the blood of Christ and brought to a right standing with God?
2. As a believer, do you hold animosity and hostility towards other people groups or worse still, towards other blood washed saints of God? That all ended at the cross!

The Church God's Dwelling Place

Text: Ephesians 2:19-22

Introduction:

1. Review: In verse 1-10 of this chapter Paul has described the salvation experience of individuals. Now he expands the theme further, exploring how that as believers we are not left by ourselves but are united with other believers into one body, the church.
2. Harold Hoehner summarizes it well, "Individual sinners have obtained the gracious gift of salvation on the basis of God's grace by faith. That is not the end. They are not left alone but are united with other believers into a corporate unity. In Eph. 2:11-22 Paul discussed this union of redeemed Jews and Gentiles in the church, Christ's body." Or as Harry Ironside puts it, "We have already examined the past, present and future of the individual believer. In this section the Apostle addresses converted Gentiles collectively and speaks of converted Jews collectively."
3. In Vs. 11-18 the primary figure used to describe the church was that of a body. Now the Apostle will now use three more figures to describe the church, majoring on the picture of a building.
4. Review of main outline

I. THE REALITY BEFORE THIS UNION (VS. 11-12)

- A. Despised (Vs. 11)
- B. Destitute (Vs. 12)

II. THE RECONCILIATION OF THIS UNION (VS. 13-18)

- A. The Payment for our Reconciliation (Vs. 13)
- B. The Peace from our Reconciliation (Vs. 14-16)
- C. The Proclamation of our Reconciliation (Vs. 17)
- D. The Privilege of our Reconciliation (Vs. 18)

III. THE RESULTS OF THIS UNION (VS. 19)

- A. What we are no longer (Vs. 19a)
- B. What we are now (Vs. 19b-22)

We will now delve more into the third point concerning the blessed results of our union with Christ. "In these last four verses of the chapter the Apostle Paul lists some of the overwhelming new privileges of believing Gentiles." (William Macdonald)
There are three figures/pictures the Apostle uses to discuss these privileges.

I. A NEW CITIZENSHIP (VS. 19A)

A. What we are no longer (Vs. 19a)

1. "Now therefore" = "Paul brings to their conclusion the statements made in Vs. 14-18, and draws from them the natural, comforting inference." (Expositors)
2. "no more strangers and foreigners" = all who were not citizens. This connects back to Vs. 12 where their previous life is described as them being "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise".

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C. What we are now (Vs. 19b)

1. We are now “fellow citizens”. The word means “a native of the same town, figuratively, a fellow Christian.” (Strong's)
2. When we get saved we get a new citizenship! You are no longer a European, Asian, Indonesian, Englishman, Indonesian, Australian, Indian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, African, American etc. you are a CHRISTIAN!

II. A NEW HOUSEHOLD (VS. 19B)

A. The Picture of the Household – ‘household’

1. ‘household’ = one’s own household, family. When used of persons it means “of one’s family, strictly of kinsmen, sometimes loosely of familiar friends.” (A.T. Robinson) “It implies a close intimate family” (Hoehner). The same word is translated “household of faith” (Gal. 6:10) and “those of his own house” (1 Tim. 5:8).
2. You might say “I am saved but I am not sure if I fit in or if I am a part of the church family.” The truth is if you are saved, you ARE a part of the family!

B. The Person of the Household – “of God”

1. The church is none other than the household of the living God.
2. This truth should both comfort and challenge us. It should comfort us as we consider that we belong in God’s family. It should challenge us to have the right attitude to God’s church.

III. A NEW BUILDING (VS. 20-22)

This is the figure Paul majors on in this section. Observe three truths about this spiritual building which is the church:

A. The Foundation of the Building (Vs. 20)

1. The Support Stones – “the apostles and prophets” (Vs. 20a)
 - a. The Apostles – the office of the apostle was limited to those divinely appointed to that office. It was a temporary office for the establishment of the church. See Acts 1:21-22 for the qualifications of an Apostle. The church is built upon the foundation of Apostolic doctrine as found in the Epistles. It is interesting to note that the Apostles names are in the 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:4).
 - b. The Prophets – a reference to the N.T. prophets as opposed to the O.T. prophets. Remember, the church was a mystery hidden from the Old Testament saints (Eph. 3:1-6). The prophet’s role was one of forthtelling and foretelling. Like the Apostle’s, their role was for that early church period before the canon of Scripture was complete. The gift of prophet is listed in Romans 12 alongside the other gifts such as exhortation, serving etc... The only sense in which one has this gift today is in the forthtelling aspect, the need for direct revelation no longer needed in light of the fact we now have the completed New Testament.
2. The Supreme Stone – “Jesus Christ himself” (Vs. 20b)
 - a. The fact the N.T. apostles and prophets are called the foundation in this passage does not in anyway diminish the

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position of Christ in the foundation of the church. In fact, He is the most important part of the foundation as an understanding of the role of the corner stone in an ancient building will demonstrate.

- b. The Cornerstone (as explained by Harold Hoehner): In ancient times it was the **first** stone laid. The builder was very careful to properly set this stone. "The cornerstone is the primary foundation-stone at the angle of structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the walls and cross-walls throughout." (Lloyd) The cornerstone was the most important stone in the whole building. All the other stones were to be in line with it. It was that stone by which every other stone in the foundation and the superstructure was measured. Thus, the building of the new person, the church, must be in conformity with the cornerstone, Christ Jesus. The Apostles and prophets were to be correctly aligned with Christ and the same applies for the saints which form the walls of the building.
- c. The theme of Christ as the corner stone is a reoccurring theme in the New Testament:
 - i. Mark 12:10 Jesus said, "And have ye not read this scripture; **The stone** which the builders rejected is become the **head of the corner**:"
 - ii. Acts 4:11 "This is the **stone** which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the **head of the corner**."
 - iii. 1 Peter 2:6-7 "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the **stone** which the builders disallowed, the same is made the **head of the corner**,"
- d. Note: Christ is everything to the church. He is to be central in all things. He is our reference point and we need to regularly check that we are in line with Him and His will as revealed in His Word.

B. The Formation of the Building (Vs. 21)

1. The Person of its formation (Vs. 21a)
 - a. "in whom" = refers back to Christ the corner stone (Vs. 20). Christ is the sphere of the church's development.
 - b. The church owes its existence to Christ. He is the one building it.
2. The Process of its formation (Vs. 21b)
 - a. "fitly framed together" = it means to join or fit together. Today stones in a building are fitted together with mortar but in that day, there was an elaborate process of cutting and smoothing the stones so that they fit exactly next to each other." (Hoehner) Christ is the Master Craftsman. He takes our lives as rough stones out of the valley of death and with loving tenderness and

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perfect skill, shapes and molds us into living stones and places us in His building.

- b. 'together' = this word occurs also in the next verse (Vs. 22). This growth process is experienced in the company of others. We see that God's way for you to grow is not to leave you isolated by yourself but to place you in one of His local churches. To grow as a Christian, you need to be a member of a local, Bible believing Church where the headship of Christ is embraced.
 - c. 'groweth' = this building is alive! It is a living organism. The word is in the present tense indicating an ongoing process.
3. The Purpose of its formation (Vs. 21c)
 - a. 'unto' = this word shows the purpose or direction of the growth.
 - b. "an holy temple" = 'holy' means that which is consecrated and set aside for God's use. The Apostle's use of the word 'temple' is significant when you remember that the Ephesians used to be connected with the unholy, vile temple of Diana.
 - c. "in the Lord" = the church is God's spiritual temple.
 - d. Note: The kind of church Christ is working to build is a church that is consecrated, distinct and separate from the world.

C. The Function of the Building (Vs. 22)

"Verse 21 speaks of the building process whereas Vs. 22 speaks of the people who make up the building." (Hoehner)

1. The People of the church at Ephesus (Vs. 22a)
 - a. "ye are builded together" = Paul now moves from describing the process of how Christ builds his church to the Ephesian church in particular. We note that the local church is primary in this passage. Paul is writing to the Ephesian church, a local, visible assembly.
 - b. "builded **together**" = these former pagans and religious Jews were now united together in one local church body.
2. The Purpose of the church at Ephesus (Vs. 22b)
 - a. 'for' = points to the purpose for which Christ had formed the Ephesian church.
 - b. 'habitation' = the word means a dwelling place and has the sense of "a deep or settled dwelling." (Hoehner)
 - c. "of God through the Spirit" = the church is the dwelling place of God. He indwells the church in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

1. Find your place in the local church! Let God place you in the wall where he wants you.
2. How important is your church to you? If it is God's dwelling place, don't you think you should give it the preeminent place in your priorities each week?

The Mystery Made Known

Text: Ephesians 3:1-13

Introduction:

1. In chapter 2:11-22, Paul has explained how God has united Jew and Gentile in one body through Christ's work on the cross. In this section, Paul will further elaborate on this theme.
2. The following summary by Harold Hoehner is helpful: "In 2:11-22 Paul has explained the union of Jewish and Gentile believers into one new person in Christ. He now proceeds to offer a prayer on behalf of these believers. However, just as he begins, he stops abruptly in the middle of his sentence (at the end of 3:1) and digresses to the subject of the mystery of Christ. He describes the mystery and his responsibility to make it known. After this digression he resumes his prayer beginning in verse 14...With this digression he intended to enhance his previous comments." Kenneth Wuest adds, "The purpose of the digression was to acquaint the Gentiles with their call and Paul's knowledge of the mystery of Jew and Gentile in one body."
3. We will divide this passage into 3 parts for our study.

I. THE MYSTERY PAUL WAS ELECTED TO PROCLAIM (VS. 1-6)

Paul was chosen by God to be a custodian of a special revelation. Observe 3 important points about this mystery.

A. The Steward of the Mystery (Vs. 1-4)

1. The Incarceration of Paul (Vs. 1)
 - a. "For this cause" = means "for this reason" and refers back to the preceding paragraph. In light of who the Gentiles were now in Christ, Paul was moved to pray for them that they might progress in their spiritual understanding of God's love. But before he gets to that, he first digresses into giving further details of the great theme of the unity between Jew and Gentile.
 - b. "I Paul the prisoner" = a personal note from Paul to the Ephesians.
 - c. "of Jesus Christ" = Paul viewed his present trial through a spiritual lens. He didn't view himself as Caesar's prisoner or Rome's prisoner but the prisoner of Christ. He was there by Divine appointment!
 - d. "for you Gentiles" = Paul was imprisoned because of his ministry to the Gentiles. Take the Gentiles out of the equation and most of Paul's sufferings from the Jews would have ceased. See Acts 22:21-22 & 24:27. Paul repeatedly referred to himself as the "apostle to the Gentiles" (See Rom. 11:13; 15:15-16; 1 Tim. 2:7; Eph. 3:8).
2. The Dispensation given to Paul (Vs. 2)
 - a. "If ye have heard" = Paul is going to remind them of truths he had shared with them when he was ministering at Ephesus. The word 'if' here is used in the sense of "since", "surely", "assuming that" (if, indeed, as I may assume).

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- b. 'dispensation' = means a stewardship or administration. Our word 'economy' comes from this word. It means "the management of a household, or of household affairs, the management, oversight, administration of others property, the office of a manager, overseer, stewardship." (Wuest) We refer to "government administrations" which gives us a sense for the meaning of the word.
 - c. "of the grace of God" = means this administration committed to Paul was concerning the grace of God.
 - d. "which is given me to you-ward" = the Gentiles were the focus of this responsibility given to Paul.
3. The Revelation given to Paul (Vs. 3-4)
- a. 'revelation' = means an unveiling, an uncovering, a laying bare.
 - b. 'mystery' = defined specifically in Vs. 4 as "the mystery of Christ." A mystery is a "sacred secret" that was hidden to past generations but now revealed in the New Testament. There are a number of such mystery doctrines in the N.T. such as the rapture (1 Cor. 15:51), the indwelling of Christ (Col. 1:27), the present blindness of Israel (Rom. 11:25), the mystery of His will (Eph. 1:9), the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16) etc...
 - c. "as I wrote afore in few words" = a brief parenthesis. Could refer to 1:9 but more probable that it refers to what Paul has just outlined on this theme in the previous chapter (2:11-22).
 - d. "whereby, when ye read" = "Paul wants the Ephesians to read the previous section so that they can perceive or understand his insight." (Hoehner)

B. The Season of the Mystery (Vs. 5)

- 1. The Time it was not made known (Vs. 5a)
 - a. "in other ages" = previous generations
 - b. "the sons of men" = men in general were not aware of this truth which was hidden from them.
- 2. The Time it was made known (Vs. 5b)
 - a. "now revealed" = this Divine truth now made known. Note that the truth was not created at this time. It existed prior to this in the eternal heart of God but this was now God's chosen time to reveal it.
 - b. "his holy apostles and prophets" = this mystery given to the N.T. Apostles and prophets. Note that Paul was not the sole recipient of this truth. He had a special responsibility to propagate it and pen it down but it was revealed to others at this time also.
 - c. "by the Spirit" = the revelation was given by the Holy Spirit. Notice the Trinity again. The Father reveals the mystery of Christ through the Spirit.
- 3. In summary, the definition of a mystery therefore is:
 - a. A New Testament mystery is not something hidden, but rather something revealed.
 - b. A mystery is revelation, not known to the Old Testament saints.
 - c. A mystery is new revelation revealed to the N.T. apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

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4. Illustration: The recent release of the Palace Letters (between Sir John Kerr and the Queen's secretary) on July 14, 2020.

C. The Specifics of the Mystery (Vs. 6)

This verse gives the content/details of the "mystery of Christ". It concerned the fact that the Gentiles would be made:

1. Fellow heirs (Vs. 6a) – They would share in the same inheritance as the saved Jews.
2. Fellow members (Vs. 6b) – They would be a part of the same spiritual body as the saved Jews (the church).
3. Fellow partakers (Vs. 6c) – They would share promises of God concerning salvation with the Jews. While we have been made to share in the spiritual riches of Israel, the church does not replace Israel (see Romans 11).
4. Note: All these blessings were made possible "in Christ by the gospel."

II. THE MINISTRY PAUL WAS EMPOWERED TO PERFORM (VS. 7-8A)

A. The Might that made Paul Usable (Vs. 7)

1. Divinely Appointed (Vs. 7a)
 - a. 'whereof' = links to the word 'Gospel' in the previous verse. Paul was made a minister of the Gospel.
 - b. "made a minister" = Paul was not a self-made man. God had done the work to make him a minister of the Gospel. The word 'minister' simply means servant. The word 'deacon' comes from the same word.
2. Divinely Equipped (Vs. 7b)
 - a. "the gift of the grace of God" = Paul was given this high and holy privilege as an act of God's grace. Observe that in Vs. 2, "the administration of grace was given to Paul and in the present verse the ability to administer that grace was given. The "gift of grace" in this context refers to God's enabling power to minister." (Hoehner) The only way we can serve is by the grace of God. Without that grace, we could never do anything for Him. See 2 Cor. 9:8.
 - b. "by the effectual working of his power" = this grace was imparted to Paul by the power of God operating in his life.
 - i. "effectual working" = comes from the Greek word 'energeia' which is where our word 'energy' comes from. It refers to God's power in action. The English word 'effectual' means "producing the desired or intended effect" (Webster). It means effective. The same word is translated as follows elsewhere:
 - Eph. 1:19 "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the **working** (energeia) of his mighty power,"
 - Col. 1:29 "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his **working** (energeia), which worketh in me mightily."

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- Col. 2:12 “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the **operation** (energeia) of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”
- ii. “his power” = (dunamis) refers to God’s strength and ability. So, it (working) is the activity of power produced by God’s ability. (Hoehner) God gives power to perform the responsibilities He gives us.

B. The Mindset that made Paul Usable (Vs. 8a)

1. Paul couldn’t get over the fact God had saved him, let alone make him a minister of the gospel. Paul had a great sense of his own insignificance, of his smallness. He refers to himself as “less than the least of all saints”. This was not fake pride on Paul’s part. He honestly felt this way. Elsewhere Paul called himself the “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15) and the “least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9).
2. There is a definite link between Paul’s humble attitude and his usefulness for the Lord. Pride stops up the wellsprings of God’s power in our lives. God hates pride (Prov. 6:17) and resists the proud (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).
3. Beware of pride in its many forms such as:
 1. Intellectual Pride – pride over our accumulation of knowledge, secular or spiritual. E.g., I have a degree!
 2. Spiritual Pride – pride that comes wrapped in a thin veneer of spirituality. E.g., one’s knowledge of the Scriptures, position in the church etc... Wiersbe writes, “Understanding the deep truths of God’s Word does not give a man a big head; it gives him a broken and contrite heart.” Notice how the revelation of this knowledge humbled Paul rather than puffing him up. How opposite we tend to be when having attained a little knowledge, we all of a sudden feel ourselves superior to others. The more we learn of God’s plan of salvation, the more humble we should become.
 3. National Pride – pride over one’s lineage, language, culture or heritage. E.g., The typical American “We are the greatest” talk or the Australian style of chipping everyone down to size and despising authority or the English mentality of always sitting on the fence with an unwillingness to take a stand or the African “big man” mentality or the Asian outward respect for authority but subtle behind the scenes rebellion and autonomy.
 4. Personal pride – pride over one’s career, gifts and achievements; a prideful approach to interpersonal conflicts (e.g., not being willing to admit you are wrong, a contentious spirit); pride in dealing with authorities in my life (e.g., parent, pastor, employer, government official).

III. THE MESSAGE PAUL WAS ENTRUSTED TO PREACH (VS. 8C-13)

A. The Particulars of the Message (Vs. 8c-9)

Paul was commissioned to preach:

1. The Marvels of Christ (Vs. 8c)

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- a. 'preach' = comes from the Greek word 'euaggelizo' meaning "to proclaim, announce good news".
 - b. 'unsearchable' = the word literally means "that which cannot be traced out." The same word is translated "past finding out" in Romans 11:33 – "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!**" The riches of Christ are **unfathomable** – you cannot plum their depths; they are **untraceable** – you cannot discover their end; they are **unlimited** – you cannot exhaust them, they are infinite and everlasting; they are **unsearchable** – you cannot completely comprehend them, they are beyond the reach of our finite, human minds. "I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene, and wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean."
2. The Mystery of Christ (Vs. 9)
- a. "to make see" = to bring to light, illuminate, enlighten.
 - b. 'fellowship' = another aspect to this mystery. Because we have been united in one body through salvation, we enter into fellowship not only with God but with one another.
 - c. "which from the beginning of the world" = another reference to the time frame. This wondrous truth was hidden in God from the beginning of creation, reiterating the fact that it was unknown to men until this point.
 - d. "created all things by Jesus Christ" = reference to Christ as the Creator of all things. Christ cannot be created as He is the Creator!

B. The Purpose of the Message (Vs. 10-11)

1. The Students of God's Wisdom (Vs. 10a)
 - a. "the principalities and powers" = the angelic beings, both good and evil. The unseen hosts of glorious beings in Heaven, as well as the vast armies of fallen spirits dominated by Satan, are learning the many-sided wisdom of God
 - b. Evil angels (fallen angels) learn of God's wisdom displayed in the church. The church reminds them of the power of the cross and of their defeat. No wonder Satan hates the church of Christ with such a passion!
 - c. Elect angels learn of God's wisdom displayed in the church. To learn more of the wisdom of the God they love and serve faithfully in heaven, they look at the church. The godly angels find the study of God's salvation a fascinating and intriguing exercise – "...which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter 1:12)
 - d. Wuest: "The church thus becomes the university for angels, and each saint a professor. Only in the church can the angels come to an adequate comprehension of the grace of God."
2. The School of God's Wisdom (Vs. 10b)
 - a. "by the church" = The wisdom of God is revealed through the church.

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- b. “manifold wisdom of God” = the word ‘manifold’ means many colored, many sided, multifaceted. It means “having numerous different parts elements or features.” The word was used in classical Greek to describe embroidery or flowers of many colors. The same word is used in 1 Peter 4:10 to describe the “manifold grace of God.”
- 3. The Source of God’s Wisdom (Vs. 11)
 - a. “the eternal purpose” = it was God’s eternal purpose to reveal His wisdom through the church. The church was not an afterthought to God.
 - b. “which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” = the Father purposed this in His Son. Note that Christ’s full title is used:
 - i. Christ = His title. He is the Messiah.
 - ii. Jesus = His name. He is the Saviour.
 - iii. Lord = His Lordship. He is Lord and Master.

C. The Privilege in the Message (Vs. 12)

In Christ we now have:

- 1. Freedom of Address – ‘boldness’ (Vs. 12a). The word ‘boldness’ has the idea of freedom, confidence, speaking freely. The basic idea is freedom to speak without restraints. The phrase “we have” is in the present tense.
 - a. Hebrews 4:14-16 “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. **Let us therefore come boldly** unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”
 - b. Hebrews 10:19-22 “Having therefore, brethren, **boldness** to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus...”
- 2. Freedom of Approach – ‘access’ (Vs. 12b). The word means freedom of approach.
 - a. Rom. 5:2 “By whom also we have **access** by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
 - b. Eph. 2:18 “For through him we both have **access** by one Spirit unto the Father.”
 - c. The Apostle adds the words “with confidence” to further strengthen the words of assurance he has just given. The word ‘confidence’ means “fully persuaded” and refers to “a settled state of utter confidence.”

D. The Personal in the Message (Vs. 13)

Essentially Paul says:

- 1. Please don’t be discouraged (Vs. 13a). The word ‘faint’ has the sense of “to lose courage, become faint of heart.”
- 2. Please be encouraged (Vs. 13b). Paul was concerned that the believers discern God’s design and purpose behind his sufferings.

Conclusion: Have you become a part of the body of Christ by faith? What is your attitude to the church? How much does it mean to you? Is it a priority to you?

Prayer for Spiritual Empowerment

Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction:

1. The first recorded prayer of the Epistle is in chapter 1:15-23 where the Apostle prays for their spiritual enlightenment. Now he prays for their spiritual empowerment.
2. The Apostle Paul was a great intercessor whose prayers were marked by:
 - An emphasis on praying for the *saints*. Paul did pray for the lost (Rom. 10:1) but the bulk of his recorded prayers were for the believers.
 - An emphasis on praying for the *spiritual*. It is not wrong to pray for physical and material needs such as healing (James 5:13-16) and daily needs (Matt. 6:11) but the problem is that all too often our prayers are heavily weighted on the side of the physical and material rather than the spiritual.
3. This prayer is one of the most majestic in the New Testament. A.T. Robertson comments, "Nowhere does Paul sound such depths of spiritual emotion or rise to such heights of spiritual passion as here. The whole seems to be colored with the "riches of His glory."
4. The prayer divides naturally into three sections.

I. THE PRACTICE OF PAUL'S PRAYER (VS. 14-15)

A. The Motivation behind his Prayer (Vs. 14a)

1. "For this cause" = in light of what Paul has just taught. At first glance we might ask what was the great urgency for Paul to pray for the Ephesian believers? They were saved, set apart and sealed with God's Holy Spirit. They had been placed in the body of Christ. What more could they need?
2. Perhaps the state of the Ephesian church some 35 years later might help answer that question. Through the Apostle John, Christ rebuked the Ephesian Church in these words, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. 2:4). "In the context of the churches of Revelation, it would appear that this cooling of first love is the first step into apostasy. The prayer before us and indeed the whole of the Ephesian Epistle is calculated to deter the subtle beginnings of spiritual decline. Only the constant infusion of the life and power of our risen Lord Jesus Christ will counteract the falling away of an individual Christian or of a whole church movement." (I. Western) The love of Christ does not lead us into apostasy, it protects us from apostasy!

B. The Method of his Prayer (Vs. 14b-15)

1. The Posture in which he Prayed (Vs. 14b)
 - a. In Paul's day, according to court etiquette when someone approached the throne, he bowed the knee. (Phillips) There are numerous postures for prayer in the Bible and there is a sense where each one conveys a heart attitude. Kneeling conveys humility, reverence, and dependence upon God.

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- b. Wiersbe: “The posture that links ‘sitting’ with ‘walking’ and ‘standing’ is “bowing the knee.” It is through prayer that we lay hold of God’s riches that enable us to behave like Christians and battle like Christians.”
2. The Person to whom he Prayed (Vs. 14b-15)
 - a. The Father of Christ (14b). The preposition ‘unto’ means ‘towards’. It speaks of the consciousness which Paul had when praying that he was directing his prayer to God who was listening while he prayed.” (Wuest) The general patter for prayer in the N.T. is to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The Father of Christians (15)

II. THE PETITION OF PAUL’S PRAYER (VS. 16-19)

There is a very real sense in which this is one petition with four parts, like the segments of a telescope. One request leads into the next one and so on. Each request is introduced by the pronoun ‘that’. Paul prays for:

A. The Spirit’s Strengthening (Vs. 16)

1. The Provision of Strengthening (Vs. 16a)
 - a. ‘grant’ = means to give. This working of the Spirit in our lives is not worked up, it is prayed down!
 - b. “riches of his glory” = the standard and supply of the provision. ‘Glory’ is “the whole revealed perfections of God.” (Wuest) It is “the reflection of the essence of one’s being.” (Hoehner) Heaven’s wealth is available to saints who will pray!
2. The Person of Strengthening (Vs. 16b)
 - a. ‘strengthened’ = means to be made strong. It is in the passive voice reminding us that this power is not self-generated but comes from God. Twice this same word is translated “wax strong”, first in relation to John the Baptist (Luke 1:80) and then in relation to Christ (Luke 2:40).
 - b. “with might” = ‘dunamis’, Divine power, ability. Paul is praying that they will be made strong in God’s power.
 - c. “by his Spirit” = the Holy Spirit is the Agent of this power. He is the one who ministers God’s power to us in response to believing prayer.
3. The Place of Strengthening (Vs. 16c)
 - a. “the inner man” = the heart, spirit as opposed to the outer, physical man. 2 Cor. 4:16 “For which cause we faint not; but though our **outward man** perish, yet the **inward man** is renewed day by day.” Paul wants them to know power in their spiritual lives.
 - b. Andrew Murray observes:

“Day and night he cried to God in his intercession for them that the light and the power of the Holy Spirit might be in them. As earnestly as he believed in the power of his intercession for them so also did he believe in the blessing that theirs would bring upon him. “Now I beseech you... that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” (Rom 15:30). —[God] will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us” (2 Cor. 1:0-11). “Praying... for me... that I may open my mouth boldly” (Eph. 6:18-19 “This shall turn to my salvation through your prayer” (Phil. 1:19) The whole relationship between pastor and people depends on the united, continual prayerfulness. Their whole relationship to each other is a heavenly

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one, spiritual and divine, and can only be maintained by unceasing prayer. When ministers and people waken up to the consciousness that the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit is waiting for their united and unceasing prayers, the church will begin to know something of what apostolic Christianity is.”

B. The Saviour’s Abiding (Vs. 17a)

1. The Meaning of this Indwelling – ‘dwell’
 - a. The word ‘dwell’ means “to make one’s home, to be at home.” (Robertson) The word denotes a permanent habitation as opposed to sojourning or an occasional visit. Note how the word is used in the following examples to illustrate:
 - i. Acts 9:22 “the Jews which **dwelt** at Damascus”
 - ii. Acts 11:29 “the brethren which **dwelt** in Judaea”
 - b. Kenneth Wuest explains: “The personal presence of the Lord Jesus in the heart of the believer is not in view here. That is taken for granted. The word ‘dwell’ is ‘katoikesai’, made up of ‘oikeo’, “to live in as a home,” and ‘kata’, “down” thus “to settle down and be at home”. So, it has the sense “that Christ might finally settle down and feel completely at home in your hearts.”
 - c. Challenge: If you are saved, Christ indwells you, but is He at home in your heart? Or is your heart overtaken by things that grieve Him? You are Christ indwelt but are you Christ controlled?
2. The Means of this Indwelling – “by faith”
 - a. By faith we are indwelt by salvation and by faith we experience the abiding presence of Christ in our lives.
 - b. Wuest: “This trust here is not a trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, but, having believed on Him as Saviour, the saint is now to believe on Him as the One who fills with the Spirit, or grants the fulness of the Spirit, as Paul puts it in his prayer here.”

C. The Saint’s Growing (Vs. 17b-19a)

They were to grow in the love of God. “This love is a love that seeks the highest good in the one loved.” (Hoehner) Paul prayed that they would be:

1. Established in Divine Love (Vs. 17b)
 - a. The Agricultural Metaphor – ‘rooted’. God’s love is pictured as the soil in which the believer flourishes. We grow by the principle of love, not law. The root does two things: 1. It provides nutriment; 2. It provides stability.
 - b. The Architectural Metaphor – ‘grounded’. The reference is to the foundation of a building. Love is the foundation for the Christian love, not law. We live by an inner life principle, not by an external law principle.
2. Enlightened in Divine Love (Vs. 18-19a)
 - a. A Love which is Unmeasurable (Vs. 18)

The four dimensions are intended to illustrate the vastness of God’s love. Consider its:

 - i. Breadth – how wide is it? Is it only wide enough for a select few? No! His love is wide enough for all mankind (John

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3:16). His love is wider than the seas and broader than the vast expanse of the universe.

- ii. Length – how long is it? Where does God’s love start and where does it end? Can you measure it? Will God ever stop loving us as His children? Will we reach a limit one day? No! God’s love is infinite and eternal reaching back into the heart of God in eternity past and extending forward into eternity future. God’s love has no end, it is forever.
- iii. Depth – how deep is it? Is it as deep as the deepest ocean? What is its volume? It is deeper than the deepest ocean!
- iv. Height – how high is it? Is it as high as the sky? Does it reach to the stars, the galaxy and beyond? Does it reach as high as heaven? Do you see the picture? No matter how far you travel in any direction, God’s love is vaster still.
- v. Illustration: Abraham was instructed of God to walk “the length” and “the breadth” of the land he was to inherit. Gen. 13:14-15, 17 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”
 - i. Hymn: Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the sky of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above would drain the oceans dry, nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky.
- b. A Love which is Unfathomable (Vs. 19a)
 - i. “to know” = refers to knowledge gained by experience.
 - ii. “passeth knowledge” = the word ‘passeth’ means “to throw beyond, to surpass, exceed.” “No matter how much knowledge we have of Christ and His work, his love surpasses that knowledge.” (Hoehner) This phrase is similar to that of Vs. 8 – “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
 - iii. Illustration: Imagine if you could assemble 100 of the greatest Christians from church history in one room and have them share their knowledge and experience of God’s love in salvation. What an immense pool of knowledge that would be! And yet, God’s love would far surpass it still.
 - iv. Wuest: “No matter how much the saint experiences of the love of Christ, yet there are oceans of love in the great heart of God that have not been touched by his experience.”

D. The Spirit’s Filling (Vs. 19b)

1. Positionally we have been filled – Col. 2:9-10 “For in him dwelleth all the **fulness** of the Godhead bodily. And ye are **complete** in him,

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which is the head of all principality and power:" In Christ, we have been filled with His fulness.

2. Experientially we need to be filled – “that ye might be filled” (Eph. 3:19). There is a direct link between prayer and the filling of the Spirit. It is Scriptural to pray for the filling of the Spirit. Would to God we would all start praying fervently for each other that we would all be filled with His fulness.
3. Illustration: D.L. Moody’s experience (as explained by John Phillips). “He rarely spoke of his experience because it was too sacred, but it is recorded in his biography. He had been walking the streets of New York City, oblivious to the crowds and traffic, wrestling with God about a claim God was making on his life. Suddenly he gave in and felt an overwhelming sense of God’s presence sweep over him like waves. He went to a friend’s house, declined the offer of a meal, and asked for a room where he could be alone. Time passed. He was alone with God in a way he had never known before; he was filled with the fullness of God. At last Moody cried out to God to stay His hand, for he could take no more. After that experience his ministry was never the same. An anointing on him surpassed all that had gone before.”
4. Illustration: Imagine you possessed a vast fortune but instead of using it, you lived as though you did not possess it at all. You struggled from day to day to get by with your own meagre resources. How often we live this way as God’s people! We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings (1:3) but instead of appropriating them in our lives by faith for our spiritual needs, we try and live according to our own power and strength.

III. THE PRAISE OF PAUL’S PRAYER (VS. 20-21)

Paul concludes this prayer and this first major section of the Epistle with a stirring doxology emphasizing...

A. The Ability of God (Vs. 20)

Observe two truths about God’s power. It is...

1. Overwhelming Power (Vs. 20a)
 - a. “him that is able” = the word ‘able’ also comes from ‘dunamis’. Perhaps you would say, I desire the working of God’s Holy Spirit in my life. I want to know more of God’s power in my life. But how is it all possible? The answer is that God is able!
 - b. “exceeding abundantly above” = “this expression is the highest form of comparison imaginable.” (Hoehner) It means “beyond all measure, greatly exceeding all boundaries.” (Linguistic Key)
 - c. “all that we ask or think” = God’s ability to work in our lives and to answer our prayers is way beyond any request we bring him or even our wildest imaginations.
 - d. Note: Remember again that the context is prayer for spiritual blessings, not material blessings. This verse has nothing to do with the prosperity movement.
2. Operating Power (Vs. 20b)
 - a. ‘worketh’ = energy, power in operation. The operation of the Holy Spirit in His work of sanctification.

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- b. Challenge: There is no limit to what God can do but the extent to which He works in our lives will be largely determined by how much we are yielded to Him.

B. The Glory of God (Vs. 21)

1. The location of this glory (Vs. 21a)
 - a. "in the church" = this fits the whole context which is dealing with the church. It is in the church that God's manifold wisdom is displayed (Vs. 10) and it is through the church that God glorifies Himself.
 - b. Remember, the sole purpose of a New Testament church is the glory of God and it is only a church consumed with a zeal for God's glory that will know something of God's power.
 - c. Maclaren: "His glory is to shine in the Church, the theatre of His power, the standing demonstration of the might of redeeming love...So, then, think of that wonder that God sets His glory in His dealings with us. Amid all the majesty of His works and all the blaze of His creation, this is what He presents as the highest specimen of his power – the Church of Jesus Christ, the company of poor men, wearied and conscious of many evils, who follow afar off the footsteps of their Lord."
2. The mediation of this glory (Vs. 21b) Christ is the one who makes it possible for us to glorify the Father. His mediatorial ministry is in view.
3. The duration of this glory (Vs. 21c)
 - a. "throughout all ages" = that means **now** in this present age.
 - b. "throughout all ages" = that means **forever** into the future, in eternity. This is "the expression of one trying to convey the idea of eternity." (Wuest)

Conclusion:

1. Pray this prayer for yourself that you might know God's power in your life.
2. Pray this prayer for others that they might know God's power in their lives. It is especially important that mature saints take up the ministry of prayer for the young and immature in the Lord. "We cannot unveil the love of God to the young pilgrim, but the Holy Spirit can and does. Yet for some wise and good reason God has ordained that this great spiritual blessing be granted in answer to the intercessory prayers of His people. Some, no doubt sincere folk, turn to a highly emotive charismatic experience as the universal panacea (remedy) for all spiritual ills. Paul's, yea the Holy Spirit's method is the prayer closet of the more mature saints, lifting up their struggling brothers and sisters before the throne of grace, until the eyes of their understanding be opened, the Spirit be released in greater measure and the love of God flood their hearts." (I. Western)

Walk the Talk!

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

Introduction:

1. Review of main outline.
 - Our Wealth (Chap. 1-3)
 - Our Walk (Chap. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare (Chap. 6:10-24)
2. This chapter: We enter the second major part of the Epistle dealing with the believer's walk. We go from position to practice, doctrine to duty, beliefs to behavior, creed to conduct, worldview to walk etc. **Truth is transforming!** There are somewhere in the order of **41** imperatives/commands (H. Hoehner) in this section. Kenneth Wuest summarizes this transition well, "We come now to an important dividing point in this letter. The first three chapters contain doctrine, the last three, exhortation. This is the proper order, for only in doctrine can one see the sweet reasonableness of the exhortations, and obtain the necessary power and technique to obey them. In brief, God says in chapters 1-3, "I have made you a saint." In chapters 4-6, He says, "Now, live a saintly life." **You are a saint now live like a saint!**
3. When people make statements like, "Don't talk to me about doctrine – just let me live my Christian life!" or "It makes no difference what you believe, just as long as you live right," they reveal their ignorance of the way the Christian life works. We all order our conduct according to our beliefs and values!
4. This section (Vs. 1-16): The key theme is unity (See Vs. 3 and 13).
5. This lesson (Vs. 1-6): We will consider the opening exhortation to walk worthy and how that moves towards the theme of unity. To that end, we will divide the portion under three headings.

I. THE CALL TO A WORTHY WALK (VS. 1)

A. The Person making the Appeal (Vs. 1a)

1. "I therefore" = on the basis of what has been previously taught. In light of who we are in Christ, Paul exhorts the believers on how to live for Christ.
2. "the prisoner of the Lord" = they are reminded again of Paul's situation in the will of God. In many ways, Paul was an example of the very dedication and consecration he was asking of the Ephesian believers. He was in prison on account of His total commitment to the walk God had ordained for him.

B. The Passion of the Appeal (Vs. 1b)

1. 'beseech' = the word means to exhort, to urge, to plead. This is no dispassionate, dry appeal. Paul is not about to give a list of suggestions for the believers to choose from in relation to their Christian lives. He is going to issue Divine directives for their lives. It is essential they live as Christ would have them so he issues this impassioned plea.
2. Note: It is entirely right and biblical for the preacher to fervently call believers to consecrated Christian living. He has no authority to put the commands of Christ in the form of suggestions, giving the saints

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the impression, they can take or leave them. These are Divine demands.

C. The Point of the Appeal (Vs. 1c)

1. 'walk' = the word speaks of our conduct and lifestyle as Christians.
2. 'worthy' = has the sense of worthily, suitably, in a manner worthy of.
 - a. the word has "the root meaning of balancing the scales – what is on one side of the scale should be equal in weight to what is on the other side." (MacArthur) It means "having the weight of another thing. Thus, Paul exhorts the Ephesian saints to see to it that their Christian experience, the Christian life they live, should weigh as much as the profession of Christianity which they make." (Wuest)
 - b. Therefore, to "walk worthy" means that our daily lives need to correspond to the high position we have in Christ. "The emphasis is on conduct that is in balance with or equal to one's call." (Hoehner)
3. "the vocation wherewith ye are called" = the word 'vocation' means 'calling' and comes from the same root as the word 'called' in the verse. This is a reference to our salvation. We heard the call of God through the Gospel, responded to that call through repentance and faith and were saved.
4. Illustration: When we think of a vocation, we think of one's occupation or profession (e.g., nurse, doctor, mechanic, office worker, tradesman etc...). Perhaps you've heard of "vocational training" which is training to prepare you for a particular career. That's your earthly vocation. But don't forget your high and heavenly vocation (calling) to be a follower of Jesus Christ!

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A WORTHY WALK (VS. 2-3)

What does a worthy walk actually look like in practice? The Apostle now outlines this for us. To walk worthy of our calling is to:

A. Walk Humbly (Vs. 2a)

There are two words that both describe humility:

1. Lowliness – the word is made up of 'low' and 'mind', thus literally meaning humbly/lowly thinking. Speaks of having a humble opinion of oneself. The same word was used by Paul in Acts 20:19 where he mentioned to the Ephesian elders that he had served the Lord in Asia with all "humility of mind". Apparently, this word was coined by the early Christians as the Greeks and Romans had no word in their vocabulary for humility. To them, humility was abhorrent. Pride and self-assertion were highly valued.
 - a. It is significant that humility is mentioned first. Without humility the other graces mentioned will not be present. As pride is the fountainhead of wickedness, so humility is the fountainhead of righteousness.
 - b. The Christian life begins with humility. You must humble yourself to admit you are a sinner in need of a Saviour. "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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Whosoever therefore shall **humble himself** as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3-4)

- c. The Christian life must continue in humility! James 4:6 “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**” E.g., Humility to learn from God’s Word and to cooperate with the change He wants to bring in my life; humility in our dealings with one another within the local church; humility in family living etc...
2. Meekness – has the idea of gentleness, the opposite of roughness. It is by product of humility. Meekness is not weakness or a disposition to compromise on truth. “The word was used of wild animals that were tamed, especially of horses that were broken and tamed. Such an animal still has strength and spirit, but its will is under the control of its master. Meekness is power under control, the control of God. A meek person is not avenging, self-assertive, vindictive or self-defensive.” (Macarthur)
 - a. Meekness is self-control, the ability not to retaliate and react in one’s own self-interest, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The word “implies the conscious exercise of self-control, exhibiting a conscious choice of gentleness as opposed to the use of power for the purpose of retaliation.” (Hoehner)
 - b. Illustration: Christ said of Himself, “I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29) but in no way was Christ weak. Consider His cleansing of the temple from those profiteering from the worshippers. When faced with arrest in the garden, Christ could have summoned the armies of heaven to His defense (12 legions of angels – Matt. 26:53) and yet He did not use that power, choosing rather to submit to the will of the Father and go to the cross.

B. Walk Patiently (Vs. 2b)

There are two words that both describe patience:

1. Longsuffering – literally means “long tempered”, the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back.
 - a. It refers to “patient endurance under injuries inflicted by others. The Christians response towards circumstances and events.” (Strongs) Trench defines the word as “patience with respect to persons.”
 - b. Illustration: God is the greatest example of longsuffering where He withholds His wrath, giving us opportunity to repent (Rom. 2:4). “Thus, must the believer stay his or her impatience or vengeance when wronged by another believer, exhibiting patience one toward another, especially in the light of the union of believing Jews and Gentiles into one body.” (Hoehner)
2. Forbearing – means to bear with, endure.
 - a. Who we are to forbear – “one another”. To put it simply, we are to bear with and endure one another. Robertson suggests it has the idea of “holding yourselves back from one another.” It is the opposite to that attitude where one is always ready for fight and quick to enter into conflict with others.

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- b. How we are to forbear – “in love”. These qualifying words make it clear that this is not a cold, clinical “putting up with” each other like we sometimes do. There is warmth and sincerity in our hearts as we are influenced by Divine love. This ‘love’ is the ‘agape’ love which is a love that seeks the highest good of the one loved. It is others centered love as opposed to self-centered concern. It is love that gives. It is Calvary love. It is the love described in 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

C. Walk in Unity (Vs. 3)

1. The Attention to Unity (Vs. 3a)
 - a. ‘endeavouring’ = means giving diligence, making every effort, to exert one’s self, be zealous. “It speaks of determined effort.” (Wuest) The same word is translated ‘study’ (2 Tim. 2:15), “do” or “give diligence (2. Tim. 4:9, 21; Tit. 3:12, 2. Pet. 1:10, 3:14) and ‘labour’ (Heb. 4:11). Synonyms for ‘endeavour’: Striving, aiming, laboring, struggling, exerting, seeking, trying.
 - b. “to keep” = means “to keep by guarding, to guard by exercising watchful care. It speaks of guarding something which is in one’s possession.” (Wuest) The same word is also translated ‘observe’ (Matt. 23:3), ‘watched’ (Matt. 27:36), ‘preserved’ (1 Thess. 5:23) and “hold fast” (Rev. 3:3).
 - c. “the unity” = comes from the root word ‘one’. To be unified is to be one – in “one accord and in one place” (Acts 1:14, 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12)
 - d. Challenge: Unity is a very delicate and fragile thing in a church and can easily be disrupted unless each member takes this responsibility to heart. Our unity is a vital part of our witness for the Lord (John 13:35).
2. The Author of Unity (Vs. 3b)
 - a. This unity is attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit – “the unity of the Spirit”. Through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, they had been placed together into one body. They were unified in their position in Christ, now that unity was to be lived out and maintained in the local assembly at Ephesus. “Unity is not uniformity. Unity comes from within and is a spiritual grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from without.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. Psalm 133:1-3 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like **the precious ointment** upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”
 - c. Note: As we “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16), the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23) is produced in our lives which results in “the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3).
3. The Aid to Unity (Vs. 3c)
 - a. ‘bond’ = that which binds together. “The word was used in ancient writings to refer to the binding together of a defense structure or the fastening of garments. It comes from the same

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root as 'prisoner' in verse 1 so it has the idea of being chained. Hence, the chaining together of peace." (Hoehner)

- b. 'peace' = the binding factor which will preserve the unity which the Spirit has produced. Remember, peace is possible because of what Christ accomplished – He is our peace, He made peace and He preached peace (2:14-16). Expositors: "The unity wrought among these Ephesians by the Spirit of God will be theirs in so far as they make peace the relation which they maintain one to another, or the bond in which they walk together."

III. THE CREED OF A WORTHY WALK (VS. 4-6)

The unity of the believers is strongly emphasized in these verses with the seven-fold use of the word 'one'. True unity is not divorced from truth but is based upon doctrine for two reasons:

- Paul has just spent 3 chapters laying a doctrinal framework before he gives this call to unity.
- Paul now demonstrates that unity is connected to doctrine in Vs. 4-6.

Central to this unity is the Person of God, the Trinity – The Spirit (Vs. 4), the Son (Vs. 5) and the Father (Vs. 6). Paul explains "in more detail how elements of the Christian faith revolve around the three Persons of the Trinity." (Hoehner) There is no connecting conjunction (like 'for') giving the transition a somewhat abrupt and forceful tone.

A. Unity in the Spirit (Vs. 4)

1. One body – a reference to the body of Christ. The local church is the visible manifestation of the body of Christ. The Ephesians had been united in Christ's body, the Church.
2. One Spirit – the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer. This verse revolves around the Spirit.
3. One Hope – this hope is attached to the believers 'calling'. This calling refers to our calling to salvation. The Holy Spirit was the agent of this call. "Hope for believers is not the world's "hope so" but the absolute certainty that God will deliver what He has promised." (Hoehner)

B. Unity in the Son (Vs. 5)

1. One Lord – clearly this is a reference to Christ as the Spirit is mentioned in the previous verse (Vs. 4) and the Father in the next verse (Vs. 6). This verse revolves around the Son. There is only one Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
2. One Faith – the word is used in two ways in the New Testament.
 - a. Subjective Faith – faith exercised by the individual in Christ for salvation. It could therefore refer to the "one act of trust in Christ for all both Jew and Gentile." (Robertson)
 - b. Objective Faith – the body of revealed truth, N.T. doctrine. Jude 1:3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which

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was **once delivered unto the saints.**” It is this sense that is most likely in view in this verse.

3. One Baptism – reference to water baptism which in the New Testament is always for believers and by full immersion in water. There are not multiple baptisms such as infant sprinkling, pouring or baptism of adults for salvation. Only believer’s baptism **after** salvation as a public testimony and confession of one’s faith in Christ. Biblical baptism essential for unity in the local church.
 - a. Note: This is not a reference to the spiritual baptism of the Spirit or it would have been connected with the Person of the Holy Spirit in the previous verse. Also, the truth of being spiritually baptised into one body has essentially already been covered in the previous verse where the “one body” is mentioned. 1 Cor. 12:13 “For **by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”
 - b. The reason baptism is connected with the Person of the Son is because upon exercising faith in Christ for salvation, the believer is to be baptized as a public confession of his faith in Christ (See Acts 8:37).

C. Unity in the Father (Vs. 6)

1. One God – the great truth of Monotheism, that is, that there is only One True God. This verse revolves around the Father. Deut. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is **one LORD:**” Isaiah 45:6 “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, **that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.**”
2. Father of all – not teaching universal salvation. God is the Father of all born again believers. If we have the same Heavenly Father and are a part of the same spiritual family, we have every reason to be a unified people. Several truths are stated about God the Father. He is:
 - a. **Above all** – this emphasises his transcendence and His sovereign position over all believers. Not only is He the sovereign Lord of the universe but also of His children. Every aspect of our lives is to be under His authority.
 - b. **Through all** – emphasises His immanence. He works through the lives of all His people to accomplish His purposes.
 - c. **In all** – emphasises His indwelling. The Father indwells each believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit. What a blessed thought! We are indwelt by the Triune God – indwelt by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9), by Christ (Col. 1:27) and the Father (Eph. 4:6).

Conclusion:

1. Are you living in a way that is consistent with your high calling in Christ?
2. Are you walking in humility and bearing with others patiently?
3. Are you a contributor to church unity or a disrupter of church unity? Are you watchful and careful about your attitudes, words and actions and their effect upon others? Are you alert to threats to unity from the devil and divisive individuals? How much effort are you making towards unity right now?

Christ's Gifts to His Church

Text: Ephesians 4:7-16

Introduction:

1. Review of main outline.
 - Our Wealth (Chap. 1-3)
 - Our Walk (Chap. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare (Chap. 6:10-24)
2. This chapter: We enter the second major part of the Epistle dealing with the believer's walk. We go from position to practice, doctrine to duty, beliefs to behavior, creed to conduct, worldview to walk etc. **Truth is transforming!** There are somewhere in the order of **41** imperatives/commands (H. Hoehner) in this section. In brief, God says in chapters 1-3, "I have made you a saint." In chapters 4-6, He says, "Now, live a saintly life." **You are a saint now live like a saint!**
3. This section (Vs. 1-16): The key theme is unity (See Vs. 3 and 13).
4. This lesson (Vs. 7-16): Paul now focuses on the gifts Christ has bestowed upon His church to help preserve this unity. "Paul moves now from what all Christians have in common to how Christians differ from each other. He is discussing variety and individuality within the unity of the Spirit." (Wiersbe) We will study this section under three headings:

I. THE PROVISION OF THE GIFTS (VS. 7-10)

A. The Recipients of the Gifts (Vs. 7)

1. 'but' = "marks a contrast from the preceding context, going from the whole church to every individual within the church. In the oneness of the body there is also diversity." (Hoehner)
2. "unto every one of us is given grace" = grace is the Gospel in a word. We experience saving grace when we trust Christ as Saviour. Then we experience enabling grace for the Christian life and that is what is in view here. Spiritual gifts are not limited to a select few. Every Christian has received a spiritual gift to exercise for God's glory and the edification of others.
3. "measure of the gift of Christ" = the word 'measure' means "specific portion" (Macarthur). The Lord has sovereignly measured out the exact proportion of each believer's gift (Rom. 12:3). Expositors explain, "Each gets the grace which Christ has to give, and each gets it in the proportion in which the Giver is pleased to bestow it; one having it in larger measure and another in smaller, but each getting it from the same Head and with the same purpose." Christ not only "gives each believer a gift but he also determines the amount of the gift. Each believer has received from Christ a measure of a gift to be used in a particular function in the body." (Hoehner)

B. The Rights of the Giver (Vs. 8-10)

1. The quotation (Vs. 8)
 - a. The quotation is from Psalm 68:18, a Messianic Psalm of victory.

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- b. The emphasis is upon the credentials of the One giving the gifts. It is Christ's Divine prerogative by virtue of His victorious ascension. "The central thought in Vs. 8-10 is that the Giver of the gifts is the ascended Christ." (Macdonald)
2. The explanation (Vs. 9-10)
 - a. There is a parenthesis covering two verses where the Apostle provides a commentary on the quotation in the previous verse. A parenthesis is used to "mark of an interjected explanatory or qualifying remark."
 - b. Again, the emphasis is on Christ's exalted position. The exalted, ascended, glorified Christ has Divinely bestowed gifts upon His church.
 - c. "fill all things" = the object of Christ's ascension. He ascended to occupy the position of supreme sovereign over the entire universe and in that position, he has the Divine right to bestow gifts to His church as He sees fit.

II. THE PARTICULARS OF THE GIFTS (VS. 11)

There are 5 gifts listed. We will divide them into two categories:

A. Foundational Gifts (Vs. 11a)

1. Apostles = primary reference is to the original 12 apostles chosen by Christ. To qualify as an Apostle, you had to be an eye witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1). The office of an Apostle was by its very nature, a temporary office, ordained of God for the establishment of the church (Eph. 2:20).
2. Prophets = the N.T. prophets who had a special function of receiving and communicating direct Revelation from God prior to the completion of the New Testament. This was also a temporary gift. The prophet gift only exists now in the sense in which it is described in Romans 12. The prophet gift today is a forthtelling gift, not a foretelling gift.

B. Operational Gifts (Vs. 11b)

1. The Evangelist Gift = the Evangelist gift involves:
 - a. The evangelization of the lost. The root word is 'Gospel' so primarily an Evangelist is one who is gifted in the reaching of others with the good news. Philip is a good illustration of this in Acts 8:5 where he preaches Christ in Samaria. From Philip's example we can also see that opening new areas for the Gospel is a part of the Evangelist's role. Remember! All Christians are to be involved in the work of Evangelism but some have a special gift from God in that area. Paul exhorted Timothy as a pastor at Ephesus to "do the work of an Evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5).
 - b. The edification of the saints (Vs. 12).
2. The Pastor Gift = the pastoral gift is that of shepherding the flock. It is both a gift and one of the two offices in the local church (See 1 Tim. 3). Christ equips those He calls to that office. There are several truths about the New Testament pastor worth remembering:
 - a. There are three titles but one office. This is demonstrated in passages such as Phil. 1:1 and Titus 1:5-8. All three words are used in Acts 20:17, 28 and 1 Peter 5:1-2.

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- b. Your pastor plays an important role in your life as a believer! He is God's gift to the church for its protection and edification. The anti-pastor attitude today that says "I don't need a pastor" is ignorance.
- c. Get the most out of your gift!
 - i. Place yourself under your pastor's preaching faithfully and regularly.
 - ii. Seek your pastor's counsel and input in your life and ministry.
 - iii. Maintain a right attitude to your pastor. Guard your heart against falling prey to the rumor machine! If the devil can get you disconnected from your pastor and harm your spiritual life, he will.
 - iv. Be willing to receive correction as well as encouragement.
 - v. See the pastor as your co-laborer, friend and ally in the service of the local church. His involvement in your area of ministry is to be welcomed!
- 3. The Teacher Gift = the gift of teaching the Word of God. Every pastor must be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2) but not every teacher is necessarily a pastor. It can exist as a separate gift in the local church and can be very helpful in the area of biblical instruction.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS (VS. 12-16)

We now get to the reason why Christ gave these gifted men to the church. They were given to the church for:

A. Equipping the Saints (Vs. 12-13)

- 1. The Definition of this equipping (Vs. 12a)
 - a. 'perfecting' = the word means "complete furnishing, equipping." (Strongs) The word is used in New Testament times for the furnishing of a house (Robertson) or the preparation of a garment (Hoehner). It means to "equip for service" (Wuest).
 - b. These gifted men are placed there by God to furnish you with the tools from God's Word to be a better servant.
- 2. The Direction of this equipping (Vs. 12b-13)

There are two by products intended to flow out of this equipping of the saints:

 - a. The work of the ministry (Vs. 12b). These gifted men are to specialize in equipping the saints for Christian service. Sometimes we read this incorrectly as "the pastor and church staff are there to do the work of the ministry." While it is true that a pastor's whole life is dedicated to laboring in the ministry for the Lord, that is not what is in view here. The 'saints' are in view. So, it means the saints are to be equipped for service.
 - b. The edifying of the body (Vs. 12c-13). As the saints are furnished in the truth by God's gifted men and they put it into practice in Christian service, the church is built up (edified). This involves:
 - i. Unity – "the unity of the faith". Through the teaching and preaching ministry of God's gifted men, the church grows

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in unity. Again, we note that this unity is achieved through the truth (“the faith”) not in disconnection from the truth. This unity is achieved as we grow in the “knowledge of the Son of God” who is the object of our faith. The word ‘knowledge’ refers to a full, precise and correct knowledge (Wuest). Observe the word ‘all’. This goal is for every believer, not a select few.

- ii. Maturity – “a perfect man”. The word ‘perfect’ means “mature, full grown.” The picture is of the church as a whole being matured and more and more reflecting the image of Christ. This process will ultimately be finished when the church is glorified in heaven but what a thrill to be a part of that process of becoming more like Christ in company with other believers in the local church right now.

B. Establishing the Saints (Vs. 14)

This verse presents the contrasting picture to the mature man who has come of age in the previous verse.

1. The stability of immature saints is encouraged (Vs. 14a)
 - a. “be no more children” = ‘children’ refers to infants, young children. The reference is to a “child’s gullibility, lack of understanding or lack of perception.” (Hoehner) Christ gave gifted men to the church not only to help believers grow into Christ’s stature but also to protect them from error and deception. It is vital that you place yourself and your family under a trustworthy man of God in a biblical church for your spiritual safety.
 - b. To further illustrate this state of instability to be avoided, the Apostle employs two metaphors from nature:
 - i. Water – “tossed to and fro”. The word picture conveys the idea of being thrown around by the waves of the sea. Hebrews 13:9 says, “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace;”
 - ii. Wind – “carried about with every wind of doctrine”. These winds of error are designed to blow the believer in a different direction to the sound teaching of the pastor-teacher.
 - iii. In both examples the individual is under the influence and control of external forces. What hurricane winds of false doctrine are sweeping the world today through the medium of technology!
2. The methodology of false teachers is exposed (Vs. 14b)

Notice the words describing the deceitful modus operandi of the false teacher:

 - a. ‘sleight’ = the word lit. means “dice throwing” and could have indicated dice that were loaded to fall a certain way. The word therefore refers to the trickery, craftiness and slyness of the false teacher. Webster defines the word as “An artful trick; sly

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- artifice; a trick or feat so dexterously performed that the manner of performance escapes observation; as *sleight* of hand.”
- b. “cunning craftiness” = clever, skillful deceptions. False teachers are often intelligent people and are skilled in the art of deception.
 - c. “lie in wait to deceive” = the phrase “lie in wait” comes from the Greek word ‘methodeia’ which forms the basis of our English word ‘method’. It refers to a “deliberate planning or system” (Wuest). The word ‘deceive’ means to lead astray, cause to err. The false teacher has a methodology, a scheme and a strategy to lead you astray. The cults are masters at such schemes. They are trained to twist the Scriptures and to lead you into their false doctrines.
 - d. Note: Satan is the master deceiver and false teachers are cut out of the same mould as their master – 2 Cor. 11:13-15 “For such *are* false apostles, **deceitful workers**, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is **transformed into an angel of light**. Therefore *it is* no great thing if **his ministers also be transformed** as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

C. Edifying the Saints (Vs. 15-16)

1. Edification from the Truth (Vs. 15)
 - a. “speaking the truth” = the best defense against false teachers and false teaching as described in the previous verse is the truth. We all have a role to play in building one another up in the truth.
 - b. “in love” = the motivation behind our words. This love is others centered, a love that has the highest good of the other person as its goal. While warmth and emotion accompany this love, this love has more to do with one’s actions (See 1 Cor. 13:4-8). Note that it does not say “avoid speaking the truth because of love”! The philosophy of today’s culture is that you love by not speaking the truth if it is likely to offend someone, the result being that less and less truth is being spoken in the public square. True love will speak the truth even if it offends because you have the ultimate good and well-being of the individual in view.
 - c. “may grow up into him” = the truth drives our growth into Christlikeness. We are to grow up in “all things”, that is, we are to develop in all areas of spiritual growth, not just some. Think of a child. The desire is for that child to not just develop in one or two areas but all areas of life.
2. Edification from the Head (Vs. 16)
 - a. “From whom” = refers back to ‘Christ’ in the previous verse. Christ is the head of the church and He ministers His life and blessing to the body through its individual members. Col. 2:19 “And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having **nourishment ministered**, and **knit together**, **increaseth** with the increase of God.”

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- b. “fitly joined together” = from the same word translated “fitly framed together” in 2:21. “It means to join or fit together. Today stones in a building are fitted together with mortar but in that day, there was an elaborate process of cutting and smoothing the stones so that they fit exactly next to each other.” (Hoehner) Christ is the Master Craftsman. He takes our lives and with loving tenderness and perfect skill, shapes and molds us into living stones and places us in His building. **You will not grow properly as a Christian alone in isolation from other believers!**
- c. “compacted by that which every joint supplieth” = the word ‘compacted’ means to knit, join or put together. This is achieved by the working of the ‘head’ (Christ) through every ‘joint’ (member) as each one allows Christ to use them according to the gifts He has given them (“according to the effectual working in the measure of every part”).
 - i. The word ‘joint’ “has the idea of ‘touch’ and ‘contact’. The union and growth of the body can only come when there is contact with other members of the body...the interaction or contact between members, as the gifts are exercised, promotes both individual and corporate growth. Every believer is necessary to this process, not just a select few.” (Hoehner)
 - ii. Practically this means that the extent to which a church grows in spiritual oneness and unity will largely be determined by the willingness of each individual member to yield to the headship of Christ. Wuest comments, “The life of the Head flowing through the bands of supply, is constantly joining together and causing to grow together the individual members...the degree to which this life of the Head flowing through the members operates, joining the members of the Body more closely together into a more compact organic union, is determined by the individual saint’s fellowship with the Lord and with his fellow saints. This more compactly built Body will show in the closer ties of Christian love and brotherhood as exhibited by the saints in their Christian experience.”
 - iii. “maketh increase of the body” = the result is the growth and building up of the body.
- d. “in love” = this all takes place in the environment of love. Note the emphasis of love in this section. We are to forbear one another in love (Vs. 2), speak truth to one another in love (Vs. 15) and edify one another in love (Vs. 16).

Conclusion:

1. Are you using the gift God has given you in your local church? How much are you contributing to the growth of the body? Are you allowing Christ as head of the church to work through you to the blessing of others?
2. How is your relationship to the leaders God has placed over you in the local church? Do you value them as God’s gift for your help and benefit?

A Brand-New Life

Text: Ephesians 4:17-27

Introduction:

1. This chapter: In brief, God says in chapters 1-3, "I have made you a saint." In chapters 4-6, He says, "Now, live a saintly life." **You are a saint now live like a saint!**
2. This section (Vs. 17-32): The Apostle Paul exhorts the believers concerning another major facet of their walk. In the first part of the chapter the exhortation was to "walk worthy" (Vs. 1). This second section really continues that general theme with a strong emphasis on the need to walk distinctly. We are called to a distinct and separated walk as God's people – a life that is different to the way we used to live. In short, we are called to live a brand-new life as God's children.
3. This lesson (Vs. 17-27): We will consider this separated walk we are called to as believers under 3 headings.

I. THE PORTRAIT OF THE OLD LIFE (VS. 17-19)

A. The Forbidding of the Old Life Declared (Vs. 17a)

1. 'therefore' = on the basis of the preceding teaching. Connects back to the theme introduced in Vs. 1 of walking worthy. We are to walk in a way that it consistent with our new position in Christ. Paul is now going to give further details of what that walk looks like in practice.
2. "testify in the Lord" = this was a solemn declaration on the part of the Apostle. This adds weight and authority to what he is about to say. What he is about to say is absolute for the Christian life!
3. "henceforth walk not" = the word 'henceforth' means "from this time forward" (Webster), no longer, no more. They were not to live like they had in the past.
4. "as other Gentiles walk" = remember this church was located in pagan Ephesus under the shadow of the temple of Diana. It was so vital that in a polluted, degraded, and sinful society such as Ephesus that the believers uphold a godly testimony in their lives. To apply it to our lives today we could say "Don't walk as other Australians walk!"

B. The Features of the Old Life Detailed (Vs. 17b-18)

Paul now proceeds to remind his readers of what the unbelieving lifestyle looks like. Paul diagnoses the problem from the symptom to the source (root cause). We could summarize it in 5 words. The unsaved world walks in:

1. Emptiness (Vs. 17b)
 - a. 'vanity' = the word means emptiness, futility, that which is devoid of truth. The word contains the idea of aimlessness, leading to no object or end.
 - b. "of their mind" = the unbeliever orders his behavior according to the empty philosophies and ideals of his own sinful heart and that of the unbelieving world around him. When man makes

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himself the standard for morality, you end up with the sort of chaos described in the Book of Judges where every man “did that which was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 17:6; 21:25)

- c. Harry Ironside: “Unsaved men have illusions of their own minds; they see mirages of all kinds and imagine them to be real but they are not. They believe all sorts of theories, scholastic ideas, and such like, and would even bring this blessed Book to the bar of their theories instead of bringing their theories to the test of the Word of God. The Christian ought to be concerned about these things, and not walk in the delusions of the fleshly mind, for these poor Christless men, whatever their talents, whatever their culture, whatever their education, have the understanding darkened, have never been born of God, and are incapable of taking in divine things.”
2. Darkness (Vs. 18a)
 - a. ‘understanding’ = intelligence, the mind as an organ of thinking. 1 Cor. 2:14 “But **the natural man** receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”
 - b. ‘darkened’ = spiritual and moral darkness. The same word is used to describe the darkening of the sun in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:29). What people often hail as ‘enlightenment’ and ‘progress’ is actually the darkness of sin and evil.
 3. Deadness (Vs. 18b)
 - a. ‘alienated’ = means to be estranged or separated from. Same word is translated “being aliens” in Eph. 2:12.
 - b. “the life of God” = spiritual life that comes from God. The unbeliever may be alive physically, mentally and emotionally but he is dead spiritually (Eph. 2:1). What a tragedy! However, if you are saved, you’ve been made alive in Christ (quicken)!
 4. Blindness (Vs. 18c)
 - a. “through the ignorance that is in them” = the reason why they are separated from the life of God is given. They are ignorant on account of the “blindness of their heart”.
 - b. “that is in them” = “their alienation had its cause not in something external, casual or superficial, but in themselves.” (Wuest)
 - c. Note: Ignorance does not equal innocence. This is an ignorance that comes as a result of a deliberate rejection of the truth. The scoffers of the last days are described in 2 Peter 3:3-7 as being “willingly ignorant”.
 - d. Romans 1: 21 “Because that, **when they knew God**, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their **foolish heart was darkened.**” Observe that this is the opposite order to that proposed by the evolutionists who suggest that human being’s concept of God has evolved.

C. The Fruit of the Old Life Described (Vs. 19)

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Darkened beliefs lead to depraved actions. Evil philosophies lead to evil lifestyles. The fruit is:

1. A Damaged Conscience (Vs. 19a)
 - a. “past feeling” = the word means “to cease to feel pain or grief” (Strongs). It means “to become callous, insensible to pain. The lack of moral feeling and discernment means the inability to exercise any restraint.” It describes “the heart which has ceased to be sensible to the stimuli of conscience” (Ellicott). “As the sinner goes on in darkness, he sears his conscience and stops feeling guilty about what he is doing.” (Phillips)
 - b. Just as there is a pain response triggered by the nerves when the body is injured, a guilt response is triggered by the conscience when we sin. 1 Timothy 4:2 warns of a conscience that has been “seared with a hot iron.”
 - c. Illustration: Imagine if your nerves in a particular part of your body did not register pain? Great damage would be the result as there would be no pain to warn you that a particular form of conduct is detrimental to your health.
2. A Depraved Conduct (Vs. 19b)

There are 3 Bible words describing this depraved lifestyle:

 - a. Lasciviousness = unbridled, unrestrained lust, particularly in sexual matters. The same Greek word is translated “filthy conversation” (2 Pet. 2:7) and ‘wantonness” (2 Pet. 2:18). Josephus, the Jewish Historian, used the word to describe a Roman soldier who indecently exposed himself in the temple during the Passover.
 - i. Wuest says it “describes a person who acknowledges no restraints, who dares whatsoever his caprice and wanton petulance may suggest.”
 - ii. Harold Hoehner says, “It is the performance of blatant acts with no consideration of personal standards or social sanctions. It is doing something openly with no shame.”
 - iii. Notice that they “have given themselves over” to this lifestyle. This means they had handed themselves over to their lustful desires. “It was their own initiative which propelled them in to immorality.” (Hoehner)
 - b. Uncleaness = uncleaness in a moral sense, impurity. Note the word ‘all’. They pursue moral uncleaness in all its forms, every kind of uncleaness. Often moral uncleaness is connected to physical uncleaness. Immorality is dirty not just spiritually, but physically.
 - c. Greediness = means a “greedy desire to have more; covetousness, extreme selfishness”. The picture is of one who has sold himself to the gratification of sinful lusts and yet is never satisfied, he just wants more and more. Without the intervention of God through the work of salvation, “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Tim. 3:13)
3. Note: The **key point** is that we are not to pattern our lives as believers after the wisdom and lifestyle of the world. The unsaved

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world is not our model and example for life. Our standards for living are to be based on the eternal Word of God.

II. THE PROCESS FOR THE NEW LIFE (VS. 20-24)

The Apostle now reminds the saints of the “put off”, “put on” principle they had been taught for their Christian lives. The picture Paul uses is that of a removal of an old set of clothes to replace it with a new set. In essence, he says, “Christian, wear your new outfit!” There are **four aspects** to this process for living the new life. We are instructed to:

A. Remember (Vs. 20-21)

1. You came to know Christ’s Person (Vs. 20)
 - a. “but ye” = the believers in contrast to the lost just described.
 - b. “learned Christ” = they had come to know Christ personally through salvation. Christianity is Christ! Notice that it doesn’t say “learned about Christ”. Many people know “about” Christ but have never entered into a personal relationship with Him through salvation.
2. You came to know Christ’s Principle (Vs. 21)
 - a. “If...you have heard him” = ‘if’ is used in the sense of “since you have heard”. Paul is reminding them of what they had already been taught previously as he had not been present in Ephesus for 5 or 6 years.
 - b. “heard him...taught by him...truth in Jesus” = the truth came from Christ as He is the very embodiment of truth (John 14:6). Though the truth was delivered through gifted men, it ultimately had Christ as its source.
 - c. Note: It is our relationship to Christ that is the motivating power behind our new conduct.

B. Remove (Vs. 22)

1. “put off” = means to lay aside, to remove as one puts off clothes. The word was used in Acts 7:58 to describe the “laying down” of the clothes at Paul’s feet by the mob that stoned godly Stephen to death.
2. “the former conversation” = the previous lifestyle.
3. “the old man” = the description of the person you used to be before salvation. The “old man” is “the unsaved person dominated by the totally depraved nature” (Wuest).
 - a. The old man is further described as being “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”. The word ‘corrupt’ means “rotten, putrid”. It is in the present, passive participle tense and therefore speaks of “the progressive condition of corruption which characterized the old man.” (Wuest) The former self was “not only corrupt but growing ever more and more corrupt.” (Linguistic Key)
 - b. Positionally, we have been delivered from the new man (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20) but Paul is now exhorting us to a practical living out of that reality in the power of God. The liberating truth for the Christian is that you don’t have to live anymore according to the dictates of the old man!
4. For the Christian it isn’t “business as usual” but “under new management!”

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5. Illustration: Lazarus – take of the graveclothes of the old life (“Loose him, and let him go.” John 11:44)

C. Renew (Vs. 23)

1. ‘renewed’ = means to “make new again”.
2. “spirit of your mind” = The mind is the control center of the whole person. Before salvation our behavior was conducted according to a mind dominated by darkness and vanity (Vs. 17-18). Many of our problems in the Christian walk trace back to wrong thinking. The mind needs to be renewed by the truth of God’s Word.
 - a. Col. 3:10 “And have put on the new *man*, which is **renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him:”
 - b. Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
 - c. “You will only be a strong Christian if you are a truth loving Christian.” (Ironsides)
3. This verse demonstrates the key role the mind plays in this process of change. Between the “putting off” of Vs. 22 and the “putting on” of Vs. 24, we have “be renewed” in Vs. 23. The old thought patterns need to be replaced with new thought patterns that are based on the truth. God desires that we have truth in the “inward parts” (Psalm 51:6).

D. Replace (Vs. 24)

1. “put on” = the principle of replacement. We are not only to remove the wrong things out of our lives, we are to replace them with the right things.
2. “the new man” = the brand-new man! Refers “to the saved person dominated by the divine nature” (Wuest). Refers to who we are now in Christ as described in the first part of the Epistle. Again, Paul is emphasizing the practical outworking of our position. “Christlike Christians display the life and loveliness of the Lord Jesus.” (Phillips)
3. “created in righteousness and true holiness” = what a contrast to the old man which was described as being “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Vs. 22) The word ‘created’ points to the supernatural work of God in our salvation. We are His new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

III. THE PRACTICE OF THE NEW LIFE (VS. 25-27)

The Apostle now moves from the general principle to demonstrate what this looks like practically in our everyday lives from Vs. 25-32. This section will be the focus of our next lesson but to make a start, let’s consider two areas addresses. As New Men in Christ we are to have:

A. A New Talk (Vs. 25)

1. The negative – “putting away lying”.
 - a. Lying is Satan’s lingo (John 8:44). Warren Wiersbe: “Whenever we speak truth, the Spirit of God works, but whenever we tell a lie, Satan goes to work.” John Phillips: “Lies are the evil one’s currency of speech.”

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- b. Illustration: The first sin judged in the early church was lying (Acts 5:1-11).
2. The positive – “speak truth”.
3. The reason – “for we are members one of another”. We have union with one another by virtue of our union with Christ our Head. We are joined together in a spiritual body.
 - a. Interestingly the word ‘members’ is “never used of members of an organization but always members of an organism. Members of an organization may not have a relationship to other members but members of an organism demand a close-knit relationship to the other members.” (Hoehner)
 - b. The sin of one member affects the whole. Remember Achan’s sin and its impact upon the whole nation of Israel (e.g., defeat at Ai).
 - c. Romans 12:5 “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one of another.”

B. A New Temper (Vs. 26-27)

1. “Be angry” = Anger is not intrinsically sinful. God exercises righteous wrath and anger against the wicked (Psalm 7:11; Rom. 1:18). There is nothing wrong with being angry for a righteous cause. In fact, anger would be the only appropriate response to some things. Anger can be an emotion connected to a right sense of justice.
2. “sin not” = we are forbidden from exercising sinful anger. As weak, sinful creatures our anger is rarely selfless and righteous. Even the right sort of anger can quickly become sinful if we are not Spirit-controlled.
3. ‘wrath’ = ‘parorismos’ “means anger that is mingled with irritation, exasperation, and embitterment.” (Wuest) It is an “intensified form of the word ‘wrath’”. It describes a state of being intensely provoked. It is a festering anger, provocation or irritation.” (Hoehner) Someone has described anger as “momentary insanity.”
4. Illustration: I explode and then its all over. Yes, and look at the damage left behind that explosion!
5. “not the sun go down upon your wrath” = important we keep short accounts with one another and with the Lord and settle our anger quickly. As one put it, “The day of anger should be the day of reconciliation.”
6. “give place” = ‘place is from the Greek word ‘topos’ which forms the basis of our word ‘topography’. Unresolved, sinful anger gives Satan an opportunity to establish a base of operations in my life.
7. Rather than giving place to the devil, we need to give place to the Lord to deal with the injustices in our lives. Romans 12:19 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* **give place** unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

Conclusion: What is influencing your walk as a Christian? Are you walking according to the new position you have in Christ or according to the dictates of the old life? Are you allowing God’s truth to renew and transform your thinking?

Put Off & Put On (Part 1)

Text: Ephesians 4:25-28

Introduction:

1. This section (Vs. 25-32): The Apostle Paul now practically applies the “put off” and “put on” principle he has just discussed (Vs. 22-24) to the every day lives of the believers. Some wrongly conclude that the Christian life is all about doctrine/theory and fails to impact one’s daily life. This couldn’t be further from the truth! The truth of God’s Word has a transforming effect on our entire lives.
2. A general pattern in these exhortations can be discerned. There is:
 - A negative aspect to the command – a behavior to put off.
 - A positive aspect to the command – a behavior to put on.
 - A reason for the command – a goal in view.
3. These exhortations touch at least 5 important areas in the believer’s life. As new men in Christ we are to have:

I. A NEW TRUTHFULNESS (VS. 25)

A. The Wrong Behavior to Put Off (Vs. 25a)

1. Lying is Satan’s lingo (John 8:44). John Phillips: “Lies are the evil one’s currency of speech.”
2. Illustration: The first sin judged in the early church was lying (Acts 5:1-11).
3. Examples of lying
 - a. Total untruths/falsehoods – things that are completely and blatantly false. E.g., A mother asks the child if he has taken a cookie. He says a fervent ‘no’ even though he is sitting surrounded by a pile of cookie crumbs. Satan’s lie to Eve is a classic example. God said if you eat the fruit, you will die. Satan said, “ye shall not surely die!”
 - b. Partial truths – mixing truth and error. This is still lying! E.g., recounting an incident but leaving out the things you did wrong in order to cast yourself in a good light. The devil is the master of this form of lying through the cults. There is a clever mix of truth and error. Enough truth to lure you in but enough error to damn you!
 - c. Exaggeration – embellishing the facts to make them more sensational & tantalising. E.g., You get to know with some people that when they are telling you a story, they’ve added some tasty ingredients of their own to the mix – a cup of imagination, a tablespoon of speculation and a pinch of facts! The media is also a classic example of this form of lying.
4. Col. 3:9 “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;”

B. The Right Behavior to Put On (Vs. 25b)

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1. “speak truth” = when we speak the truth, we please God whose very character is truth. God the Father is the truth (Num. 23:19), Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6) and the Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 16:13). Warren Wiersbe: “Whenever we speak truth, the Spirit of God works, but whenever we tell a lie, Satan goes to work.”
2. “with his neighbor” = in this context, the church family. It reminds us of the second of the two primal laws of love (Matt. 22:37-40).

C. The Reason for the Command (Vs. 25c)

1. “for we are members one of another”. We have union with one another by virtue of our union with Christ our Head. We are joined together in a spiritual body. Romans 12:5 “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one of another.”
2. Interestingly the word ‘members’ is “never used of members of an organization but always members of an organism. Members of an organization may not have a relationship to other members but members of an organism demand a close-knit relationship to the other members.” (Hoehner)
3. The sin of one member affects the whole. Remember Achan’s sin and its impact upon the whole nation of Israel (e.g., defeat at Ai).

II. A NEW TEMPER (VS. 26-27)

A. The Right Anger (Vs. 26a)

1. “Be angry” = Anger is not intrinsically sinful. God exercises righteous wrath and anger against the wicked (Psalm 7:11; Rom. 1:18). There is nothing wrong with being angry for a righteous cause. In fact, anger would be the only appropriate response to some things. Anger can be an emotion connected to a right sense of justice.
2. Illustration: How do you respond when you hear of a heinous crime committed against an innocent child?
3. Question: Is your anger righteous or sinful? Ask yourself the following: What is motivating this anger? Is it a zeal for God and the truth? Or is it self-centered (i.e., one of my perceived rights has been violated)? Is self-involved somewhere in this spirit of anger? Am I angry at sin or at people? The summary from Faith Counselling Institute is helpful:
 - a. Righteous Anger
 - i. When God doesn’t get what He wants.
 - ii. Motivated by a sincere love for God.
 - iii. God’s will is violated.
 - iv. Christ is Lord of my life.
 - b. Sinful Anger
 - i. When I don’t get what I want.
 - ii. Motivated by a love of some idolatrous desire.
 - iii. My will is violated.
 - iv. I am lord of my life.

B. The Wrong Anger (Vs. 26b)

1. “sin not” = we are forbidden from exercising sinful anger. As weak, sinful creatures our anger is rarely selfless and righteous. Even the right sort of anger can quickly become sinful if we are not Spirit-

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controlled. The first part of this verse is a quotation from Psalm 4:4 which says, “**Stand in awe and sin** not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.” The phrase “stand in awe” means “to tremble”. It refers to the need to tremble in God’s presence but also contains the idea of a heart that is moved with indignation. At such times, we are warned of the danger of our anger leading us into sin and are exhorted to be still in the presence of the Lord and give time to careful self-examination and reflection.

2. ‘wrath’ = ‘parorismos’ “means anger that is mingled with irritation, exasperation, and embitterment.” (Wuest) It is an “intensified form of the word ‘wrath’. It describes a state of being intensely provoked. It is a festering anger, provocation or irritation.” (Hoehner) Someone has described anger as “momentary insanity.”
3. Illustration: I explode and then it’s all over. Yes, and look at the damage left behind that explosion!
4. Question: What are some common causes of anger? The following is from *Quieting a Noisy Soul* by Jim Berg
 - a. Frustration – the agitation that results from a thwarted goal. Beware of soothing yourself with the lie, “I’m not angry, just frustrated.”
 - b. Hurt – the pain in the soul from personal mistreatment.
 - c. Fear – the uncertainty of how things will turn out.
5. Remember! Anger is expressed in multiple ways. Some explode outwardly with angry words; others give the cold shoulder treatment and go quiet (icy spirit). Some are like petrol – lots of flames and noise when they are angry. Some are more like steam. They are quieter and more subtle but they blister you just as bad, if not worse.
6. Prov. 29:22 “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.” (See also Prov. 22:4 – make no friendship with an angry man)
7. Prov. 16:32 “*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*”

C. The Resolve for Anger (Vs. 26c-27)

1. When we are to resolve anger Vs. 26c)
 - a. “let not the sun go down upon your wrath” = it is important we keep short accounts with one another and with the Lord and settle our anger quickly. As one put it, “The day of anger should be the day of reconciliation.”
 - b. This is so important in our relationships
 - i. Our relationship with the Lord. Sometimes my anger is unknown to other people (e.g., it is kept hidden inside) but let us remember that the Lord knows and anger grieves the Holy Spirit (See Vs. 30-31). Sometimes we can even get angry directly at God and charge Him foolishly and that needs to be corrected.
 - ii. Our relationship to our spouse in marriage. Unresolved anger in marriage ends in the divorce courts or worse!

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- iii. Our relationship to other believers. If you lost your cool with a fellow brother or sister in Christ, then humble yourself, confess it to them and seek their forgiveness!
 - iv. Our relationship to non-believers. If you spoke in anger to a work colleague, be a good testimony and make it right with them.
2. Why we are to resolve anger (Vs. 27)
 - a. “give place” = ‘place is from the Greek word ‘topos’ which forms the basis of our word ‘topography’. Unresolved, sinful anger gives Satan an opportunity to establish a base of operations in my life. Satan is quick to take advantage of an angry heart. Beware! If you allow Satan to setup camp in one area of your life, be sure he will not rest content until he has defeated you in as many other areas as he can!
 - b. Illustration: Some of the fiercest battles in the world wars were fought over beaches because once a beachhead has been established, it is extremely hard to drive the enemy back out of that territory.
 - c. Rather than giving place to the devil, we need to give place to the Lord to deal with the injustices in our lives. Romans 12:19 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* **give place** unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

III. A NEW TRUSTWORTHINESS (Vs. 28)

A. The Wrong Behavior to Put Off (Vs. 28a)

1. “Let him that stole steal no more” = remember that in Paul’s day there was no welfare system so stealing was a common thing to do if someone was out of work. Stealing is a feature of the old life and is to have no place in the believer’s life. As born again, blood-washed believers we should be people of impeccable honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
2. Stealing can be overt and obvious but also covert and sophisticated.
 - a. Examples of overt stealing would be things like burglary, break ins, even taking small items that don’t belong to you such as stealing someone else’s rubber or pencil.
 - b. Examples of covert stealing would be things like cheating on your tax return, misusing of a company credit card, stealing the bosses time, dishonest business dealings etc...

B. The Right Behavior to Put On (Vs. 28b)

1. “but rather let him labour” = the alternative to a life of dishonesty and theft. The word ‘labour’ contains the idea of “to be tired, to grow weary. The point is that labor exerted is exhausting.” (Hoehner) While not all work involves hard manual labor, hard work is not to be despised in any trade or profession. Our Lord Himself learned the carpenters trade as a young man. Paul was a tent maker and Peter a fisherman.
2. “working with his hands” = the contrast is clear. Rather than using the hands to steal, we are to use our hands to earn an honest living.

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3. The day in which we live largely despises hard work. The ideal, dream life to many is to have lots of money, live in pleasure and do little to no work. The dream job is one that requires the minimum amount of effort for the most amount of pay. That is not a godly model for Christian living! Remember that the depravity of Sodom was connected to an indulged and idle way of living. Ezekiel 16:49 “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, **pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness** was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”

C. The Reason for the Command (Vs. 28c)

1. “that he may have to give” = not only are we to labour to take care of our own needs but we are to labour with a view to being able to have a ministry of giving to others in need. “The purpose for work is not self-indulgence but to benefit those who are in need.” (Hoehner)
2. While the Christian should be open to helping a non-believer, the New Testament emphasizes that the priority for this ministry is to be fellow believers. Gal. 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, **especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**”
3. The Christian should labour in order to be involved in:
 - a. Giving to the Lord – tithes and offerings. Prov. 3:9 “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:”
 - b. Providing for the family – 1 Tim. 5:8 “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
 - c. Helping the brethren – Acts 2:44-45 “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, **as every man had need.**”

To be continued in Part 2

Conclusion:

1. Is there something for you to remove (put off) out of your Christian life? Habits of deceit, dishonesty & theft? What about anger?
2. Is there something you need to put on? Perhaps you have spent time working on removing the bad habits but are you cultivating godly habits in their place?

Put Off & Put On (Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 4:29-32

Introduction:

1. This section (Vs. 25-32): The Apostle Paul now practically applies the “put off” and “put on” principle he has just discussed (Vs. 22-24) to the everyday lives of the believers. Some wrongly conclude that the Christian life is all about doctrine/theory and fails to impact one’s daily life. This couldn’t be further from the truth! The truth of God’s Word has a transforming effect on our entire lives.
2. A general pattern in these exhortations can be discerned. There is:
 - A negative aspect to the command – a behavior to put off.
 - A positive aspect to the command – a behavior to put on.
 - A reason for the command – the goal in view.
3. These exhortations touch at least 5 important areas in the believer’s life. We considered 3 of these in part 1 of this message and will now consider the final two. As new men in Christ we are to have:

I. A NEW TRUTHFULNESS (VS. 25)

II. A NEW TEMPER (VS. 26-27)

III. A NEW TRUSTWORTHINESS (Vs. 28)

IV. A NEW TONGUE (VS. 29-30)

A. What to Put Off (Vs. 29a)

1. “Let **no** corrupt communication” = the little word ‘no’ is very broad in its scope and holds the believer to a very high standard of speech.
2. “**corrupt** communication” = the word ‘corrupt’ means that which is putrid, rotting and worthless. It comes from the old man who is “corrupt” (Vs. 22). It was used in ancient literature to describe “rotten wood, withered flowers and rancid fish. It generally refers to things or people who are worn out or useless or that which is of little worth. In the New Testament it refers to worthless or withered trees that produce evil or worthless fruit (Matt. 7:17-19) and of bad or worthless fish (Matt. 13:48).” (Hoehner) So the word covers speech which is:
 - a. Unholy: Inuendoes, blue jokes, dirty jokes, deliberate double meanings, swear words, blasphemy, rough talk, toilet talk and idle gossip should never be heard coming from the lips of God’s children.
 - b. Unprofitable: The word not only covers speech which is defiling but speech which is ‘worthless’. A lot of time can be wasted on discussions around things which simply do not profit.

B. What to Put On (Vs. 29b)

1. “but that which his good” = that which is morally excellent, virtuous, of high quality. Interestingly the word ‘good’ is singular emphasizing that “every word is to be accounted for...any word that comes out of

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a believer's mouth should be good and not evil which causes injury." (Hoehner)

2. Col. 4:6 "Let your speech be always with **grace**, seasoned with **salt**, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

C. Why to Put On (Vs. 29c-30)

There are two important considerations when it comes to the use of our tongues. We need to consider:

1. Our relationship to the saints (Vs. 29c)
 - a. "the use" = the word use has the idea of "need, necessity". There is a need for the work of God to be built up.
 - b. 'edifying' = to build up. The word 'edifice' is a word related to 'edify' in English. Godly speech builds up the believers. Conversely, corrupt speech tears them down.
 - c. "minister grace" = "here it refers to the spiritual blessings and benefits that will accrue to the hearers from the gracious words of the speaker." (Wuest)
 - d. Challenge: Do people go away from a conversation with you helped or hindered in their Christian walk? Are they refreshed or discouraged?
2. Our relationship to the Spirit (Vs. 30)

Polluted speech not only damages the saints, it grieves the Spirit.

 - a. "**And** grieve not" = the word 'and' shows that this is closely connected with the previous exhortation. It is the "first time the 'kai' (and) conjunction is used in this section and suggests that it is not an entirely new injunction but is to be added to the last exhortation." (Hoehner) "The utterance of evil or worthless words is repugnant to the holiness of the Spirit, and is to be refrained from as calculated to grieve Him." (Wuest)
 - b. "grieve not the holy Spirit of God" = the word 'grieve' means to cause sorrow, to affect with sadness, cause grief. The same Greek word is translated "exceeding sorry" (Matt. 17:23), "very sorry" (Matt. 18:31), "cause grief" (2 Cor. 2:5) and 'heaviness' (1 Peter 1:6).
 - i. This clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a Person and not some impersonal force like the cults try and teach. Only a person can be grieved.
 - ii. In many ways this verse is key in this section as it reveals how these different areas can affect our relationship to God's Spirit in our lives.
 - iii. Consider all of the ministries the Spirit of God performs in our lives such as comfort (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7); assurance (Rom. 8:16); teaching (John 16:13); producing godly fruit (Gal. 5:22-23); spiritual victory (Rom. 8:13) and power for witness (Acts 1:8). If the Spirit of God is grieved and quenched in my life, and is not at liberty to work as He desires, can you imagine what sort of devastating effect that will have on my Christian walk and experience?
 - iv. Challenge: How seriously do we take our relationship to God's Holy Spirit?

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- c. “whereby ye are sealed” = See 1:13-14. We were indwelt with and sealed by the Holy Spirit the moment we were saved.
- d. “until the day of redemption” = this sealing is a permanent thing. We are protected from the day of our salvation all the way through to the end. The future and final aspect of our redemption is in view here.

V. A NEW TENDERNESS (VS. 31-32)

A. What to Put Off (Vs. 31)

1. Bitterness – “Let all bitterness”
 - a. The word ‘all’ applies to all the five nouns that follow.
 - b. The word ‘bitterness’ is derived from the adjective ‘pikros’ that is used of a pointed or sharp arrow; hence it means to pierce, cut & prick. Bitter experiences often lead to a bitter spirit if the believer does not carefully guard his heart. It is like a gash or wound which if left untreated will become infected and spread septicemia through the body.
 - c. Hebrews 12:15 warns, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”
 - d. Bitterness takes root in my life when I fail to appropriate the grace of God in hurtful situations.
 - e. Bitterness not only grieves the Holy Spirit in my own life and thereby damages my own walk with God (“troubles you”) it quickly poisons others and ‘defiles’ them.
 - f. Illustration of bitterness: Absalom’s bitterness against David
 - g. Illustration of a bitter experience, responded to by the grace of God - The story behind the hymn “It is Well with My Soul” by Horatio G. Spafford:

When the great Chicago fire consumed the Windy City in 1871, Horatio G. Spafford, an attorney heavily invested in real estate, lost a fortune. About that time, his only son, age 4, succumbed to scarlet fever. Horatio drowned his grief in work, pouring himself into rebuilding the city and assisting the 100,000 who had been left homeless.

In November of 1873, he decided to take his wife and daughters to Europe. Horatio was close to D.L. Moody and Ira Sankey, and he wanted to visit their evangelistic meetings in England, then enjoy a vacation.

When an urgent matter detained Horatio in New York, he decided to send his wife, Anna, and their four daughters, Maggie, Tanetta, Annie, and Bessie, on ahead. As he saw them settled into a cabin aboard the luxurious French liner Ville du Havre, unease filled his mind, and he moved them to a room closer to the bow of the ship. Then he said good-bye, promising to join them soon.

During the small hours of November 22, 1873, as the Ville du Havre, glided over smooth seas, the passengers were jolted from their bunks. The ship had collided with an iron sailing vessel, and water poured in like Niagara. The Ville du Havre tilted dangerously. Screams, prayers, and oaths merged into a nightmare of unmeasured terror. Passengers clung to posts, tumbled through darkness, and were swept away by powerful currents of icy ocean. Loved ones fell from each other’s grasp and disappeared into foaming blackness. Within two hours, the mighty ship vanished beneath the waters. The 226 fatalities included Maggie, Tanetta, Annie and Bessie. Mrs Spafford was found nearly unconscious, clinging to a piece of the wreckage. When the 47 survivors landed in Cardiff, Wales, she cabled her husband: “Saved Alone.”

Horatio immediately booked passage to join his wife, En route, on a cold December night, the captain called him aside and said, “I believe we are now passing over the place where the Ville du Havre went down.” Spafford went to his cabin but found it hard to sleep. He said to himself, “It is well; the will of God be done.” He later wrote his famous hymn based on those words.

2. Anger – “all...wrath and anger”

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- a. The two words are synonyms with a possible slight shade of difference between the two. The word 'wrath' has been defined as "the outward expression of anger, the quick boiling up of anger whereas 'anger' has been defined as a deep flowing anger, the attitude of anger. "The word 'thumos' was more passionate and temporary, that is, anger that boils up, whereas 'orge' was more settled and abiding, a state of anger." (Hoehner)
 - b. Note: These two words cover both types of anger. 1. The anger that smoulders away in the heart unseen. 2. The anger that boils up quickly and is expressed in violent words and actions.
 - c. Ecc. 7:0 "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."
3. Clamour – "all...clamour"
- a. 'clamour' (κραυγή) = outcry, shouting; the cry of strife; expression of dissatisfaction; noise. It refers to repeated and urgent complaining. "The violent assertion of rights & wrongs, real or supposed." (Moule) Wuest defines it as "the outcry of passion, the outward manifestation of anger in vociferation or brawling."
 - b. Translated elsewhere as 'cry' such as:
 - i. Matthew 25:6 "And at midnight there was a **cry** (κραυγή) made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him."
 - ii. Acts 23:9 "And there arose a great **cry**: (κραυγή) and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God."
 - c. Examples of clamour – asserting my opinions/rights (i.e., making a protest when I don't get my way in church decision making); complaining and murmuring; creating a spirit of division and dissent etc... Prov. 6:16-19 "...he that **soweth** discord (strife) among brethren."
4. Evil speaking
- a. Comes from the Greek word βλασφημία. The word is translated elsewhere as Translated elsewhere as 'reviled', 'railed', "evil spoken of" & "to speak evil of". Satan is the master slanderer. Interestingly the word 'slanderer' in the N.T. (1 Tim. 3:11) comes from the same root word translated 'devil'.
 - b. Refers to slanderous and injurious speech against both God and man.
 1. Toward God – E.g., Using His Name flippantly or Misrepresenting His character (slander).
 2. Toward Man. It is probably this point that is most in focus. Examples would be railing on someone with hurtful words or assassinating someone else's character (slander).
 - c. **Take note** of how many of these exhortations have to do with the tongue (See Vs. 25, 29, 31).
5. Malice

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- a. Comes from a broad word meaning 'badness'. Webster defines 'malice as "Extreme enmity of heart, or malevolence; a disposition to injure others without cause, from mere personal gratification or from a spirit of revenge;"
- b. Malice in many ways is the fruit of a bitter, angry heart. Malice is where the attitude of bitterness and anger translates into action.

B. What to Put On (Vs. 32)

1. Kindness – kind as opposed to the harsh, hard, bitter and sharp spirit described in the previous verse.
2. Gentleness – the word 'tenderhearted' means 'compassionate'. The word originally was used to refer to the inward parts (e.g., the heart, lungs, liver & kidneys) and therefore came to speak of the seat of the emotions.
3. Forgiveness – the word has the idea of "showing grace". The word teaches that forgiveness involves bestowing something unmerited. A gracious, forgiving spirit is the opposite to the bitterness, anger, wrath, clamour, slander and malice described in the previous verse. We are held to the highest standard of forgiveness possible – "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Conclusion:

1. Is there something for you to remove (put off) out of your Christian life? Habits of deceit, dishonesty & theft? What about anger? How is our relationship to the Holy Spirit? Are we grieving Him in our words, thoughts, attitudes and actions?
2. Is there something you need to put on? Perhaps you have spent time working on removing the bad habits but are you cultivating godly habits in their place?

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Walk in Love (Part 1)

What it REALLY means to walk in love!

Text: Ephesians 5:1-3

Introduction:

1. This is the 3rd time we encounter the word 'walk' in this practical section of Ephesians. We are exhorted to:
 - Walk worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1)
 - Not walk as the unsaved (Eph. 4:17)
 - Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
2. The word walk implies progress and forward movement. "The word depicts progress in the Christian life because the Christian life never stands still. It is a life of movement." (John Phillips)
3. In this section the Apostle now issues a call for us to walk in love. As we will see, this is connected with a life of strict separation from the sensual sins of the flesh. We will consider this section under three headings:
 - The Example of Love to Follow (Vs. 1-2)
 - The Evils of Lust to Flee (Vs. 3-4)
 - The End of the Lost to Fear (Vs. 5-6)

I. THE EXAMPLE OF LOVE TO FOLLOW (VS. 1-2)

As believers we are to walk according to:

A. The Standard of the Father's Love (Vs. 1)

1. It is a love that is forgiving (Vs. 1a)
 - a. "therefore" = shows the connection of this exhortation to the previous verse. In the previous verse (Eph. 4:32) the forgiveness of the Father has been described.
 - b. Note: This forgiveness was based upon the sacrifice of Christ – "even as God for **Christ's sake**" (Vs. 32).
2. It is a love that is to be Followed (Vs. 1b)
 - a. "followers of God" = the word 'follower' comes from the Greek word 'mimetes' (μιμητης) which forms the basis of our word 'mimic' in English. We are to imitate our Heavenly Father in all things and in particular within the context of this passage, His attribute of forgiveness. Forgiveness is love expressed in action.
Who are you imitating in your life?
 - b. "as dear children" = the word 'dear' means 'beloved'. "In classical times it particularly referred to an only child to whom the parents had devoted all their love... Believers must realize God's ability to extend his love to each of his children as if he or she were the only child." (Hoehner) As children in God's family, we are to imitate our Heavenly Father.
 - c. Illustration of forgiveness: Sabina Wurmbrand

B. The Standard of the Son's Love (Vs. 2)

The love of Christ is the model for our walk. Notice three features of Christ's love described in the verse. Christ's love was:

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1. Self-giving – “as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us
 - a. Christ loved us so much He **gave Himself** for us. The word ‘gave’ means “to hand or give over”. Do you see the picture? Christ handed Himself over to all the agonies of the cross to purchase our redemption. He was not forced onto that Christ; he laid His life down willingly for us. Can you see how much Christ loves us? John 10:17-18 “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but **I lay it down of myself**. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”
 - b. The word ‘for’ is ‘huper’ meaning “instead of, in behalf of”. It brings out the great truth of substitution that Christ died in our place, instead of us.
 - c. Application: The kind of love God wants from us as Christians is a selfless, giving love (Rom. 5:5).
2. Self-sacrificing – “an offering and a sacrifice to God” (Vs. 2b)
 - a. The use of the words ‘offering’ and ‘sacrifice’ take our minds back to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament of which Christ is the perfect fulfillment.
 - b. “...Behold **the Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.”
 - c. Application: The love God requires from us as Christians is a sacrificial love.
3. Sweet-smelling – “for a sweetsmelling savour” (Vs. 2c)
 - a. This phrase points us back to the “sweet savour” offerings described in Leviticus. They were the first 3 of the 5 offerings described in the first part of Leviticus. They are:
 - i. The Burnt offering (Lev. 1:1-17) which depicted Christ’s total devotion to God in giving His very life to obey and please His Father.
 - ii. The meat (meal, grain) offering (Lev. 2:1-16) which depicted Christ’s perfection.
 - iii. The peace offering (Lev. 3:1-17; 4:27-31) which depicted His making peace between God and man.
 - b. The central thought is that of an offering that is well pleasing to the Father.
 - c. Application: When we exercise Christ-like love, it is fragrant and pleasing to God. Do you have the fragrance of Christ’s love in your life or the foul stench of self-centeredness?

II. THE EVILS OF LUST TO FLEE (Vs. 3-4)

Paul now demonstrates that “to walk as unregenerate sinners runs counter to walking in love and lists lifestyles that are diametrically opposed to the Christian love.” (Hoehner) God’s Word clearly shows that walking in God’s love is inseparably connected to a life of purity and holiness. The sins Paul warns against fall into two categories:

A. Sensual Sins (Vs. 3)

1. The sins described (Vs. 3a)

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- a. **Fornication** (Vs. 3a) – refers to illicit sexual intercourse in its many and various forms. It comes from the Greek word ‘porneia’. The related word πορνη is translated ‘harlot(s)’ 8 times in the N.T. and 4 times as ‘whore’. Our English word ‘pornography’ comes from two Greek words πορνεία and γραφή meaning, “to write about a whore or harlot.” It is a broad term encompassing any form of illicit sex.
- i. The Graeco-Roman view in Paul’s day: Demosthenes (Greek Orator) said, “We have courtesans (prostitutes) for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs.” Seneca, a Roman Philosopher, said that the women of that day would date the years by the names of their husbands. John Phillips notes, “In Paul’s day, as in ours, sexual promiscuity was taken for granted. Everybody indulged in it; it was an acceptable lifestyle. Many of the Ephesian converts had been brought up in **a permissive atmosphere** where it was common for a man to keep a mistress, frequent houses of ill repute, gratify his lusts in casual liaisons, or accept a partner without bothering with the formality of marriage.”
 - ii. Sounds like the day we live in! Now we have our government passing laws legitimizing sins that a generation ago would have landed you in prison!
 - iii. I. Cor. 6:13, 15-20 “...Now the body is not for **fornication**, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body...Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. **Flee fornication**. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but **he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body**. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”
 - iv. 1Thess. 4:3-4 “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from **fornication**:

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That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;”

- v. Practical Challenge: Guard your virginity as a **single person**. Resolve to stay pure until God provides you a spouse. Resolve to stay single if it's God's will and serve Him rather than marrying out of God's will!
- vi. Practical Challenge: Guard your marriage as a **spouse**. Remember your vow was “till death us do part” not “until lust us do part”! Remember you didn't just make that promise to your spouse, you made it to Almighty God!
- b. **Uncleanness** (Vs. 3b) – means moral uncleanness, perversion, impurity. The word ‘all’ means “every kind of, all sorts of”. It is a more general term than the previous, encompassing not only sinful actions but **thoughts** and **intentions** as well. A closely related form of the same word is used to describe demons as ‘unclean’ at least 22 times. In fact, the word ‘uncleanness’ with the exception of one instance is used in connection with sexual sin in the New Testament. The following are other examples where uncleanness is linked to sexual perversion:
 - i. Rom. 1:24, 26 “Wherefore God also gave them up to **uncleanness** through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves...for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman...”
 - ii. II. Cor. 12:21 “...and have not repented of the **uncleanness** and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.”
 - iii. Gal. 5:19 “Adultery, fornication, **uncleanness**”
 - iv. Rev. 17:4 “...**filthiness** of her fornication.”
 - v. Illustration: In the O.T. physical and spiritual uncleanness was to be zealously put away from God's people. The word ‘unclean’ occurs 110 times in Leviticus and the word ‘uncleanness’ 19 times. In like manner, all uncleanness of the flesh and spirit is to be put away from us if we are to walk in fellowship with Christ. 2 Cor. 7:1 “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from **all filthiness of the flesh and spirit**, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
- c. **Covetousness** – means a greedy desire to have more, an uncontrolled appetite. It is “selfishness to an extreme degree. The internal attitude is tied to the sexual immorality and impurity. Can also be greed for material possessions.” (Hoehner)

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- i. Remember the context here is sexual sins. Covetousness is the root from which these perverse sins spring. Covetousness is linked to sexual lust elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Eph. 4:19, 1 Thess. 4:6, Col. 3:5).
 - ii. Exodus 20:17 “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, **thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife**, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.”
 - iii. There are a number of things fuelling this covetousness in the area of sensual pleasure in our day. There is Hollywood and the pop culture which promotes promiscuity through its movies and music. There is the multibillion-dollar pornography industry with its vile tentacles reaching its way through most of the internet world. Then there is the culture of immodesty and nakedness that sadly has also affected the church. (See 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:5). There is social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc...) that promotes an unreal/fake universe where everyone appears to be attractive.
2. The standard demanded (Vs. 3b)
 - a. “not be once named among you” = ‘named’ is used in the same sense here as in 1 Cor. 5:1. This is a very high standard for God’s people. These sins are to have **no** place in our lives. Such sins are unthinkable for the child of God. “Paul is not saying that one cannot identify the sin when it occurs. Rather, he is asserting that these sins should be so universally absent from the body of believers that there should be no occasion to associate them with the church.” (Hoehner)
 - b. “as becometh saints” = the word ‘becometh’ means appropriate, fitting and proper. In other words, abstaining from these sins entirely is what is proper for the saints. Indulging in these sins is inappropriate and unbecoming for the saints. Remember, the word ‘saint’ means a holy, set apart, consecrated one. You’re a saint not a playboy! Walk in love not lust! In this passage, the Holy Spirit brings us back to the gold standard of Christlikeness.

To be continued in Part 2...

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? Verse 5-6 make it clear that unless one repents from such a lifestyle and receives Christ, they will spend eternity in hell.
2. Are you defeated in the area of moral purity in your life as a Christian? Will you seek cleansing and restoration from God and get godly council?

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Walk in Love (Part 2)

What it REALLY means to walk in love!

Text: Ephesians 5:4-6

Introduction:

1. This is the 3rd time we encounter the word 'walk' in this practical section of Ephesians. We are exhorted to:
 - Walk worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1)
 - Not walk as the unsaved (Eph. 4:17)
 - Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
2. The word walk implies a couple of important truths:
 - The Christian life is a practical life.
 - The Christian life involves progress and forward movement. "The word depicts progress in the Christian life because the Christian life never stands still. It is a life of movement." (John Phillips)
3. In this section the Apostle now issues a call for us to walk in love. As we will see, this is connected with a life of strict separation from the sensual sins of the flesh. We are considering this section under three headings:
 - The Example of Love to Follow (Vs. 1-2)
 - The Evils of Lust to Flee (Vs. 3-4)
 - The End of the Lost to Fear (Vs. 5-6)

I. THE EXAMPLE OF LOVE TO FOLLOW (VS. 1-2)

As believers we are to walk according to:

A. The Standard of the Father's Love (Vs. 1)

B. The Standard of the Son's Love (Vs. 2)

II. THE EVILS OF LUST TO FLEE (VS. 3-4)

The sins Paul warns against fall into two categories:

A. Sensual Sins (Vs. 3)

B. Speech Sins (Vs. 4)

Warren Wiersbe notes, "It is not difficult to see the relationship between the sins named in Verse 3 and those in Verse 4. People who have base appetites usually cultivate a base kind of speech and humour, and often people who want to commit sexual sins, or have committed them, enjoy jesting about them."

1. The perverse tongue described (Vs. 4a)

a. Filthiness – signifies something shameful or obscene (Phillips).

It is "that which is shameful, disgraceful, base. Includes speech but not limited to it." (Hoehner)

i. As believers our speech should not include innuendoes, suggestive language, dirty jokes and questionable things. We are living in a day where nothing is sacred and talk about intimate things is commonplace. "Two indications

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of a person's character are what makes him laugh and what makes him weep." (Wiersbe)

- ii. Illustration: My Grandma's innocence of such things till 18 years of age.
- b. Foolish talking – means empty, futile, silly talk. It is made up of two Greek words; 'moros' (moron) and 'lego' (word, speaking). Vincent says "talk which is both foolish and sinful. It is more than random or idle talk."
 - i. Harry Ironside says it is "talking like a fool about unclean things, such as double meanings."
 - ii. John Phillips wisely points out that "Flippant talk often degenerates into worse talk. Another problem is that some people get into such a habit of talking on a light and foolish level, that you can't have a serious conversation with them. They turn everything into a joke or pun."
- c. Jestling – a coarse jest (Linguistic Key). The word is made up of 'eu' (well, easily) and 'trepo' (to turn). Therefore, it means "able to turn easily".
 - i. Wiersbe notes "it suggests a certain kind of conversationalist who can turn any statement into a coarse jest. The gift of wit is a blessing, but when it is attached to a filthy mind or a base motive, it becomes a curse."
 - ii. Robertson says, "nimbleness of wit but in a low sense as here ribaldry (vulgar, coarse or indecent speech), scurrility."
 - iii. Harold Hoehner points out "in the context it most likely indicates jesting that has gone too far, thus becoming sarcastic ridicule that cuts people down and embarrasses others who are present. It is humour in bad taste. Believers should build up and not destroy, even in humour... This does not mean humour cannot be used by Christians. However, it should not be employed at someone's expense thus running counter to Paul's injunction to edify each other (4:29) ... Like anger, humour is to be controlled."
- d. "which are not convenient" = the word 'convenient' means "befitting, seemly" (Wuest). It means "fit, suitable, proper" (Webster). It therefore means such speech is not appropriate for a believer.
- e. Question: What place does humour have in a Christian's life?
 - i. God created us with the ability to laugh and it is a valid expression of joy in the appropriate context. Ecc. 3:4 says there is "a time to laugh". Prov. 17:22 reminds us "A

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merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” The Psalmist spoke of the deliverance of God’s people from captivity and how their mouths were “filled with laughter” and their tongues “with singing” (Psalm 126:2). God Himself is said to laugh at the foolishness of the wicked (Psalm 2:4).

- ii. The key thing is that our humour is to be within the context of that which is wholesome. We are not to laugh at that which breaks God’s heart. We are not to laugh at the sins that nailed Christ to the cross!
 - iii. Where our humour one with another is in the form of a wholesome jest (sarcasm, wit, jokes, teasing), we do need to take care that we don’t cross a line and offend someone. If it tips over into running the person down or turns into a form of mockery, then it has gone too far. A good question to ask is “Are both parties having an enjoyable time?” If you are the only one having a good time and the other person is not, then you need to stop!
2. The pure tongue commended (Vs. 4b)
 - a. “but rather” = the contrasting alternative is presented.
 - b. “giving of thanks” = instead of having corruption on our tongues, we are to have praise to God. The message is clear. Instead of using your tongue to degrade and pull down, use it to give thanks to God. Elevate your conversation to a higher plane!

III. THE END OF THE LOST TO FEAR (VS. 5-6)

Those who do not repent of their sinful lifestyle face a fearful judgment.

A. They will be Excluded from God’s Kingdom (Vs. 5)

1. For this ye know” = evidently Paul had taught them about this previously and now reminds them.
2. The Apostle now lists three categories of men which tie back to the three key words in Vs. 3.
 - a. Whoremonger = ‘ pornos’; means ‘fornicator’. Links back to the sin of fornication mentioned in Vs. 3.
 - b. Unclean Person = comes from the same word as “uncleanness” (Vs. 3)
 - c. Covetous = Paul adds the words “who is an idolater” as covetousness is a form of idolatry – “...covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). “That which is coveted becomes the centre of one’s life and is worshipped instead of the Creator (Rom. 1:23).” (Hoehner)
3. “hath **any** inheritance in the kingdom” = these sins, practiced habitually, are evidence of an unregenerate heart. “A Christian is not sinless, but he sins less!” Those living this way “simply give evidence that they are not Christians at all.” (Hoehner) 1 Cor. 6:9-

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10 warns, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

B. They will Experience God's Wrath (Vs. 6)

1. The illusion of the deceivers (Vs. 6a)
 - a. "Let no man deceive you" = evidently there were those trying to teach contrary to the truth and thereby justify an immoral and wicked life.
 - b. "vain words" = Any person who tells you God is fine with sexual immorality is lying to you. Their words are 'vain', meaning "empty, hollow."
 - c. It shines a light on how many deceivers there are today within Christendom who preach a form of "easy believism" that leaves the truth of repentance out.
2. The reality of the defiled (Vs. 6b)
 - a. "because of these things" = the things Paul has just denounced in Vs. 3-4.
 - b. "cometh the wrath of God" = the word 'cometh' is in the present tense. It pictures the wrath of God hovering over the sinner, about to crash down upon him.
 - c. "children of disobedience" = a description of the unregenerate. If your life is characterized by disobedience, it raises a serious question over your salvation.

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? If you are living habitually in such a lifestyle, then it is a warning to you that you have an unregenerate heart. You need to repent of that lifestyle and receive God's free gift of forgiveness.
2. How is your mouth as a Christian? From our studies in Ephesians to date in this practical section of the Book, it is very clear that what comes out of our mouths is very important to our God.

Walk in Light

Text: Ephesians 5:7-14

Introduction:

1. This is the 4th time we encounter the word 'walk' in this practical section of Ephesians. We have already been exhorted to:
 - Walk worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1)
 - Not walk as the unsaved (Eph. 4:17)
 - Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
2. The Christian life involves progress and forward movement. "The word depicts progress in the Christian life because the Christian life never stands still. It is a life of movement." (John Phillips)
3. In this section the Apostle now issues a call for us to walk in light. This is also a practical outworking of the command to be "followers of God" (Vs. 1). The word 'light' appears 5 times in these verses. Light is a part of God's very character so it makes sense that as His children we would walk in the light.
 - Psalm 27:1 "The LORD is my **light** and my salvation..."
 - 1 John 1:5 "...God is **light**, and in him is no darkness at all."
 - John 8:12 "...I am the **light** of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the **light** of life."
 - John 1:9 "That was the **true light**, which **lighteth** every man that cometh into the world."
4. We will study this exhortation to walk in the light under 4 headings:

I. THE COMMAND FOR WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 7-8)

A. The Reason for this Walk (Vs. 7-8a)

1. The reality of the lost (Vs. 7)
 - a. 'therefore' = draws an inference from what was said previously. Paul has just spoken of the impending doom of unbelievers (Vs. 6). They are under God's wrath on account of their sin.
 - b. 'partakers' = the word means "one who is a partner or accomplice in a plot" (Hoehner). It means "to hold with" another (Wuest). We are not to participate with the ungodly in the sins that provoke the righteous wrath of God (See Vs. 3-5).
2. The reality of the saved (Vs. 8a)
 - a. What You Were Then – "ye **were** sometimes darkness". This was the reality of our condition before we were saved. Eph. 4:18 describes this condition, "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." Thank God for the word 'were'. If you are saved, that's in the past! Observe the language of Ephesians 2:12 – "were dead" (Vs. 1), "in time past" (Vs. 2, 3, 11) and "at that time" (Vs. 12). We weren't just abiding in darkness, we **were** darkness! Our very character was depraved, contributing to the spiritual darkness around us.
 - b. What You Are Now – "but **now** are ye light in the Lord". The reality of our condition now that we are saved. Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, and to turn *them* **from darkness to light**, and

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from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Col. 1:13 “Who hath **delivered us from the power of darkness**, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Not only have we been translated out of darkness into light, we are very light! The life of Christ shines through our lives – “In him (Jesus) was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4). Jesus said “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” (Matt. 5:14). Phil. 2:15 reminds us that “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” we “shine as lights in the world;” Jesus Christ is the source of this light – “light in the Lord”.

B. The Requirements for this Walk (Vs. 8b)

1. The Consistency Required – ‘walk’. The word ‘walk’ is in the present tense indicating an ongoing, habitual practice of life. “Be habitually conduction yourselves as children of light” (Wuest). The Christian life is a daily discipline!
2. The Quality Required – ‘as’. The word ‘as’ points to the standard of this walk. We are to walk in a manner befitting our position as “children of light”. The word ‘child’ is “a word that connotes a close relationship to the parent. As imitators of God, we should reflect the glory of God.” (Hoehner) This is in direct contrast to the “children of disobedience” mentioned in Vs. 6.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 9)

The Apostle inserts a parenthesis at this point to highlight three fruits that are produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit as we walk in the light. “These graces should characterize those who are children of the light” (Ironsides).

A. Goodness (Vs. 9a)

1. Also listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22. Only the Spirit of God can produce goodness in the true sense of the word in our lives.
2. The word is broad in its scope but it essentially refers to kindness, moral excellence. It refers to “that which is intrinsically right, free from defects, beautiful and honorable.” (Macarthur) Webster defines the word as “The moral qualities which constitute Christian excellence; moral virtue.”

B. Righteousness (Vs. 9b)

There are two senses to the word ‘righteousness’. There is:

1. Righteousness in its positional sense – the righteous standing God gives us when we get saved. This cannot be earned.
2. Righteousness in its practical sense – the practical outworking of our position in Christ. “The quality of life from which righteous actions spring” (Hoehner) This is what is in view in this verse. The Spirit of God produces right living in us as we consciously walk in the light of God’s presence.

C. Truthfulness (Vs. 9c)

1. The source of the truth – the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is called “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13).
2. The manifestation of truth. There will be:
 - a. Truth in word – honesty and integrity of lips.

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- b. Truth in deed – honesty and integrity of life.
- c. Challenge: Are we known as honest, sincere and trustworthy people?

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 10-13)

The Apostle now proceeds to outline several facets of this walk in the light. He shows us what this walk looks like in practice. Walking in the light involves:

A. Examining What's Acceptable (Vs. 10)

1. The Meaning of Proving
 - a. 'proving' = testing. It means "to put to the test for the purpose of approving" (Wuest). The word means "to approve after scrutiny as fit; to test or scrutinize." (Hoehner) The word was used of the testing of metals. The same Greek word is translated 'discern' (Lk. 12:56), 'prove' (Lk. 14:19, 2 Cor. 8:22, 2 Cor. 13:5, Gal. 6:4, 1 Thess. 5:21, Heb. 3:9), 'approve' (1 Cor. 16:3), 'try' (1 Cor. 3:13, 1 Pet. 1:7, 1 Jn. 4:11) and 'examine' (1 Cor. 11:28).
 - b. 'acceptable' = pleasing. The majority of the N.T. usage of this word has to do with pleasing God. Three times it is translated as 'well pleasing' (Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20; Heb. 13:21). We are to have a testing mindset in order to discern what is pleasing to Christ. John Phillips writes, "The criterion for judging what is to be permitted in our lives is whether or not the conduct is acceptable to the Lord. That standard settles all the issues. It sweeps away all the befuddling, pettifogging compromises and excuses. When Christ is brought into the picture, the choices are clear."
 - c. 1 Thess. 5:21 "**Prove** (same word) **all things**; hold fast that which is good."
2. The Means of Testing
 - a. The Word of God and the help of the Spirit of God are our main resources for discerning what is and what isn't pleasing to God.
 - b. Phil. 1:9-10 says "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in **knowledge** and in all judgment; That ye may **approve** (same word as 'proving') **things that are excellent**; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;" Note the connection between abounding in knowledge and exercising discernment.
 - c. Where Scripture does not directly address an issue, we need to look for principles in God's Word that we can apply to the situation. The "12 tests for unanswered questions" is helpful (refer separate document).

B. Eschewing What's Unfruitful (Vs. 11a)

We are to have no fellowship with:

1. Ungodly Workers (Vs. 6b-7)
2. Unfruitful Works (Vs. 11a)
 - a. "**no** fellowship" = a total prohibition. We are called to a life of strict separation as God's children.

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- b. “fellowship” = the word means “to become a partaker together with others. The word refers to a joint-participation between two or more individuals in a common interest and a common activity.” (Wuest) Charles Hodge elaborates, “Those who have things in common, who are congenial, who have the same views, feelings, and interests, and who therefore delight in each other’s society, are said to be in fellowship... So we are said to have fellowship in any thing which we delight in and partake of. To have fellowship with the works of darkness, therefore, is to delight in them and to participate in them. All such association is forbidden as inconsistent with the character of the children of light.”
 - c. “unfruitful works” = they are of no value. This is in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit (Vs. 9). Think of all the sinning that goes on each day in the world. What good does any of it achieve?
 - d. “of darkness” = the “works of darkness” are the kind of things Paul has already denounced in the Epistle so far such as lying, anger, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, malice, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking and jesting.
3. True fellowship for the believer is in “the light”. 1 John 1:7-8 says, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we **walk in the light**, as **he is in the light**, we have fellowship **one with another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” As we walk in the light, we enjoy fellowship with:
- a. The Lord – “as he is in the light”
 - b. The Lord’s people – “we have fellowship one with another”
 - c. Note: True fellowship cannot take place in the darkness of sin and compromise. For there to be true fellowship according to God’s standard, it must take place in the light of God’s truth and God’s presence. This refutes the popular notion today of compromising on the truth in the name of “fellowship”.

C. Exposing What’s Evil (Vs. 11b-13)

- 1. The instruction to reprove (Vs. 11b)
 - a. “reprove **them**” = reference to the “unfruitful works of darkness” just mentioned.
 - b. ‘reprove’ = the word means to expose, convict and rebuke. It means “to reprove or rebuke so as to bring out conviction or confession of guilt.” (Wuest) “It means to convince by evidence” (Hodge). The same word describes the ministry of the Spirit of God in John 16:8 “he will **reprove** the world of sin”. It is not enough to simply separate from evil, we must also confront it with the truth of God’s Word.
 - c. William Macdonald: “The believer is called not only to abstain from the unfruitful works of darkness, but positively he is called to expose them. He does this in two ways: first, by a life of holiness, and second, by words of correction spoken under the direction of the Holy Spirit.”
- 2. The explanation why to reprove (Vs. 12-13)

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- a. The shameful and secretive nature of sin (Vs. 12)
 - i. Expositors: “The secrecy of the works in question is the reason why they require to be openly reproved; and the point is this – the heathen practice in secret, vices too abominable even to mention; all the more is the need of open rebuke instead of silent overlooking or connivance.”
 - ii. We are not to discuss these matters the way the world does (e.g., radio, T.V. talk). If we do speak of them, it should be to expose them with the truth. **Illustration:** Scientists who work with dangerous diseases and chemicals do not handle them carelessly. In like manner, we should not be foolish and careless when handling the disease of sin lest we also be defiled. “We can give God’s diagnosis and solution for sins without portraying every sordid detail.” (MacArthur)
 - iii. These sins are “done in secret”. “Sin loves the dark” (Robertson). Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (See John 3:19-21).
- b. The exposing and revealing nature of the light (Vs. 13). The light reveals things (makes manifest). The test of true light is whether it exposes sin and error.

IV. THE CALL TO WALKING IN THE LIGHT (VS. 14)

Appears Paul draws on Isaiah 60:1-2 in this quotation – “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”

A. The Call goes to the Saint

1. AWAKE! – “Awake thou that sleepest” (Vs. 14a)
 - a. Interesting combination of the figure of sleep with darkness. Sleep usually takes place in the darkness. Those participating in spiritual darkness are in a state of spiritual slumber.
 - b. We find a similar exhortation in Romans 13:11-12 “And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time **to awake out of sleep**: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”
2. ARISE! – “and arise from the dead” (Vs. 14b) A “reference to the spiritual deadening demonstrated by their unfruitful works of darkness.” (Hoehner)
3. ANTICIPATE! – “and Christ shall give thee light” (Vs. 14c)

B. The Call applies to the Sinner

This verse could certainly be applied to the sinner.

1. AWAKE! – You are asleep in the darkness of your sin and on your way to the “blackness of darkness forever” without Christ.

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2. **ARISE!** – through Christ's power you can be raised from spiritual death to spiritual life (Eph. 2:1).
3. **ANTICIPATE!** – Christ will give you the light of His salvation in your heart if you repent and believe.

Conclusion:

1. Are you walking in the light as a believer or are you wandering in the darkness of your former life? Its time to wake up and get right with the Lord!
2. Are you saved? Maybe you are still in darkness, having never received the light of the Gospel truth. It's time to wake up and receive Christ!

Walk in Wisdom

Text: Ephesians 5:15-18

Introduction:

1. This is the 5th time we encounter the word 'walk' in this practical section of Ephesians. We have already been exhorted to:
 - Walk worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1)
 - Not walk as the unsaved (Eph. 4:17)
 - Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
 - Walk in light (Eph. 5:8)
2. In this section the Apostle now issues a call for us to walk in wisdom. Note the emphasis on wisdom in these verses – “not as fools, but as wise” (Vs. 15); “Wherefore be ye not unwise” (Vs. 17). “The challenge in this section is to walk in wisdom. This serves as the basis for the many exhortations found in 5:15-6:9...the metaphor of darkness and light is dropped, and the contrast is now between 'wise' vs 'unwise'.” (Harold Hoehner)
3. We will consider this section under 4 headings. Walking according to God's wisdom means we need to:

I. WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY (VS. 15)

A. The Definition of Walking Circumspectly (Vs. 15a)

1. “See then” = “see therefore”. This circumspect walk is a natural flow on and part of walking in the light. The Apostle has just exhorted us to a life of walking in the light which involves walking in a manner distinct from our old lives before salvation, having a proving mindset, separating from and reproofing the unfruitful works of darkness. Since God requires us to have “no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” it follows logically then that in order to live that way, we will need to be watchful, discerning and careful in our walk. “If believers are bound to dispel the darkness from the hearts and lives of others, how careful should they be not to be dark themselves.” (Charles Hodge)
2. ‘circumspectly’ = carefully, exactly, accurately, diligently.
 - a. Webster defines it as “Cautiously; with watchfulness every way; with attention to guard against surprise or danger.”
 - b. The same Greek word is translated ‘diligently’ in Acts 18:25 and ‘perfectly’ in 1 Thess. 5:2.
 - c. The English word comes from 2 Latin words which mean “looking around.” It therefore means to “walk carefully, with exactness.” (Warren Wiersbe)
 - d. Wuest: “See to it that your conduct is accurate with respect to the demands of the Word of God. It is like a motorist accurately following on the right side of the centre line dividing traffic.”
 - e. Hodge: “Walk strictly by rule, so as not to deviate by a hair's breadth.”
 - f. Illustration: “A climber on a glacier has to look to his feet, or he will slip and fall down a crevasse, perhaps, from which he will never be drawn up.” (Maclaren)

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- g. Note: This is the opposite to the typical attitude found in all too many believers today which tends to be walking carelessly, flippantly and with a shocking lack of discernment.
- h. Alexander Maclaren: “**What shall the end be?**” ought to be the question at every beginning. If we would cultivate the habit of holding present satisfactions in suspense, and of giving no weight to present advantages until we saw right along the road to the end of the journey, there would be fewer failures, and fewer weary, disenchanted old men and women, to lament that the harvest they had to reap and feed on was so bitter.”

B. The Discipline of Walking Circumspectly (Vs. 15a)

1. Again, the word ‘walk’ is a present imperative. This spirit of godly caution is to govern our whole lives. We are not to let our guard down. This doesn’t mean a life of bondage without joy. It simply means we are paying careful attention to the wisdom of God as revealed in His Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.
2. How often do we see examples in the Word of God of men who walked circumspectly for the majority of their lives, only to let their guard down in a moment of weakness and do something foolish that marred their testimony. E.g., Hezekiah who showed the Babylonian delegation his treasures and kingdom after being sick (2 Kings 20:12-13).

C. The Detail of Walking Circumspectly (Vs. 15b)

1. “not as fools” = only occurrence of this Greek word in the N.T. It is ‘asophos’ which literally means “no wisdom, unwise.” a fool is one who walks without reference to the God’s truth. He lives according to the vain wisdom and imagination of his own heart.
2. “but as wise” = a wise man is one who orders his life according to Divine truth. He applies godly knowledge in a practical way in his life.
3. Note: In the context, the foolish would be those who walk in the darkness of sin whereas the wise would be those who heed God’s warnings and walk in the light of truth and purity.

II. WALK DILIGENTLY (VS. 16)

A. The Mandate to Redeem the Time (Vs. 16a)

1. ‘Redeeming’ = a specific example of what it means to walk wisely. The parallel passage in Colossians 4:5 also connects redeeming the time with walking wisely – “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” The word means “to buy up, ransom, rescue from loss” (Strong’s). It contains the idea of “acquiring by purchase”. It means “to avail ourselves of the occasion” (Hodge).
2. “the time” = the Greek word is ‘kairos’ rather than ‘chronos’ in this verse so has more to do with the season or opportunity. It is ‘time’ in the sense of how it is used in Ecclesiastes 3:1 “To every *thing* *there is* a season, and a **time** to every purpose under the heaven:”
3. Maclaren: “A great element in that heedfulness is a quick insight into the special duty and opportunity of the moment, for life is not merely made up of hours, but each has its own particular errand for

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us, and has some possibility in it which, neglected, may be lost for ever.”

4. Illustration: The English word ‘opportunity’ comes from Latin and means “toward the port.” “It suggests a ship taking advantage of the wind and tide to arrive safely in the harbor.” (Wiersbe)
5. God gives us 1,440 minutes to spend every 24 hours. How do we use our time? We live in the time-wasting generation. Are we living with eternity in view? Or are we squandering our lives on the here and now? Are we making wise use of the season of life God has us in for the glory of God?
6. James 4:14 “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a **vapour**, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”
7. Psalm 103:15-16 “As for man, **his days are as grass**: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and **it is gone**; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

B. The Motivation to Redeem the Time (Vs. 16b)

1. ‘because’ = the reason for the command is given.
2. “the days are evil” = it was a true statement back then in Paul’s day and it certainly is a true statement of the times in which we live. The days are evil because they are controlled by the evil one, the god of this world who works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). The word ‘evil’ is the word ‘poneros’ from which our word ‘pornographic’ comes from. We certainly do live in a pornographic age!
3. It’s time to wake up and start living for Christ! The hour is late! The return of Christ draws nigh! The time of so many people is consumed with things that will accomplish **zero** so far as treasures in heaven and eternity are concerned.
 - a. Young people, don’t waste your youth.
 - b. Middle aged people, don’t waste the prime of your life.
 - c. Seniors, don’t waste your sunset years.
4. Romans 13:11-13 “And that, **knowing the time**, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. **The night is far spent, the day is at hand**: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

III. WALK WISELY (VS. 17)

There are two aspects to this:

A. Avoiding Foolishness (Vs. 17a)

1. ‘wherefore’ = means “on account of this”. Ties back to the theme introduced in Vs. 15.
2. ‘unwise’ = means “senseless, unthinking, trifling. It refers to one who does not make the right use of his understanding, who does not see things in their true light, or estimate them according to their

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relative importance. He is indiscriminating between what is true and false, right and wrong, important and unimportant.” (Hodge)

B. Embracing Understanding (Vs. 17b)

1. ‘understanding’ = means to “set or bring together” (Strong’s). Understanding is “the ability to bring things together and see them in relation to one another” (Linguistic Key). The word “suggests using our minds to discover and do the will of God. We discover the will of God as our minds are transformed (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23). God wants us to not just know His will but to understand it.” (Wiersbe)
2. The word ‘understanding’ occurs 54 times in the Book of Proverbs. Prov. 2:6 “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and **understanding**.”
3. “the will of the Lord” = this is not left to our imaginations. God has revealed His Divine will in His Word.
4. John Phillips: “Surely it is the height of stupidity to have in one’s hand the very Word of the living God – inbreathed by the Omniscient, all-wise Creator of the universe – and neglect to read it, study it, memorize it, and obey it! The angels must look at our foolishness with astonishment. We spend years going to college to study medicine, physics, chemistry, business management, engineering, and history. We invest time and money to sit at the feet of those we consider to be learned. We buy their books, attend their lectures, apply our minds to master what they have to say. But we neglect our Bibles. What folly! What an exposure of our warped sense of values!”
5. What a joy it is to have our lives governed by the eternal, unchanging truth of God’s Word rather than the ever-changing opinions and philosophies of fallible men.
6. Psalm 1 – “Blessed is the man that walketh not...”

IV. WALK SOBERLY (VS. 18A)

“Going from the general to the specific, Paul explains how this wisdom works out in the believer’s conduct.” (Hoehner)

A. Be Empty of Fermented Spirits (Vs. 18a)

Here we have “a specific example of an “unwise” walk. The man who has a right discernment will not seek refreshment or excitement from wine but from the Holy Spirit.” (Hodge)

1. ‘And’ = a transition from a general fact to a particular instance in daily life (Linguistic Key).
2. “be not drunk” = lit. “to be being made drunk.” “Paul prohibits them from a course of action.” (Hoehner) The word translated “drunk” is the verb, “Methusko”. It is related to the verb “Methuo,” which, according to W.E. Vine, “signifies to be drunk with wine”. In contrast, “Methusko” “signifies to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process of the state expressed in No.1, Methuo (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words)
 - a. The verb is in the present tense and the passive voice. The present tense views the action as currently taking place in time. The passive voice indicates that the subject is the recipient of

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the action. “Here the Holy Ghost forbids, not only the final state of drunkenness, but also **the process that leads to that state**. The believer is forbidden to place himself in the passive state where he allows alcohol to lead him to intoxication.” (I.W., Jan 2021)

- b. The Bible not only teaches us not to indulge in sin but also to avoid the pathway or process that leads to it. Prov. 4:14 “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*. **Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.**” We pray “And **lead us not** into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matt. 6:13).
- c. Illustration: The young man void of understanding (Prov. 7:6-23) – “And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, **Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house**, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:” (Vs. 7-9)
- d. This refutes the argument “I drink but don’t get drunk.” Medical research disproves this idea. How drunk do you have to be before you have crossed the line into sin? Who sets the rules for this? God’s Word exhorts us not to even start on the process that leads to drunkenness.
- e. Keith Malcomson (Sober Saints): “The pathway to drunkenness begins with one drink and the effect is almost immediate with the very first intake. This is true even if the effect is totally unnoticed by all. **Medical science tells us that the effect of alcohol reaches the brain within one minute of consumption...**When taken, alcohol passes from the stomach into the small intestine, where it is rapidly absorbed into the blood. As a result, it can be detected in the blood within three minutes of the first intake.”
- f. There is an interesting study published by “The Lancet” Vol 392, September 22, 2018 entitled “No level of alcohol consumption improves health” where they cite “the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2016 for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016” They claim that it “is the most comprehensive estimate of the global burden of alcohol use to date.” They state: “The conclusions of the study are clear and unambiguous: alcohol is a colossal global health issue and small reductions in health-related harms at low levels of alcohol intake are outweighed by the increased risk of other health-related harms, including cancer. There is strong support here for the guideline published by the Chief Medical Officer of the UK who found that there is “no safe level of alcohol consumption.”¹

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31571-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31571-X/fulltext). Viewed 2/5/21.

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- g. The warning of God's Word is clear, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Prov. 23:31-32)
 - h. Illustration: The documented revivals of history demonstrate that revival leads in the direction of total abstinence. Today we see the opposite of revival where believers in every increasing numbers are turning to the wine bottle rather than the Holy Spirit in their lives.
3. "wherein is excess" = means "riot." The word 'excess' is translated 'riot' in Titus 1:6 and 1 Peter 4:4. It refers to an abandoned, dissolute life. This type of life is in the direction in which fermented wine ('wherein') leads.
- a. "The word literally means "not to save". That is, that which has nothing of a saving quality about it, but rather, a destructive one. It expresses the idea of an abandoned, debauched, profligate life." (Wuest).
 - b. It refers to "a wild and undisciplined life; a life lived without restraint and in a wasteful manner. It refers to people who waste their resources to gratify their own sensual desires." (Hoehner)

B. Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Vs. 18b)

- 1. This is the blessed contrast and alternative to drunkenness. "Paul not only instructs believers concerning the way in which they are not to live but also how they are to live." (Hoehner)
 - 2. "be filled" = lit. "be being filled". It therefore means "be constantly filled with the Spirit; be constantly, moment by moment being controlled by the Spirit." "Men are said to be filled with wine when completely under its influence; so, they are said to be filled with the Spirit when He controls all their thoughts, feelings, words and actions." (Hodge)
 - a. 'filled' = means "to fill up, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout." (Wuest) The is used "of something which is filled with content. For example, "to fill containers." (Hoehner) Illustration: John 12:3 "...The house was **filled** with the odour of the ointment."
 - b. The imperative mood places the responsibility on the believers. The passive voice suggest that believers cannot fill themselves.
 - c. "The idea of the word is 'control'. The indwelling Spirit of God is the one who should continually control and dominate the life of the believer." (Linguistic Key)
 - d. "With the indwelling each Christian has all of the Spirit, but the command to be filled by the Spirit enables the Spirit to have all of the believer. The wise walk, therefore, is one that is characterized by the Holy Spirit's control." (Hoehner)
 - 3. Illustration: The Equilateral Triangle (Stephen Olford). At the base of the triangle, we have "The Lordship of Christ". Then on one side
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“The Word of God” (Col. 3:16) and then on the other side “The Spirit of God” (Eph. 5:18).

4. Maclaren: “Paul makes a daring, and, as some would think, an irreverent, comparison, when he proposes being “filled with the Spirit” as the Christian alternative or substitute to being “drunken with wine.” But the daring comparison suggest deep truth. The spurious exhilaration, the loosening of the bonds of care, the elevation above the pettiness and monotony of daily life, which the drunkard seeks, and is degraded and deceived in proportion as he momentarily finds, are all ours, genuinely, nobly, and to our infinite profit, if we have our empty spirits filled with that Divine Life. That exhilaration does not froth away, leaving bitter dregs in the cup. That loosening of the bonds of care, and elevation above life’s sorrows, does not flow from foolish oblivion of facts, nor end in their being again roughly forced on us. ‘Riot’ bellows itself hoarse, and is succeeded by corresponding depression; but the calm joys of the Spirit-filled spirit last, grow, and become calmer and more joyful every day.”
5. Unknown author (quoted by Macdonald): “Just as you have left the whole burden of your sin, and have rested on the finished work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and service, and rest upon the present inworking of the Holy Spirit. Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forth praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit all through the day, of joyfully depending upon and obeying Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us as He wills to the glory of God.”

Conclusion:

1. Are you walking the Christian life circumspectly? Or do you coast through life in a careless manner, not taking heed to spiritual dangers.
2. Is your life being governed by the wisdom of God found in the Word of God or the fallible opinions of men?
3. How are you using your time? What season of opportunity to serve God is in front of you now? Are you distracted and missing it?
4. Do you seek the Spirit’s filling or do you turn to intoxicating substances and other substitutes for your joy?

Be Filled with the Spirit

Text: Ephesians 5:18

Introduction:

1. We have encountered the word 'walk' five times in this practical section of Ephesians. We have been exhorted to:
 - Walk worthy of the Lord (Eph. 4:1)
 - Not walk as the unsaved (Eph. 4:17)
 - Walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
 - Walk in light (Eph. 5:8)
 - Walk in wisdom (Eph. 5:15)
2. In this section (5:15-6:9) the Apostle now issues a call for us to walk in wisdom. Note the emphasis on wisdom in these verses – “not as fools, but as wise” (Vs. 15); “Wherefore be ye not unwise” (Vs. 17). “The challenge in this section is to walk in wisdom. This serves as the basis for the many exhortations found in 5:15-6:9...the metaphor of darkness and light is dropped, and the contrast is now between ‘wise’ vs ‘unwise’.” (Harold Hoehner)
3. In this sermon we are going to spend some time considering the command to be filled with the Spirit. Before we get into that, we need to remember what the Epistle has taught us so far about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit:
 - The Holy Spirit indwells and seals the believer at the moment of salvation (Eph. 1:13-14). The word ‘earnest’ means “a pledge, a down payment, a deposit that guarantees the full amount will be paid at the appropriate or due time.” (Hester) “It was the first instalment with a guarantee that the rest would follow.” (Hoehner)
 - The Holy Spirit strengthens the believer in answer to prayer (Eph. 3:16).
 - The Holy Spirit can be grieved by the believer (Eph. 4:30).
 - The Holy Spirit produces godly fruit in the believer (Eph. 5:9).
 - The Holy Spirit fills the obedient, yielded believer (Eph. 5:18).
 - Note: There is a very real sense in which these are sequential. You can't be filled unless you are first indwelt by the Spirit (salvation). The Spirit of God will not fill us when we are constantly grieving him and walking in carnality.
4. We will consider this theme of being filled with the Spirit under 3 headings:

I. THE CONTRAST TO THE SPIRIT'S FILLING (VS. 18A)

“Going from the general to the specific, Paul explains how this wisdom works out in the believer's conduct.” (Hoehner)

A. The Command

1. “be not drunk” = lit. “to be being made drunk.” “Paul prohibits them from a course of action.” (Hoehner) The word translated "drunk" is the verb, "Methusko". It is related to the verb "Methuo," which, according to W.E. Vine, "signifies to be drunk with wine". In contrast, "Methusko" "signifies to **make** drunk, or to **grow** drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process of the state expressed in No.1, Methuo (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). The verb

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is in the present tense and the passive voice. The present tense views the action as currently taking place in time. The passive voice indicates that the subject is the recipient of the action. "Here the Holy Ghost forbids, not only the final state of drunkenness, but also **the process that leads to that state**. The believer is forbidden to place himself in the passive state where he allows alcohol to lead him to intoxication." (I.W., Jan 2021)

2. "wherein is excess" = means "riot." The word 'excess' is translated 'riot' in Titus 1:6 and 1 Peter 4:4. It refers to an abandoned, dissolute life. This type of life is in the direction in which fermented wine ('wherein') leads.
 - a. "The word literally means "not to save". That is, that which has nothing of a saving quality about it, but rather, a destructive one. It expresses the idea of an abandoned, debauched, profligate life." (Wuest).
 - b. It refers to "a wild and undisciplined life; a life lived without restraint and in a wasteful manner. It refers to people who waste their resources to gratify their own sensual desires." (Hoehner)

B. The Contrast

1. Paul uses a startling contrast but, in some areas, there are some parallels/similarities (adapted from William Macdonald):
 - a. In both conditions, the person is under a power outside himself. In one case it is the power of intoxicating liquor (sometimes called "spirits"); in the other case it is the power of the Spirit.
 - b. In both conditions, the person is bold/fervent; it affects his speech.
 - c. In both conditions the person's walk is affected – his physical walk in the case of drunkenness and his moral behaviour in the other instance.
2. In other ways there is a sharp contrast between the two:
 - a. In the case of drunkenness, there is dissipation and debauchery. The Spirit's filling never produces these.
 - b. In the case of drunkenness, there is loss of self-control. But the Fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Gal. 5:23).
3. Harold Hoehner notes, "Persons controlled by alcohol no longer control their actions, as exhibited when asked to walk a straight line and are unable to do so. Likewise, those filled by the Spirit no longer control their actions but rather relinquish their will to the Lord."
4. Alexander Maclaren summarizes it well: "Paul makes a daring, and, as some would think, an irreverent, comparison, when he proposes being "filled with the Spirit" as the Christian alternative or substitute to being "drunken with wine." But the daring comparison suggest deep truth. The spurious exhilaration, the loosening of the bonds of care, the elevation above the pettiness and monotony of daily life, which the drunkard seeks, and is degraded and deceived in proportion as he momentarily finds, are all ours, genuinely, nobly, and to our infinite profit, if we have our empty spirits filled with that

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Divine Life. That exhilaration does not froth away, leaving bitter dregs in the cup. That loosening of the bonds of care, and elevation above life's sorrows, does not flow from foolish oblivion of facts, nor end in their being again roughly forced on us. 'Riot' bellows itself hoarse, and is succeeded by corresponding depression; but the calm joys of the Spirit-filled spirit last, grow, and become calmer and more joyful every day."

II. THE COMMAND FOR THE SPIRIT'S FILLING (VS. 18B)

As we study this command ("be filled with the Spirit") we can note several valuable lessons from the grammar of the command as well as some helpful illustrations of how the word is used elsewhere in the New Testament. The command "be filled" is present tense, passive voice and imperative mood. To summarize, there is...

A. A Process to Follow (pres. tense)

1. "be filled" = lit. "be being filled". It therefore means "be constantly filled with the Spirit; be constantly, moment by moment being controlled by the Spirit" (Wuest).
2. "Men are said to be filled with wine when completely under its influence; so, they are said to be filled with the Spirit when He controls all their thoughts, feelings, words and actions." (Hodge)
3. The filling of the Spirit is not a steady-state condition like the indwelling of the Spirit or the sealing of the Spirit. It is a constant, ongoing process, a moment by moment walk. We cannot rely on yesterday's filling!

B. A Person to whom we Yield (pass. voice)

1. The imperative mood places the responsibility on the believers. The passive voice suggest that believers cannot fill themselves by their own efforts but that it must be accomplished by Someone apart from ourselves. This One is the same Person who desires to fill us.
2. Unknown author (quoted by Macdonald): "Just as you have left the whole burden of your sin, and have rested on the finished work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and service, and rest upon the present inworking of the Holy Spirit. Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forth praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit all through the day, of joyfully depending upon and obeying Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us as He wills to the glory of God."

C. A Precept to Obey (imp. mood)

1. The imperative mood places the responsibility on the believers. We are to consciously and obediently yield to the Spirit's ministry in our lives.

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2. The word 'filled' means "to fill up, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout." (Wuest) The word is used "of something which is filled with content. For example, "to fill containers." (Hoehner)
3. The word was used in the following three senses:
 - a. Of the wind filling a sail and thereby carrying the ship along. Hence it refers to the Holy Spirit being our direction in life.
 - b. Of the salting of meat in order to flavor and preserve it. Hence, the Holy Spirit's desire is to permeate the life of each believer so that they reflect Christlikeness.
 - c. Of total control. As believers, we are to be dominated and controlled by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. "The idea of the word is 'control'. The indwelling Spirit of God is the one who should continually control and dominate the life of the believer." (Linguistic Key)
 - ii. "With the indwelling each Christian has all of the Spirit, but the command to be filled by the Spirit enables the Spirit to have all of the believer. The wise walk, therefore, is one that is characterized by the Holy Spirit's control." (Hoehner)

D. Some Pictures to Illustrate

Studying some examples of how the word 'filled' is used elsewhere in the N.T. helps give us a further sense of what it means:

1. John 12:3 "...The house was **filled** with the odour of the ointment."
2. Acts 2:2 "...a rushing mighty wind and it **filled** all the house where they were sitting."
3. Acts 5:28 "...ye have **filled** Jerusalem with your doctrine..."
4. It is also used to describe being filled with 'wisdom' (Lk. 2:40), 'sorrow' (John 16:6), 'joy' (Acts 13:52), 'knowledge' (Rom. 15:14) and 'comfort' (2 Cor. 7:4).
5. A number of men in Acts were said to be full of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Stephen – "a man **full** of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:5); "**full** of faith and power" (Acts 6:8); "But he, being **full** of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:55).
 - b. Barnabas – "For he was a good man, and **full** of the Holy Ghost and of faith"
6. It is the word used in Ephesians 3:19 concerning the believer being "filled with all the fulness of God".
7. Illustration: The glove and the hand. On its own, the glove is powerless and useless but when it is filled with a hand, a work can be accomplished.

III. THE COMPLEMENT TO THE SPIRIT'S FILLING (COL. 3:16)

The filling of the Spirit and the filling of the Word work hand in hand. In this verse we note that the Word is to:

A. Dominate our Lives – 'dwell'

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1. The word 'dwell' means "to be at home in". It means "to dwell in one and influence him (for good)" (Strong's).
2. "It is one thing for the believer to be in the Word; it is another for the Word to have free access to all parts of his life." (Gromacki)
3. "Do not suffer the Word of God, as a stranger, to stand without; but let it enter into the chamber of your heart, and constantly abide in your minds." (Davenant)

B. Saturate our Lives – 'richly'

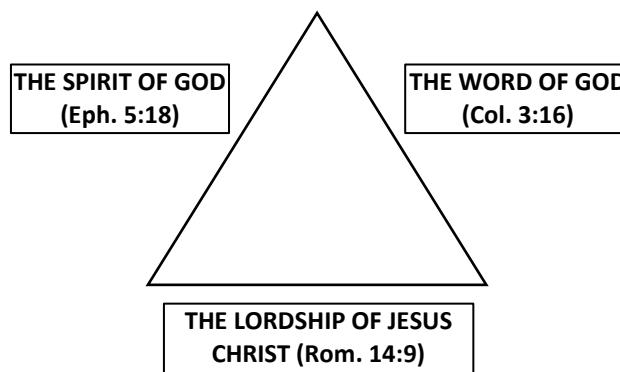
1. The word 'richly' means "greatly or abundantly".
2. The Word of God is to be our passion in life. Read it, study it, memorize it, meditate on it, hear it preached regularly etc...

C. Transform our Lives – "in all wisdom"

1. Wisdom is knowledge applied. It is not enough to simply have a head full of Bible if there is no real attempt to apply it to our lives. We need to allow the Word of God to change us.
2. Moule: "They were not merely to know "the word" verbally, but to handle and apply it with spiritual fitness and rightness."
3. Note: Those who claim to know the Spirit's filling and yet demonstrate a disregard for God's Word are deceived.

Conclusion:

1. Illustration: The Equilateral Triangle (Stephen Olford). At the base of the triangle, we have "The Lordship of Christ". Then on one side "The Word of God" (Col. 3:16) and then on the other side "The Spirit of God" (Eph. 5:18).



2. John Phillips writes, "With this simple figure in mind (above), note what happens. As we begin to read the Word of God, the Spirit of God brings some divine truth to our attention; a promise to claim, a sin to confess and avoid, a command to obey. Because we have established the basic premise that Jesus is Lord and made that the foundation of all our behaviour, our immediate response is to obey. We yield on whatever issue in the Word of God the Spirit of God has brought to our attention. As we yield, He fills us and we receive the power to turn that teaching into practical reality."
3. Challenge: Do we have any desire to know the filling of the Spirit in our lives? Or have we grown content in our carnality?

Harmony in God's House (Part 1)

Text: Ephesians 5:19-21 (Also Col. 3:16)

Introduction:

1. In our last lesson, we considered the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle now proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life. It is so important that we understand what the Spirit of God **actually** produces in the lives of those whom He controls.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God's House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. In this message we will consider the harmony produced in God's House (the local church) by the filling of the Spirit. There are three clear fruits of the Spirit's filling in these verses, one in each verse.
 - Singing (Vs. 19)
 - Thanking (Vs. 20)
 - Submitting (Vs. 21)

I. THE SINGING OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (VS. 18-19)

The Christian faith is a singing faith. The filling of the Spirit results in a certain kind of worship music. There are 6 important considerations we need to look at in relation to church music.

A. The Musicians of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 18; Col. 3:16)

1. Don't forget that the filling of the Spirit follows the previous commands as to how we are to walk in the Christian life. This is significant. The Spirit of God cannot and will not fill the life of a worldly, defiled, compromised believer.
2. Consideration needs to be given to the musicians behind the music we use in church. In light of the context, we could ask the following **seven** pertinent questions:
 - a. Are they people who have a godly reputation for holiness and personal purity? (E.g., Vs. 3-9)
 - b. Are they people who have the discerning, proving mindset that God requires or do they have the “doctrine doesn't matter” philosophy? (Vs. 10)
 - c. Are they people who are walking in strict separation from the world and who take a stand against sin and compromise? (Vs. 11a)
 - d. Are they people who reprove sin and evil? (Vs. 11b-13)
 - e. Are they people who walk in a careful, watchful and sober manner? (Vs. 15-17)
 - f. Are they people who are dominated and saturated by the Word of God? What is their view of Scripture? (Col. 3:16)
 - g. Are they people who are truly Spirit-filled and controlled? (Vs. 18)

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- h. Note: Based on these questions alone, the overwhelming majority of contemporary Christian artists fail the Bible test and should be rejected by the discerning Christian.

B. The Message of Spirit-filled Music (Col. 3:16)

1. Remember the parallel verse in Col. 3:16. The Spirit of God and the Word of God work hand in hand in the inner life of the believer to produce godly worship. Therefore, worship cannot and must not be disconnected from truth in the name of “being filled with the Spirit!”
2. John 4:24 Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in **spirit** and in **truth**.”
3. The Spirit of God is called the “Spirit of truth” three times in John’s Gospel (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). The Spirit of God will not produce worship that is contrary to the Word He inspired. Music must conform to the truth of God’s Word both in its lyrics and its music.
4. Good Christian music is to be a vehicle for the truth of God’s Word.
5. Good Christian music is to be doctrinally sound.
6. Good Christian music will have lyrics with substance. This doesn’t mean that a song can’t convey a simple message. There are songs of testimony (Psalm 40:1-4) as well as songs that contain deep doctrinal and theological truths.

C. The Ministry of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19a)

Church music is for:

1. The Edification of the Saints – “to yourselves”
 - a. Christian music is for edification not entertainment. Col. 3:16 emphasizes this aspect – “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”. The word ‘admonish’ means to “caution or reprove gently” (Strong’s). Good music contains instruction and correction. “...let **all things** be done unto edifying.” I. Cor. 14:26 This is why I prefer the term “ministry in song” to “special item”.
 - b. Christian music is for edification not evangelism. While God can and no doubt does at times use the truth of His Word communicated in song in the hearts of the lost, the Bible never states that music is a vehicle for the evangelization of the lost. “...it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** to save them that believe.” (1 Cor. 1:21)
2. The Exaltation of the Saviour – “to the Lord”
 - a. We could put it another way and say that church worship music is for **Christians** and for **Christ**.
 - b. This means that our music should be Christ-centered and Christ-focused rather than artist centered.

D. The Medium of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19b)

There are three musical genres God has ordained for use in His local churches. There is both **scope** and **constraint** in these three categories. Scope in the sense that there is tremendous room for godly creativity in the producing of sacred songs for worship within the boundaries of God’s laws for music. Constraint in that this instruction clearly rules out the soundtrack of this sinful world. It is without dispute

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that these verses teach that worship music is something distinct from this wicked world. Let's consider them each in turn:

1. Scripture Songs – “Psalms” (ψαλμοῖς)
 - a. Originally the word ‘Psalms’ meant ‘plucking’ the string of a bow or the sound of a stringed instrument. The singing of the Psalms was accompanied by stringed instruments. Josephus also uses the word to designate a stringed instrument like a harp. (Harold Hoehner).
 - b. Specifically, this is a reference to the Psalms of the Old Testament which was the hymnbook of Israel. This ancient song book is carried over into the New Testament church for us to use. James 5:13 says, “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him **sing psalms.**”
 - c. Generally, it would apply to any text of Scripture set to music. It is a wonderful thing to be able to sing the Scriptures!
2. Sacred Songs – “Hymns” (ὕμνοις)
 - a. Hymns are poetic material and either recited or sung in praise to God. It specifically is a song of praise. They are “sacred compositions whose primary purpose is to praise” (Linguistic Key).
 - b. Jesus and His disciples “sung an hymn” at the conclusion of the Last Supper (Matt. 26:30; 14:26).
3. Spiritual Songs (ὠδαίς)
 - a. The word ‘song’ is a more general word and can refer to both secular and sacred songs. Our English word ‘ode’ is derived from the Greek word. This is why the Apostle adds the very important qualifying word ‘spiritual’ so that we are in no doubt as to what sort of songs constitute Spirit-filled worship.
 - b. ‘Spiritual’ music is opposite to that which is ‘carnal’ and fleshly. It is music that ministers to the spirit rather than the fleshly appetites of the body. While godly music can stir the emotions in a balanced and controlled way, it is not experience focused or targeted towards the emotions like contemporary praise. In sacred songs, the truth of God’s Word ministers to the spirit through the mind and the feelings follow.

E. The Melody of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19c)

1. The Standard of Melody in godly Music – “singing and making melody”
 - a. The word ‘melody’ literally means ‘psalming’ which in its literal sense has to do with playing of a tune on a stringed instrument. It means “to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang” (Strong) The word ‘melody’ comes from two Greek words, ‘meloidia’ meaning “choral song” derived from ‘melos’, tune, plus ‘aoidein’, “to sing” (Garlock & Woetzel).
 - b. An excellent book entitled *Music in the Balance* by Frank Garlock and Kurt Woetzel notes, “The part of music to which the spirit responds is the melody. Ephesians 5:18-19 gives us a clear indication the part of music which God wants to be **preeminent** in the music of a Christian. Verse 18 commands us to be “filled with the spirit”. The word ‘filled’ literally means “to be

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- controlled.” The very next verse then states that we should be “making melody” ... Thus, when the King James Version of Scripture follows the command to be filled with the Spirit with the musical form melody, it is accurately teaching that this element of music and God’s control in our lives are closely related.”
- c. This verse very clearly teaches that the kind of music the Holy Spirit’s filling produces is melodious, tuneful music. This is the opposite to rock and roll music which is rhythm dominated with its back beat and sensual dance rhythms.
 - d. The Trinity of Music. Music reflects the character of the Triune God who created it. There are three elements in music: melody, harmony and rhythm.
 1. Melody is the primary tune and ministers to the spirit. The melody is to dominate and control the music.
 2. Harmony is “the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions having a pleasing effect.” (Oxford Dictionary) The harmony is what ministers to the soul.
 3. Rhythm is the pulse of the music and ministers to the body. It is the physical part of music. The analogy between the pulse and the rhythm will help the Christian to be discerning in his choice of music (from Music in the Balance):
 - Too much pulse (or erratic pulse) – the body is sick.
 - Too much rhythm (or erratic rhythm) – the music is sick.
 - No pulse – the body is dead.
 - No rhythm – the music is dead.
 - Pulse under control – the body is well.
 - Rhythm under control – the music is well.
 - “The pulse is there to sustain life. It does not call attention to itself in that role. Rhythm should play the same part in music. It is there to keep the music moving, not to dominate the sound.” (Garlock & Woetzel)
 - Note: In good music, you are generally unaware of the rhythm as it does not draw attention to itself.
 - e. The musical trinity therefore corresponds to the order we see in the Godhead – The Son works in submission to the Father and the Spirit does not draw attention to Himself but glorifies the Son.
 - f. The musical trinity also corresponds to the order in the three parts of man.
 1. The spirit is to be the control center.
 2. The soul (mind, will and emotions) subservient to the rule of the spirit.
 3. The body under the control of the spirit.
 - g. Question: Which part of music dominates in rock and roll? Melody or rhythm? Answer: The rhythm! This is the complete opposite to godly, Spirit-filled music which is melody dominated and controlled. This is why the contemporary Christian music movement is so unscriptural with its use of the world’s fleshly, ungodly style of music.

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- h. Simon Frith in his book, *Sound Effects, Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll* states, "The sexuality of music is usually referred to in terms of its rhythm – it is the beat that commands a directly physical response."
 - i. David Tame in his book *The Secret Power of Music* concurs, "When pulsation and syncopation are the rhythmic foundations of the music at a dance hall, the movements of the dancers can invariably be seen to become very **sensual**."
 - j. Chris Stein of the rock band Blondie – "Everyone takes it for granted that rock and roll is synonymous with sex." (*People*, May 21, 1979).
 - k. John Oates of Hall & Oates – "Rock 'n' roll is 99% sex." (*Circus*, Jan. 31, 1976)
 - l. Frank Zappa of Mothers of Invention – "Rock music is sex. The big beat matches the body's rhythms." (*Life*, June 28, 1968)
 - m. Jimi Hendrix – "Perhaps my music is sexy...but what music with a big **beat** isn't?"
 - n. Gene Simmons of Kiss – "That's what rock is all about – sex with a 100-megaton bomb, **THE BEAT!**" (*Entertainment Tonight*, ABC, Dec. 10, 1987)
 - o. Dan Lucarini: "Rock and roll is a musical style that was created for immoral purposes by immoral men, and has always been used by the world to express its immoral attitudes in song." (*Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*, p. 68)
 - p. Gary Gilley: "The new-paradigm church has caught the wave of our times and has created **a church for the entertainment age**. Rather than expose and correct the superficiality and wrong mindedness of a generation addicted to fun, amusement and self, the modern church has all too often chosen to go with the flow and give 'them' what they want...**it is very difficult to distinguish what the modern church is offering from what the secular world is offering.**" (*This little church went to market*, p. 33.)
2. The Source of Melody in godly Music – "in your heart"
- a. The work of the Spirit of God in the heart is what produces godly melody. Beautiful, tuneful, melodious music is the fruit of revival and the genuine work of the Spirit. This is why the greatest hymns of the faith have come out of times of spiritual reformation, revival and refreshing. Harry Ironside writes, "Every believer's heart is like a harp, and as the Spirit of God breathes over the heart-strings, real melody goes up to the ear of God."
 - b. Conversely, dark, rhythmic, beat dominated music is a fruit of man's depraved appetites under the influence and control of Satan.

F. The Motive of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19d)

- 1. As mentioned above, music is for the edification of the saints and the exaltation of the Saviour; it is for Christians and for Christ. The Lord Jesus is the focus of Spirit-filled music. We sing to Him and for Him. Our music should be Christ-centered not artist-centered.
- 2. NBC choir motto: "Sing for the audience of One".

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3. Johann Sebastian Bach: "The aim of all music is the glory of God."
4. Illustration: Revival of temple worship under Hezekiah – "And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. **And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also** with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued **until the burnt offering was finished**. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped." (II. Chronicles 29:27-29) The lamb was the focal point of this worship service.
5. The worship of heaven emphasizes Christ, the Lamb of God. Rev 5:11-12 "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."
6. Hodge: "Christ is the special object of Christian worship, to whom the heart when filled with the Spirit instinctively turns."

To be continued in Part 2...

Conclusion:

1. In our last message we emphasized the Lordship of Christ and the fact that the Spirit's filling has to do with Him having total control of our lives. The challenge to consider in light of this message is does Christ have control of our music?
2. What is your attitude to the song service? Are you singing for the edification of the brethren and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Harmony in God's House (Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 5:19-21 (Also Col. 3:16)

Introduction:

1. In our lesson on Vs. 18, we considered the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle now proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life. It is so important that we understand what the Spirit of God **actually** produces in the lives of those whom He controls.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God's House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. In this message we continue to consider the harmony produced in God's House (the local church) by the filling of the Spirit. There are three clear fruits of the Spirit's filling in these verses, one in each verse. In our previous message we considered the first (singing). We will briefly review then consider the next two.
 - Singing (Vs. 19)
 - Thanking (Vs. 20)
 - Submitting (Vs. 21)

I. THE SINGING OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (VS. 18-19)

The Christian faith is a singing faith. The filling of the Spirit results in a certain kind of worship music. There are 6 important considerations we need to look at in relation to church music.

A. The Musicians of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 18; Col. 3:16)

B. The Message of Spirit-filled Music (Col. 3:16)

C. The Ministry of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19a)

D. The Medium of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19b)

E. The Melody of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19c)

1. The Standard of Melody
2. The Source of Melody
 - a. The work of the Spirit of God in the heart is what produces godly melody. Beautiful, tuneful, melodious music is the fruit of revival and the genuine work of the Spirit. This is why the greatest hymns of the faith have come out of times of spiritual reformation, revival and refreshing. Harry Ironside writes, “Every believer's heart is like a harp, and as the Spirit of God breathes over the heart-strings, real melody goes up to the ear of God.”
 - b. Conversely, dark, rhythmic, beat dominated music is a fruit of man's depraved appetites under the influence and control of Satan.
 - c. Gary Gilley: “The new-paradigm church has caught the wave of our times and has created **a church for the entertainment age**. Rather than expose and correct the superficiality and wrong mindedness of a generation addicted to fun, amusement and self, the modern church has all too often chosen to go with the flow and give ‘them’ what they want...**it is very difficult to**

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distinguish what the modern church is offering from what the secular world is offering." (*This little church went to market*, p. 33.)

F. The Motive of Spirit-filled Music (Vs. 19d)

1. As mentioned above, music is for the edification of the saints and the exaltation of the Saviour; it is for Christians and for Christ. The Lord Jesus is the focus of Spirit-filled music. We sing to Him and for Him. Our music should be Christ-centered not artist-centered.
2. NBC choir motto: **"Sing for the audience of One"**.
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5. The worship of heaven emphasizes Christ, the Lamb of God. Rev 5:11-12 "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."
6. Hodge: "Christ is the special object of Christian worship, to whom the heart when filled with the Spirit instinctively turns."

II. THE THANKING OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (VS. 20)

Observe four principles in relation to thanksgiving in the verse:

A. The When of Thanksgiving – "always" (Vs. 20a)

1. "Giving thanks" = Thanksgiving is "The act of rendering thanks or expressing gratitude for favors or mercies." (Webster 1828)
2. "Giving thanks **always**" = this is a great challenge as we thank the Lord sometimes, not all the time. It is relatively easy to thank the Lord during the good times but not so easy during the times of trial and test.
3. Un-thankfulness towards God is a mark of an unsaved person and is the fountain head of much wickedness (Rom. 1:21).

B. The What of Thanksgiving – "for all things" (Vs. 20b)

We need to thank the Lord for:

1. All the Blessings – it is not hard to thank the Lord for the blessings but we often forget to do so. Illustration: The cleansing of 10 lepers (Luke 17:11-19).
2. All the Burdens – this is what we struggle with the most and yet it is a command for us to obey. 1 Thess. 5:18 "In **every thing** give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." We can choose to thank the Lord even when our feelings tell us

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otherwise. Consider Job's response to his trials in Job 1:20-22
"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and **worshipped**, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; **blessed be the name of the LORD**. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Note: Interesting to note from this example that worship does not have to involve music.

3. Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer **the sacrifice of praise** to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."
4. Joni Eareckson Tada, the Christian quadriplegic said "giving thanks is not a matter of feeling thankful, it is a matter of obedience."
5. Note: The context of this command is the filling of the Spirit. Only the Spirit of God can enable the believer to thank the Lord in this way for "all things".
6. Illustration: Legend of the two angels sent to gather prayers – one petitions and one thanksgiving.

C. The Who of Thanksgiving – "unto God and the Father" (Vs. 20c)

1. "God and the Father" = Granville Sharp Rule. Both titles refer to the same Person of the Godhead.
2. 'Father' = reminds us of our privileged position as God's "dear children" (5:1). God has a very personal relationship to His children. We can approach God in prayer as our Father if we are saved and say "Our Father which art in heaven".

D. The How of Thanksgiving – "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Vs. 20d)

1. "in the name" = means we "give thanks consistent with who He is and what He has done" (MacArthur)
2. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Mediator in all things to the Father. Notice Christ is given His full title. "The full title 'Lord Jesus Christ' with the personal pronoun "our" depicts the believer's possession of the Lord of Glory through whom thanksgiving is made." (Hoehner)
3. Note: While we are to give thanks to God each day in our personal lives, the context here is corporate worship in the local church. Thanksgiving should be offered to the Father in the Name of Christ during the public gatherings of God's people in the local church.

III. THE SUBMITTING OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (VS. 21)

A. The Meaning of Submission (Vs. 21a)

1. 'submitting' means "to be subject, subordinate; to order oneself under a leader." (Hoehner) The word was "used in a military sense of soldiers submitting to their superior or slaves submitting to their masters. The word has primarily the idea of giving up one's right or will." (Linguistic Key) When believers are filled with the Spirit, they submit to one another in the local church.
2. Note: If we took to hear the two laws of submission for the local church, we would have very little division and conflict.
 - a. Submit to other church members (Eph. 5:21).
 - b. Submit to church leadership (Heb. 13:17).

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- c. The spirit of rebellion is the opposite to the Spirit-filled life.
3. This simply means that you don't have to always have it **your** way. You can defer to others at times and be gracious and Spirit-filled.
4. This is the opposite of the world's philosophy of self-assertion and individualism.
5. This verse forms a transition to the teaching on submission that follows. "While this verse concludes the section describing the affects of the Spirit's filling it serves as a hinge verse to the entire following section." (Hoehner)

B. The Motivative of Submission (Vs. 21b)

1. 'fear' = refers to the "fear, dread, and awe of God." (Hoehner)
2. What will motive us to godly submission? A reverential fear of God. When believers scrap and fight amongst themselves rather than take the low road, they have lost the fear of God. Sadly, reverence for God doesn't even come into the equation at times.

Conclusion: Are you a Spirit-filled Christian? If you are, these fruits of singing, thanksgiving and submitting will be evident in your life.

Harmony at my House (Part 1)

The Spirit-filled Wife

Text: Ephesians 5:22-24

Introduction:

1. In Vs. 18, we have the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle then proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God’s House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. Expositors: “The great Christian law of mutual subjection or submissive consideration is now to be unfolded in its bearing on three particular relations which lie at the foundation of man’s social life – those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants.”
4. Family life as God ordained it works! The world has disregarded God’s design for the home and family and the result has been carnage, wreckage and chaos. Spurgeon said, “When home is ruled according to God’s Word, angels might be asked to stay with us, and they would not find themselves out of their element.” The problem is that “too many homes are an outpost of Hell instead of a parcel of Paradise!” (Wiersbe)
5. The kind of family life described in these verses is only a possibility for those who are:
 - Saved – “in Christ” (Chp. 1-3).
 - Spirit-filled (5:18).
 - Harold Hoehner: “The present context is very much related to the previous context, for only believers filled by the Spirit are able to please the Lord by fulfilling their duties and are able to live blameless lives in close and continual contact with their family or employment relationships.”
6. This section dealing with husbands and wives is the largest section with 12 verses. Children and parents are discussed in 4 verses and slaves and masters in 5 verses. This highlights the importance of Christian marriage! Marriage is the bedrock of society. Strong homes, churches and nations are only possible if there are strong marriages. No wonder Satan has concentrated so much on attacking marriage as ordained by God – divorce, polygamy, co-habitation, infidelity, adultery and now the Sodomite agenda.
7. In this message we will consider what God’s Word has to say about the Spirit-filled wife in the home under three headings.

I. THE EXHORTATION TO SUBMISSION (VS. 22)

Having issued the general exhortation in Vs. 21 for believers to submit one to another, the Apostle Paul now proceeds to discuss specific examples of submission that God requires. It is significant to note that in each case, the Word of God begins with the role of the subordinate.

A. The Mandate to Submit (Vs. 22a)

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1. The Definition of Submission – ‘submit’
 - a. What submission is **NOT**
 - i. Submission is not subjugation. Subjugation “the act of subduing and bringing under the power or absolute control of another.” A wife can appeal to her husband. She can have her own thoughts and opinions and share them with her husband.
 - ii. Submission is not slavery. A wife is her husband’s equal and counterpart to be loved, respected, cherished and adored by him. She is not his slave or piece of property! She is not a doormat! Illustration: Christian husband I heard of who would deliberately think up hard things to ask his wife to do to sets her submission to his authority.
 - iii. Submission isn’t about equality. It is about God’s lines of authority. We all submit to authority (e.g., pastoral, civil etc...). By submitting to those authorities, we do not cease to be equal with them in standing. In fact, the concept of all members of society having equal standing before the law is a Christian concept. Even within the Trinity we discern an authority structure yet there is perfect equality between each Member of the Godhead.
 - iv. Note: We should not be surprised that the natural man without God can’t make sense of God’s Divine order and structure for the Christian home.
 - b. What submission **is**
 - i. The word ‘submit’ is the same word as the one in the previous verse. It means “to be subject, subordinate; to order oneself under a leader.” (Hoehner) The word was “used in a military sense of soldiers submitting to their superior or slaves submitting to their masters. The word has primarily the idea of giving up one’s right or will.” (Rogers Jr & III) The word is in the present tense which points to the ongoing nature of this submission. It is a quality that is to be cultivated and developed.
 - ii. The word is used to describe Christ who was “subject unto” His parents (Lk. 2:51). It is the same word used to exhort Christians to “be subject” to civil authorities (Rom. 13:1). It is also translated “be under obedience” (1 Cor. 14:34), “under” (1 Cor. 15:27), “obedient” (Tit. 2:5). To be “under” your husband does not mean in the sense of being inferior to him but in the sense of being under his leadership.
 - iii. Question: What about the husband? The husband is the authority in the home in God’s created order and does not submit to the wife in the sense of her being an authority over him. However, he can and should submit to his wife in the sense of giving up his own rights yielding in love to his wife’s needs, desires and wisdom at times. Not every discussion and decision are a test of his leadership!
2. The Decision of Submission – ‘yourselves’

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- a. Notice that the verse does not say “husbands make your wives submit”. Some men have taken the verse that way and misuse it. The initiative for submission is to come from the wife. The husband’s job is to provide the environment of selfless love in which his wife’s followership can thrive and flourish.
 - b. This means that submission is a voluntary thing. It cannot be forced.
3. The Direction of Submission – “unto your own husbands”
 - a. The command is not for a woman to submit to all men generally but specifically to her own husband. The word ‘own’ means “one’s own, private, peculiar, unique possession.”
 - b. Note: The words “husband” and “wife” in this verse are often translated “man” and “woman” elsewhere in the New Testament. To be a husband, you must be a male and to be a wife you must be a female! These words are always gender specific in the New Testament. The word translated ‘husband’ never refers to a woman and the word translated ‘wife’ never refers to a man.

B. The Motive to Submit (Vs. 22b)

1. “as unto the Lord” = the wife’s submission is to be done as if she were doing it for Christ. And ultimately, when we submit to God-ordained authorities in our lives, we are doing it for Christ. He is to be our focus.
2. Note: When we are out of line with God’s authorities in our lives, we are out of sorts in our fellowship with our Saviour also.

II. THE EXPLANATION OF SUBMISSION (VS. 23)

A. The Headship of the Husband (Vs. 23a)

1. ‘for’ = a reason is given as to why the wife is to submit. It is a part of God’s functional order for the home. The wife is to submit for two reasons:
 - a. Because of the Lordship of Christ – “as to the Lord” (Vs. 22).
 - b. Because of the Headship of the Husband (Vs. 23a).
2. 1 Cor. 11:3 “But I would have you know, that the **head** of every man is Christ; and the **head** of the woman is the man; and the **head** of Christ is God.”
3. The word ‘head’ in the Bible is used literally in reference to the human head and it is also used figuratively to refer to a position of authority.
4. The word speaks of authority and direction. The husband is God’s authority in the home over the family and he is to lead the in the ways of God. Sadly, today the problem is not always that the wife doesn’t want to submit. A Spirit-filled Christian wife wants to follow a spiritual husband. Often the problem is that men won’t lead their families! If you are the head of your home, why are you acting like you’re the tail???! If you are the head, why are you acting like a boy with his mother rather than a man with his wife?!
5. Headship = leadership, not dictatorship. Leadership according to the Bible is a servant-leader model as espoused by Christ. Dictatorship on the other hand is a high handed, autocratic, controlling, self-centered kind of leadership. Leadership in a godly

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sense is about being a servant. Leadership for a dictator is about total power and control.

B. The Headship of Christ (Vs. 23b)

1. What is similar in Christ's Headship – as Christ is the head of the spiritual body the church, so the husband is the head of the one flesh, marriage unit. Christ is said to be “head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22), the “head of the church” (Col. 1:18) and the “head of all principality and power.” As Head, Christ supplies nourishment, unity and growth to His body (Col. 2:19).
2. What is different in Christ's Headship – there is a second clause that states that “he is the saviour of the body”. This reveals that Christ's relationship to the church is on a higher plan to that of the husband with his wife. The husband is not the wife's Saviour. The husband is the head only whereas Christ is both head and Saviour.
3. Wuest: “Christ, who resembles the husband in respect to headship, at the same time differs from the husband. The husband is the head of the wife, and in that he is like Christ; but Christ is also that which the husband is not, namely, Saviour of that whereof He is Head.”

III. THE APPLICATION OF SUBMISSION (VS. 24)

A. The Example for the Wife's Submission (Vs. 24a)

1. “as the church is subject unto Christ” = she is to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ.
2. Note: All through this section on the husband-and-wife relationship there is reference back to the relationship between Christ and His Church. Christian marriage is supposed to picture that sacred and beautiful relationship Christ has with His blood-bought church.

B. The Extent of the wife's Submission (Vs. 24b)

1. The church is subject to the Christ in all things. There is no area of the Christian's life that does not come under the Lordship of Christ. The church benefits from this submission to Christ. It is the pathway to blessing. In like manner, a godly woman should benefit from submitting to a Spirit-filled husband.
2. In a similar way, the wife is not to be independent from the husband God has given her. She is to work under his leadership as long as it is exercised within the boundaries of God's Word. This does not mean a woman can't exercise initiative nor does it mean she has to check every tiny detail with the day-to-day running of the household with the husband. That would be impossible! But she is to work within the framework he sets for her and accept his leadership in all areas.
3. Practical Suggestions
 - a. Uphold the authority of your husband in the home. Do not usurp his authority, especially in front of the children. If need be, resolve a difference in private discussion but try not to “have it out” with your husband in front of the family.
 - b. Remember that unlike Christ, your husband isn't perfect and he will make mistakes in his leadership. Forgiveness, grace and patience are needed. Remember, you are his helpmeet and over time you can help him become a better leader.

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- c. Bring things to his attention. Value his leadership in the home. No secrets! Some wives deliberately keep their husbands in the dark about things.
- d. Try to view his position as head as a blessing rather than through a feministic perspective.

C. The Limits of the wife's Submission (Vs. 22; Acts. 5:29)

- 1. At this point, the question often arises as to whether there are any limits to submission if the Bible says she is to submit in "everything". The answer is "yes". There are Divine limitations to the husband's authority.
- 2. This command must be understood within its immediate context and the context of other Scriptural truths. The following two qualifying questions can be asked to help a wife determine whether she is to obey her husband or not:
 - a. Does it pass the "as to the Lord" text (Vs. 22)? Can what I am being asked to do be done as unto Christ with a clear conscience? We believe in individual soul liberty and a wife should not be constrained to do something that would violate her own conscience before the Lord.
 - b. Does it pass the "obey God rather than man test" (Acts 5:29)? Will obeying my husband mean disobeying the Lord? The wife is not to submit to her husband in anything sinful including abuse.

Conclusion:

- 1. Challenge to wives: Do you know something of the filling of the Spirit in your relationship towards your husband? If you are in submission to Christ, then you will also be in submission to your husband. Do you have a Christian mindset concerning your role as a wife or a worldly mindset?
- 2. Challenge to husbands: Are you being a good leader for your wife to follow? Are you spiritually strong or weak?

Harmony at my House (Part 2)

The Spirit-filled Husband

Text: Ephesians 5:25-33

Introduction:

1. In Vs. 18, we have the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle then proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God’s House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. Family life as God ordained it works! The kind of family life described in these verses is only a possibility for those who are:
 - Saved – “in Christ” (Chp. 1-3).
 - Spirit-filled (5:18).
4. The truths relating to Christ and His church are interwoven throughout the exhortations to husbands and wives, revealing God’s grand and glorious purpose in ordaining marriage that it might be a picture and reflection of Christ’s relationship to His church. To tamper with God’s institution of marriage is a very serious thing!
5. Observe that while there are 3 verses dealing with the wife’s responsibility in the marriage union, there are 9 verses dealing with the husband’s responsibility!
6. In this message we will consider what God’s Word has to say about the Spirit-filled husband in the home under 5 headings.

I. THE EXHORTATION (VS. 25A)

A. The Definition of this Love – ‘love’

1. The word ‘love’ is the key work in this section, appearing 6 times. “It refers to love irrespective of merit even to the underserving. The present imperative reinforces the idea that a husband’s love for his wife is to be an ongoing process. The intent in this love is to seek the highest good in the one loved.” (Hoehner) “This is a self-sacrificial love, a love that impels the one loving to give himself in self-sacrifice for the well-being of the one who is loved.” (Wuest) It is the love that God is (1 Jn. 4:8), that God showed at Calvary (Jn. 3:16), and the love that the Holy Spirit produces in the heart of the yielded believer (Gal. 5:22).
2. This love cannot be manufactured. It has to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). “Our little tributaries of love soon dry up, but the ocean tides of His immeasurable love come in and overflow the banks of the narrow channels of our love.” (Phillips)
3. It is an action more than an emotion. Emotions accompany love and bring warmth to a relationship but true love is not dependent upon emotions. It is a choice.

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4. A convicting exercise for a husband is to turn to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and examine his love for his wife against the standard of God's Divine love. Try it! "As a husband I suffer long and am kind and I do not envy. I do not vaunt myself or am puffed up. I do not behave myself unseemly nor am I self-seeking. I am not easily provoked and I don't think evil of my wife (meaning I trust her and put the best construction on things). In my marriage I don't rejoice in iniquity but I rejoice in the truth. In relation to my wife, I bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things. My love for my wife never fails."
5. Note: This teaching was revolutionary in Paul's day when marriage was broken down much like it is today in our licentious society. Demosthenes (Greek Orator) said, "We have courtesans (prostitutes) for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs." Seneca, a Roman Philosopher, said that the women of that day would date the years by the names of their husbands.

B. The Direction of this Love – "your wives"

1. Your focus of this love is to be your wife. While you should have Christian love for your sisters in Christ, only your wife should be the special attention of your affections.
2. Note: The words "husband" and "wife" in this verse are often translated "man" and "woman" elsewhere in the New Testament. To be a husband, you must be a male and to be a wife you must be a female! These words are always gender specific in the New Testament. The word translated 'husband' never refers to a woman and the word translated 'wife' never refers to a man.

II. THE ILLUSTRATION (VS. 25B-27)

The example of Christ's love forms the great standard of love the husband is to aim for with the filling and help of the Spirit of God. The Apostle presents the purpose or goal of Christ's love for the church with the three 'that' clauses. Observe the qualities of Christ's love in these verses.

Christ's love is:

A. A Sacrificing Love (Vs. 25b)

1. "gave himself" = Christ's love was a love that was demonstrated in action. Love took Christ to the cross for His church. Christ was not forced to die but laid down his life willingly and voluntarily for the church (note the word 'himself').
2. As husbands we should love our wives to the point of being willing to die for them if the situation ever arose.
3. Illustration: A striking story is told about the wife of one of Cyrus' generals who was charged with treachery against the king. She was called before him and after trial condemned to die. Her husband, hearing the awful news, came running in and threw himself prostrate before the king and said, "O Sir, take my life instead of hers. Let me die in her place!" Cyrus was so touched he said, "Love like that must not be spoiled by death," and he gave them back to

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each other and let the wife go free. As they walked happily away the husband said, "Did you notice how kindly the king looked upon us when he gave you a free pardon?" "I had no eyes for the kind" she said; "I saw only the man who was willing to die for me."

4. As husbands we need to learn to give or ourselves daily for our wives. Husbands can be shockingly selfish and self-centred, always ready to take from the wife but barely willing to give.
 - a. Do you give any time to your wife? Or does it all go to your work and hobbies?
 - b. Do you have a servant's attitude in the home?

B. A Sanctifying Love (Vs. 26-27)

The grand purposes behind Christ's dying for the church are unveiled. Christ's love had the ultimate good of the church in view. "Christ's love for the church is presented here in three majestic movements extending from the past to the present to the future." (Macdonald) Christ's love is the source and fountain head for all these unspeakable blessings.

1. Our Past Redemption – "gave himself" (Vs. 25)
2. Our Present Sanctification – "That he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Vs. 26)
 - a. 'sanctify' = to be set apart or consecrated to God. Positionally the church is already sanctified but practically she is being set apart day by day as she goes through the sanctification process. Illustration: Esther's one year of preparation before being presented to King Ahasuerus (Est. 2:12-16).
 - b. 'cleanse' = the moral purification of the church.
 - c. 'washing' = the word refer to a bath or bathing place.
 - d. "by the Word" = The primary instrument of sanctification God uses is the Word of God. John 17:17 "**Sanctify** them through thy **truth: thy word is truth.**"
 - e. Challenge: Do you contribute to the spiritual needs of your marriage and family as a husband? Are you a man of the Word, able to help your wife in Christian growth and development?
3. Our Future Glorification – "That he might present it"
 - a. The church will be flawless – "not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing". She won't even have the slightest imperfection. She will be perfect in glorious, radiant beauty before the throne of God as the Lamb's bride.
 - b. The church will be faultless – "holy and without blemish". "Without blemish" means faultless, unblameable, free from faultiness.

III. THE APPLICATION (VS. 28-30)

"From this illustration of Christ's all-encompassing love for the church, Paul applies the truths to these husbands who read this letter... Christ's sacrificial love is to illustrate the necessary depth of love husbands should demonstrate toward their wives. If Christ could love sacrificially those who hated him, should not husbands love their wives who do not have such animosity?" (Hoehner)

A. The Responsibility (Vs. 28a-29a)

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1. The husband is to love his wife as himself. There is a natural instinct within each of us to give care and attention to our own bodies. The husband is to give careful consideration to the needs of his wife as he would to his own body. Paul uses two words “from the language of the nursery that are charged with affection.” (Hoehner)
 - a. ‘nourisheth’ = same word translated “bring them up” in Eph. 6:4. It means to bring up from childhood, rear up. It means to nurture and the thought encompasses the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of a person.
 - b. ‘cherisheth’ = literally means “to heat”. It means to comfort, cherish and warm. The same word used in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 where Paul states that he was gentle among the believers as a “nurse cherisheth her children.”
 - c. John Phillips: “Just as a man must take care of his body, a husband must see to his wife’s comfort. He must protect her from harm, desire her wellbeing, and pay close attention to the signals that she sends. She can, after all, make his life blissful or tormenting. He needs to help her develop her potential, nourish her, and cherish her.”
2. “He that loveth his wife loveth himself” = how can loving my wife be equated with loving myself? “The thought is the oneness of husband and wife, the position of the wife as part of the husband’s self.” (Wuest) Husband and wife are welded in marriage into a single unit of which the husband is the head. A man’s wife is a part of him and he is to love her as if she were his very body.
3. Practically speaking
 - a. Make time for your wife. Listen, listen, listen and then listen again! A husband read an article to his wife about how women use 30,000 words a day to a man’s 15,000. The wife replied, “That’s because we have to repeat everything to men.” The husband turned to his wife and said, “What?”
 - b. 1 Pet. 3:7 “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with **them according to knowledge**, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered”
 - i. Study your wife. Know her! It’s a lifelong study.
 - ii. Treat her with care, gentleness and respect. Don’t cut her down with your speech. Speak kind words. Any act of violence or abuse against a wife is unspeakably wicked.
 - iii. Prov. 16:24 “Pleasant words *are* as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”
 - c. Show an interest and concern for her physical needs: 1 Cor. 7:33 “But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” Some men are very good at spending money on themselves but not their wives!

B. The Representative (Vs. 29b-30)

1. Christ is again brought into view as the supreme example for the husband to follow.

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2. Consider how Christ nurtures and tenderly cares for His body the church. He redeemed it (1:7-12; 2:1-10), sealed it (1:13-14), empowered it (1:19-23), brought it into one body (2:16), filled it with God's fullness (3:19), gifted it (4:7-16), and loved and sanctified it (5:25-26).
3. Phillips: "The Lord views the church as His bride; it is His body. He loves it, nourishes it, and cherishes it. It is precious to Him. Nothing on earth or in Heaven compares with it. He died to redeem it. He watches over it. His Holy Spirit is here to guide it and gladden it. At the Father's right hand, Christ is importunate on the church's behalf. He anticipates with delight the coming day when the church will be complete, when it will be like Him forever, when it will reign with Him over God's vast empires in space. As far as the Lord is concerned, nothing is too good for His beloved. The church is the love of His life, the centre of His thoughts, and the object of his purposes. A man should view his wife in the same way."
4. "for we are members" = the reason why Christ nurtures and takes tender care of the church. We are members of His body!

IV. THE FOUNDATION (VS. 31-32)

"This verse reinforces the concept that the husband is compelled to love his wife because they are one flesh." (Hoehner) Paul's teaching on marriage, as with Christ's in the Gospels, is founded and rooted in Genesis. A literal understanding of the first chapters in Genesis is absolutely foundational and fundamental to a proper understanding of marriage and all other Bible doctrine.

A. The Origin of Christian Marriage (Vs. 31)

1. This verse is a quotation of Genesis 2:24. Christ quoted the same verse in His teaching on marriage (See Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7). Marriage was God's idea! We learn all the fundamentals of Christian marriage in this one verse:
 - a. Marriage is heterosexual – it is the coming together of a **man** and a **woman**. Two individuals of the same gender coming together does **not** equal marriage. To say that marriage is anything other than the union of a man and a woman is to do violence to the very etymology of the word.
 - i. Consider Webster's 1828 definition: The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life.
 - ii. Consider the shift in the modern Oxford dictionary which defines marriage as "The legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship."
 - iii. Illustration: Filling out a government form and all the options that apparently constitute a "family".
 - b. Marriage is monogamous – it is the coming together of **one** man and **one** woman. Together a man and his wife establish a new family unit.
 - c. Marriage is permanent – the two become one. The word 'joined' means to "glue or cement together".

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B. The Objective of Christian Marriage (Vs. 32)

1. A mystery is “something which was hidden in God and which humans could not unravel by their own ingenuity or study but is revealed by God for all believers to understand.” (Hoehner)
2. In the heart of the Eternal God, He intended marriage to be a picture of Christ and the church. This lifts human marriage to the highest possible plane. How this should change our attitude towards our marriage!

V. THE SUMMATION (VS. 33)

The Apostle reviews and summarizes the responsibilities of husband and wife.

A. The Husband’s Duty: Love Your Wife (Vs. 33a)

1. “everyone of you” = note that the application goes to each individual. No one is exempt!
2. “love his wife” = the husbands central duty.

B. The Wife’s Duty: Reverence Your Husband (Vs. 33b)

1. ‘reverance’ = fear. In the context of the husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church this could not be fear in the sense of terror. It means she has reverential awe and respect for her husband.
2. It is reverential admiration for a man who behaves like Christ. It is a reverence that stems from an understanding of God’s created order for the home with the husband being the head.

Conclusion: How is your love for your wife? Are you a spiritual leader as a husband? Do you demonstrate your love for your wife in a giving, serving way? Are we reflecting Christ’s relationship with his church in our marriage relationship?

Harmony at my House (Part 3)

Spirit-filled Parents & Children

Text: Ephesians 6:1-4

Introduction:

1. In Eph. 5:18, we have the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle then proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God’s House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. In the previous two messages we saw how the Spirit’s filling impacts on the marriage relationship between husband and wife.
4. We now complete this section on the Christian family as the Apostle deals with the relationship between parents and children.

I. THE EXHORTATION TO CHILDREN (Vs. 1-3)

Children are to...

A. Obey their Parents (Vs. 1)

1. The Mandate – ‘obey’
 - a. ‘obey’ = the word means “to hear under”. It speaks of the one hearing as being under the authority of someone else. It is listening with a view to obey. “Listening is wanting to hear.” The word is used of Rhoda who came to ‘**hearken**’ as Peter knocked on the door (Acts 12:13).
 - b. The similar command in Col. 3:20 says “Children, obey *your* parents **in all things**: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” The child is to submit to all his parents’ commands provided they don’t violate the supreme will of God (Acts 5:29).
 - c. ‘parents’ = observe that both the father and the mother are put on an equal level. Obedience is to be rendered to both Mum and Dad. Parents need to be on the same page otherwise it will be confusing and difficult for the children to obey properly! Remembering Dad’s headship and that he has the final say can help in resolving small differences of opinion.
 - d. “in the Lord” = “the sphere in which the obedience occurs. It is a Christian obedience fulfilled in communion with Christ.” (Wuest) It “shows the spirit in which the obedience is to be accomplished.” (Hoehner) It brings again into focus the obedience to earthly authorities is ultimately obedience to Christ. “This obedience should arise out of the conviction that such obedience is the will of the Lord.” (Hodge)
 - e. Remember children, you need the help of God’s Holy Spirit and a close walk with God to fulfill your duties in the home just as much as Mum and Dad need God’s help to fulfil theirs! And the very start of this means accepting Christ as your Saviour.

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- f. Remember that learning to obey your parents will help prepare you for a life of obedience to Christ.
 - g. Beware of the various forms of disobedience:
 - i. Blatant disobedience – “No, I’m not going to do that for you Mummy!”
 - ii. Partial obedience – doing a part of what is required.
 - iii. Delayed obedience – doing what is required in your own time. Or being asked multiple times before you obey. Remember, to delay is to disobey!
 - iv. Disobedience is a feature of the last days (2. Tim. 3:1).
 - h. Illustration: Jesus Christ was subject to His parents as a 12-year-old boy. Luke 2:51 “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and **was subject unto them**: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.”
 - i. Parents, remember that training our children to obey is NOT a small matter to be treated lightly. Illustration: Mother who asks Johnny 5 times to come to dinner.
2. The Motivation – “this is right”.
- a. Obedience is the right thing to do in the eyes of God. Obedience is right and disobedience is wrong.
 - b. Col. 3:20 further adds “...for this is **well pleasing** unto the Lord.” Obeying your parents pleases Christ. Again, we see that Christ is to be our focus when obeying an authority.

B. Honour Their Parents (Vs. 2-3)

1. The Mandate – “Honour thy father and mother”
- Paul now quotes the 5th of the 10 commandments to reinforce the command he has just given in verse 1.
- a. ‘honour’ = deals with the inner heart attitude behind the obedience. The word means “to estimate, fix the value” (Wuest). Expositors says, “Obedience is the duty; honor is the disposition of which the obedience is born.” Hodge says honour “has reference to the inward feeling as well as to the outward conduct.”
 - b. “father and mother” = equality of mother and father again emphasized. Both are to be honored equally in the family.
 - c. “the first commandment with promise” = this command is the first in the Decalogue with a specific promise attached to it.
2. The Motivation – “That it may be well with thee”. Two blessings are promised for those who honor their parents introduced by the word ‘that’. They touch a child’s...
- a. Quality of Life – “that it may be well with thee”. The word ‘well’ is translated “well done” (Matt. 25:21, 23) and ‘good’ (Mark 14:7). Children who do the right thing by their parents can expect to know God’s blessings in their lives. It doesn’t promise a life without trials but it does promise well being for the child.
 - b. Longevity of Life – “and thou mayest live long on the earth”. Faithful children can expect as a general principle that they will enjoy long lives if they graduate well from the school of the home. Prov. 3:1-2 “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart

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keep my commandments: For **length of days, and long life, and peace**, shall they add to thee.”

- d. Note: As parents we need to remember that the period of training in the home is to prepare our children to be able to make wise decisions on their own when they reach adulthood and eventually leave home (i.e., when married). So as children grow older into early adulthood, we should be careful not to keep treating them like they are 10-year-olds. In Psalm 127, it ends with the children speaking with the enemies in the gate. God did not give you arrows (children) to hoard in your quiver but to prepare for God to send out to do His will.

II. THE EXHORTATION TO FATHERS (VS. 4)

A. What fathers are to Avoid (Vs. 4a)

1. ‘fathers’ = while the command can apply to both parents, the emphasis is upon the father who is the head of the home. Like in the marriage relationship, he bears the greater responsibility for the oversight of his children’s upbringing. His wife is his helper but he must with God’s help set the vision and direction for the family. Prov. 17:6 “Children’s children are the crown of old men; and **the glory of children are their fathers.**” The father’s role is so important in the child’s life.
2. ‘provoke’ = to irritate, arouse to wrath, exasperate, anger.
3. The parallel command in Colossians 3:21 adds “lest they be **discouraged.**” The word ‘discouraged’ means to be without courage or spirit. To lose heart, be disheartened & broken hearted. It has the sense of being listless, sullen, discouraged, or despairing.
4. There are many ways a father can do this:
 - a. Unrealistic expectations that he never had to live under as a child (e.g., almost expecting perfection).
 - b. Idealistic expectations (e.g., ideas picked up in books on parenting).
 - c. Excessive discipline or discipline with a harsh, ungentle spirit. (e.g., the punishment doesn’t fit the crime). There is a difference between being firm and harsh.
 - d. A lack of proper balance between negative correction and positive encouragement. Illustration: Martin Luther.
 - e. Trying to interact with a child on an adult level (e.g., teasing or concepts the child cannot understand properly).
 - f. Issuing complex commands that are above a child’s understanding. Failure to understand the stage the child is at in his/her development.
 - g. Engaging in favoritism. The example of Isaac’s favoritism of Esau and Jacob’s of Joseph are warnings on this point.

B. What fathers are to achieve (Vs. 4b)

Fathers are responsible for:

1. The Education of their Children – ‘nurture’
 - a. Fathers are the primary ones responsible for the education of their children! Of course, the mother plays a vital role in that process as the husband’s helpmeet but the responsibility lies

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with the husband to ensure the children are educated in the things of God.

- b. The word '**nurture**' is a comprehensive word and means "tutorage, that is education or training; by implication disciplinary correction: - chastening, chastisement, instruction." (Strong) Put another way, it refers to "the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of **mind and morals**, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment). It also includes the training and care of the body. So, we are to be concerned about the development of the whole person – spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically.
 - c. The same Greek word (παιδεῖα) is translated 'instruction' (2. Tim. 3:16) and 'chastening' and 'chastisement' (Heb. 12:5, 7, 8 & 11).
 - d. So, we could summarise by saying there are two main concepts in the word:
 - i. Instruction
 - ii. Correction
 - e. Proverbs contains much helpful information for parents on training children.
 - i. Prov. 13:24 "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
 - ii. Prov. 22:15 "Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."
 - iii. Prov. 29:15 "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame."
2. The Correction of their Children – 'admonition'
- a. The word 'admonition' means "to call attention to, that is, (by implication) mild rebuke or warning" (Strong). It is made up of 'nous' (mind) and 'tithemi' (to put/place). Hence, it has the "sense of exerting influence on the mind." (Hoehner) It means "to put in mind" so is the "act of reminding one of his faults or duties" (Hodge).
 - b. Godly parenting involves loving the child enough to bring correction into his life.
3. The Christianization of their Children – "of the Lord"
- a. This means the education and correction given to the child is to be that which is according to the truth of Christ. We are to ensure our children receive a Christ-centered education. It refers to "Christian training. That is, the whole process of instruction and discipline must be that which He (Christ) prescribes and which He administers, so that His authority should be brought into constant and immediate contact with the mind, heart and conscience of the child." (Hodge)
 - b. 2 Tim. 3:15 "And that **from a child** thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

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- c. There is a strong emphasis on the spiritual education of children in the Old Testament. For example:
1. The Passover – Exodus 12:26-27 “And it shall come to pass, when **your children shall say unto you**, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It *is* the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.”
 2. The Mosaic command to parents – Deut. 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children**, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”
 3. The Psalmist's resolve – Psalm 78:1-7 (1) **Maschil of Asaph**. “Give ear, O my people, *to* my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. (2) I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: (3) Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. (4) **We will not hide *them* from their children**, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. (5) For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should **make them known to their children**: (6) That the generation to come might know *them*, **even the children which should be born**; *who* should arise and declare *them to their children*: (7) That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:”

Conclusion:

1. Children, are you saved? Do you have a day by day walk with God that helps you obey Mum and Dad?
2. Parents, are we training our children in the Word of God? Fathers, are we taking our God-given responsibilities seriously?

Walking with God at Work

Spirit-filled Employers and Employees

Text: Ephesians 6:5-9

Introduction:

1. In Eph. 5:18, we have the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle then proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God’s House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. In our previous messages we saw how the Spirit’s filling affects church and family life. In this section we consider how walking wisely under the Spirit’s control affects work life.
4. We will consider our text under two divisions. You will notice that we have 2 central commands with a motivation attached to each of them.

I. THE EXHORTATION TO SERVANTS (VS. 5-8)

A. The Servant’s Assignment (Vs. 5a)

1. ‘servants’ = lit. “slaves”. Slavery not endorsed by the Bible but was a sad fact of life in the ancient Roman world. Some cities had more slaves than freemen. For the saved slave, the solution was not revolution but to live a sanctified life in his situation. The Christian principles found in the Word of God would eventually bring about the abolition of slavery. Living for Christ applies, no matter what our station in life may be.
2. These verses have powerful application to the Employee-Employer relationship in our day and we will seek to apply the text in that light.
3. “be obedient” = same word as the one used in Vs. 1 in relation to children and parents. So long as you choose to sell your labor to a particular boss, you are duty bound to obey that boss, so long as your conscience isn’t violated or you are required to do something contrary to God’s Word. The parallel verse in Col. 3:22 adds “in all things”.
4. “masters according to the flesh” = human masters as opposed to our Heavenly Master.

B. The Servant’s Attitude (Vs. 5b)

1. One of Loyalty – “fear and trembling”
 - a. ‘fear’ = speaks of a reverential awe. The Christian worker is not to be in terror of his earthly boss but he is to be in godly fear of His Heavenly Father. The fear of God is what is in view not the fear of man (See Col. 3:22).
 - b. ‘trembling’ = the outward manifestation of the inward attitude of fear. It describes fear that is so great it cannot be concealed. Sadly, we don’t see this sort of awe of God virtually at all in our day.

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- c. Every responsibility in the Christian life is to be carried out with an eye towards the honor and glory of God.
2. One of Sincerity – “singleness of your heart”
 - a. The word has the idea of simplicity, an undivided heart. It points “to the spirit in which the obedience is to be rendered.” (Wuest)
 - b. It means that the service is rendered without hypocrisy. They were to obey wholeheartedly and completely.

C. The Servants Aim (Vs. 5c-7)

1. To **NOT** be a Men Pleaser (Vs. 6a)
 - a. “not with eyeservice” = service done only when one is under the master’s eye. Some people work great when the boss is around but when he is not around it is a different story! For example, the man who ambles along at his work until somebody says, “The boss is coming,” and all of a sudden, he flies into gear. Or the young woman who wastes her employers time until somebody says, “Look out, there is the manager coming through the office”, and she immediately gets busy. Someone wisely observed that we tend to do what is inspected, not what is expected.
 - b. “menpleasers” = service done that is superficial and with the aim to give the boss an impression which on the surface seems good but lacks true substance and reality. It refers to “those who have no real interest in their work, but only aim at making a favorable impression on their owners by fits of ostentatious zeal, doing the minimum of work.” (Hoehner)
 - c. Note: Your employer’s presence or absence on the work site should have zero effect on your work ethic. If your attitude is that you are working for Jesus Christ then you will work the same whether the boss is there or not.
 - d. John Phillips “The Christian employee is to be diligent. He is not to call in sick when he is healthy. He is not to waste his boss’s time in idle conversation or conduct personal business when he should be working. He is not to drag his feet, pad his break times, arrive late, leave early, or demand that two people do a job he could do alone. Those are the world’s ways, not the Christian’s.”
2. To **BE** a Christ Pleaser (Vs. 6b-7)

We please Christ when we:

 - a. Approach our service as being done for Him.
 - i. “as unto Christ” (Vs. 5c)
 - ii. “as the servants of Christ” (Vs. 6b)
 - iii. “as to the Lord” (Vs. 7b)
 - iv. Christ is the servant’s ultimate Master. We are to obey as if the commands were coming directly from Christ Himself. Our aim is to obey the perfect Heavenly Master not the faulty earthly master.
 - v. Note: This applies to any area of service whether it be in the home, at church or at work.
 - vi. Illustration: When William Carey applied for foreign missionary service, somebody said to him, “What is your

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business?” They intended it as a slur, for he was not a minister. He said, “My business is serving the Lord, and I make shoes to pay expenses.” We should all have the attitude that our business is serving the Lord and whatever occupation we have it is to pay our expenses but we are there to serve the Lord. (Ironsides)

- b. Embrace our service as being the will of God.
 - i. “from the heart” = lit. “out of the soul”. The heart is the center of a person, the seat of the affections and the emotions.
 - ii. This implies more than just having a sense of duty. It involves a sense of devotion. It is service from one’s innermost being.
 - iii. A.W. Tozer on the Sacred & Secular:

1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” One of the greatest hindrances to internal peace which the Christian encounters is the common habit of dividing our lives into two areas – **the sacred and the secular**. As these areas are conceived to exist apart from each other and to be morally and spiritually incompatible, and as we are compelled by the necessities of living to be always crossing back and forth from the one to the other, our inner lives tend to break up so that we live a divided instead of a unified life.

Our trouble springs from the fact that we who follow Christ inhabit at once two worlds – the spiritual and the natural. As children of Adam, we live our lives on earth subject to the limitations of the flesh and the weaknesses and ills to which human nature is heir. Merely to live among men requires of us years of hard toil and much care and attention to the things of this world. In sharp contrast to this is our life in the Spirit. There we enjoy another and higher kind of life – we are children of God; we possess heavenly status and enjoy intimate fellowship with Christ.

This tends to divide our total life into **two departments**. **We come unconsciously to recognise two sets of actions**. The first are performed with a feeling of satisfaction and a firm assurance that they are pleasing to God. These are the **sacred** acts and they are usually thought to be prayer, Bible reading, hymn singing, church attendance and such other acts as spring directly from faith... Over against these sacred acts are the **secular** ones. They include all of the ordinary activities of life which we share with the sons and daughters of Adam: eating, sleeping, working, looking after the needs of the body and performing our dull and prosaic (routine) duties here on earth. These we often do reluctantly and with many misgivings, often apologising to God for what we consider a waste of time and strength... We go about our common tasks with a feeling of deep frustration, telling ourselves pensively that there’s a better day coming when we shall slough off this earthly shell and be bothered no more with the affairs of this world.

This is the old **sacred-secular antithesis**... The sacred-secular antithesis has no foundation in the New Testament. Without a doubt, a more perfect understanding of Christian truth will deliver us from it. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our perfect example, and He knew no divided life. In the presence of His Father, He lived on earth without strain from babyhood to His death on the cross. God accepted the offering of His total life, and made no distinction between act and act... Paul’s exhortation to “do all to the glory of God” is more than pious idealism. It is an integral part of the sacred revelation and is to be accepted as the very word of truth. **It opens before us the possibility of making every act of our lives contribute to the glory of God**. Lest we should be too timid to include everything, Paul mentions specifically eating and drinking. This humble privilege we share with the beasts that perish. If these lowly animal acts can be so performed as to honour God, then it becomes difficult to conceive of one that cannot.” Pg. 109-111 (The Pursuit of God)

- c. Perform our service from the heart.

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3. **REMEMBER! You are the only Bible some people will ever read.**
4. We could summarize it by saying the servant is to be submissive, single minded and Saviour-centered.

D. The Servant's Award (Vs. 8)

1. The Certainty of the Reward – “knowing”
 - a. ‘knowing’ = the knowledge of future rewards in heaven is part of what motivates us to serve in the way we are commanded to.
 - b. Sometimes recognition and reward are lacking in this life. You may have worked diligently as a believer for an employer for years and yet receive no promotion or very little recognition. Remember that your Heavenly Master is not unjust like that and will reward your faithful service with eternal rewards if you did your work as unto Him.
 - c. Col 3:24 “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive **the reward** of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”
 - d. “The Lord’s payday is not at the end of the week; it is at the end of our lives.” (Phillips)
2. The Candidates for the Reward – “bond or free”

II. THE EXHORTATION TO MASTERS (VS. 9)

A. The Master's Mandate (Vs. 9a)

They are to treat their workers with:

1. Equality – “do the same things unto them”
 - a. They are to treat those under their authority with the same Christian spirit. They are to “exhibit the same spirit of integrity, dedication and goodwill towards their servants”. (Hoehner)
 - b. This does not mean they are subservient to those under their command but that they are to approach their role with the same overarching Christian principles.
2. Civility – “forbearing threatening”
 - a. To threaten someone is “to declare that one will cause harm to someone, particularly if certain conditions are not met.” (Hoehner) Threats are a common method used to try and motivate workers. This is the world’s approach. Some bosses seem to only every use negative pressure to try and motivate their staff. In the long run, it creates a toxic atmosphere in the workplace and generates resentment.
 - b. Illustration: Personal experience at previous workplace.

B. The Master's Motivation (Vs. 9b)

1. Their Accountability to the Heavenly Master – “your Master also is in heaven”
 - a. If you are in a position of authority, you always need to keep in focus the fact of God’s supreme authority. No man has absolute power in this life. It doesn’t matter how far you may climb up the social or corporate ladder in life, there is always someone high above you – God.
 - b. The Christian employer or manager is to always remember that he will give an account to God for his actions in relation to those under his authority.

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- c. Col. 4:1 “Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is **just and equal**; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”
2. The Impartiality of Almighty God – no “respect of persons”
 - a. “respect of persons” = lit. means “to receive a face” and is a reference to judgment on the basis of externals. In human life, the status of an individual often has an effect on how they are treated but not with God. He is not impressed by someone’s credentials or social standing. We all stand on equal ground before the bar of God and all human distinctions are erased.
 - b. This attitude of impartiality is to be embraced by the Christian. See James 2:1-4.
 - c. Illustration: Robert A. Laidlaw (1885-1971) & the Gospel booklet “The Reason Why”: Robert A Laidlaw, CBE, founder of the Farmer’s Trading Company is widely known as one of New Zealand’s most successful and respected businessmen. Born in Scotland in 1885, he was one year old when his parents migrated to New Zealand. At the age of twenty-three he commenced a mail order business in Auckland, which grew into a retail organization with a staff of 2,700. It was Robert Laidlaw’s concern for his staff which originally prompted the writing of The Reason Why as a testimony to his Christian faith. It was a business man’s explanation of the Gospel to his employees. The booklet went on to be published in 30 different languages and there are somewhere in the order of 50 million copies in print. A dynamic speaker and inspiring leader amongst the Open Brethren, Robert Laidlaw has been described as “one of the world’s great Christian laymen.” Only God knows how many souls have been brought to Christ through that booklet but it all started with an Employer who had a burden for the souls of his employees.

Conclusion: Remember, you are the only Bible some people will ever read. How is your testimony at work? Do your work colleagues see any difference in your life? Are you seeking to be a lighthouse for Christ and the Gospel where God has placed you?

The Christian in Full Armour (Part 1)

Put on the whole armour of God.

Text: Ephesians 6:10-13

Introduction:

1. We now reach the climax of the Epistle as the Apostle exhorts the believers concerning the spiritual battle they are in and the need to put on the whole armour of God for the conflict. The words “Finally, my brethren” indicate that these are the Apostle’s final words in the Epistle.
2. Every Christian is a soldier! 2 Tim. 2:4 “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath **chosen him to be a soldier.**” The Christian life is a battleground, not a playground!
3. Satan cannot take the Christian to hell but He certainly will seek to neutralize us in the battle so that we are ineffective for the cause of Christ.
4. We face a three-fold enemy as believers – the world, the flesh and the devil. We have the enemies without (the world and the devil) and the enemy within (the flesh). Satan and the world system he controls knows all too well how to appeal to the enemy within each of us!
5. Review of Epistle Outline:
 - Our Wealth in Christ (Chp. 1-3)
 - Our Walk with Christ (Chp. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare for Christ (Chp. 6:9-24)
6. In this message we will consider the opening verses of this section where we are exhorted concerning the source of our strength for the fight, the reality of the enemy we face and the armour God has provided to stand firm in the battle.

I. THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER (Vs. 10)

A. The Submission required for Empowerment (Vs. 10a)

1. “my brethren” = you are certainly no match for the devil until you are one of the ‘brethren’ and that is only possible through salvation. You need to be saved before you can become a soldier.
2. “be strong” = pres/pass/imp. Means “to make strong, endue with strength, to become able. The idea is “to clothe one’s self with strength as one puts on a garment.” (Wuest)
 - a. The present tense indicates that this is to be an ongoing, day by day – “be continually strengthened”.
 - b. The passive voice reveals that this strengthening is not self-produced but is produced by another on our behalf.
 - c. The imperative mood reminds us that our part is to yield to the Lord and let Him do the work of strengthening us.
3. The same Greek word is translated “increased the more in strength (Acts 9:22), “strengtheneth” (Phil. 4:13), ‘enabled’ (1 Tim. 1:12) and “made strong” (Heb. 11:34).
4. The command to God’s people to “be strong” is one that is repeated often throughout Scripture. For example:

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- a. Moses commanded Joshua to “be strong” – “Have not I commanded thee? **Be strong and of a good courage**; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.” (Josh. 1:9)
- b. David charged Solomon to “be strong – “And David said to Solomon his son, **Be strong and of good courage**, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.”

B. The Source of our Empowerment (Vs. 10b)

Christ is the source of our power for the battle. This is described in two ways:

1. Be strong in the Person of the Lord – “in the Lord”
 - a. Remember, as believers we are “in Christ”. Our strength is derived from our union with Him. We need to depend on the Lord to supply us with the strength we need for the battle. You need supernatural power to confront a supernatural foe!
 - b. Illustration: Vine and the branches (John 15).
2. Be strong in the Power of the Lord – “in the power of his might”
 - a. ‘power’ (kratos) = supernatural power. The same word is translated “mighty power” back in Eph. 1:19. It is also translated dominion 4 times in the N.T. (1. Pet. 4:11, 5:11, Jude 1:25, Rev. 1:6). The word has the sense of strength, might, dominion, mastery. (Hoehner)
 - b. ‘might’ = denotes inherent strength or a power that one possesses. So, the power is derived from God’s inherent strength, the power He possesses.
 - c. The hymn writer expressed it well in the words “Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armor on, Strong in the strength which God supplies Thru His eternal Son; Strong in the Lord of hosts, And in His mighty power, who in the strength of Jesus trusts Is more than conqueror.” (592 – Majesty Hymns)

II. THE ENEMY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER (VS. 11-12)

The Apostle now describes in detail the enemy we face in this battle. We are in conflict with:

A. The Head of Satanic Darkness (Vs. 11b)

1. His Title – “the devil”
 - a. Designations of Satan in Scripture
 - i. The devil – He is the accuser (Rev. 12:9; 20:2).
 - ii. Satan – He is the adversary (Rev. 12:9; 20:2).
 - iii. The god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - iv. The prince of this world (John 12:32; 14:30; 16:11).
 - v. The prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
 - b. Depictions of Satan in Scripture
 - i. Serpent – He is a Deceiver (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9; 20:2). He is the “father of lies” (Jn. 8:44) and he “deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

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- ii. Lion – He is a Devourer (1 Pet. 5:8). He was a “murderer from the beginning” (Jn. 8:44).
 - iii. Angel of Light – He is an Imposter (2 Cor. 11:14).
2. His Tactics – ‘wiles’
- a. ‘wiles’ = comes from the Greek word ‘methodeia’ from which we derive our English word method. It means “procedure, process, method, strategy or scheme” (Hoehner). The English word ‘wiles’ expresses the meaning well as it means “A trick or stratagem practiced for ensnaring or deception; a sly insidious artifice.” (Webster) They are “lying strategies”. Satan has had six millenniums to practice his deceptive ways and he is a master strategist!
 - b. Notice that the word is plural – ‘wiles’. Satan has multiple methods and strategies he uses to try and defeat us in the battle. You cannot defeat the devil with human wisdom and resources. 2 Cor. 10:3-5 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: **(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”
 - c. The same Greek word occurs in only one other place in the N.T. It is earlier in the Epistle where it is translated “**lie in wait**” (Eph. 4:14) in reference to false teachers are instruments of Satan to do his bidding and they employ the tactics of their master.

B. The Hosts of Satanic Darkness (Vs. 12)

1. The Picture of the Battle (Vs. 12a)
- a. ‘wrestle’ (pale) = an old word meaning “to throw; to swing.” It is “a contest between two till one hurls the other down and holds him down.” (Robertson) It describes a contest at close quarters, face to face, hand to hand combat. In the ancient Greek games, it was a desperate struggle as the loser would have his eyes gouged out and made blind permanently. Spiritually, so much is at stake in this battle with the devil and his demons.
 - b. “not against flesh and blood” = we are reminded that this battle is not against people. People are merely the pawns on the devil’s chessboard of life whom he moves to accomplish his bidding.
2. The Personages in the Battle (Vs. 12b)
- “The Apostle would awaken his readers to a due sense of the power of the adversaries with whom they are to contend.” (Hodge) There is a four-fold description of the demonic host in this verse. Not only are we in conflict with the devil himself but we are also in conflict with the multitude of demons who work under him and do his bidding. Satan is not omnipresent; he runs to and fro and relies on a well-established network of demons to carry out his plans. Notice the word ‘against’ is repeated each time. We are definitely against some things as believers! We are in a state of spiritual conflict with:
- a. The Principalities of the Demonic Host – ‘against principalities’

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- i. The word 'principalities' comes from the Greek word 'arche' and means beginning or origin. It means "first ones, preeminent ones, leaders" (Wuest). Therefore, in relation to angelic beings it is a reference to those who are of first or high rank. The Bible reveals that there are ranks amongst the godly angels (e.g., archangel) and the same is true for the demonic hosts.
- ii. Illustration: Missionary friend's experience at youth camp in the Fiji Islands.
- b. The Powers of the Demonic Host – 'against powers'
 - i. The word 'powers' is the word 'power' in the sense of an authority. These are demons who have delegated authority from Satan to carry out his evil plans.
 - ii. Not all demons are of equal power (See Matt. 17:21 & Mk. 9:29 – "this kind").
- c. The Potentates of the Demonic Host – "against rulers of the darkness of this world"
 - i. The word 'rulers' is compound word made up of 'world' (kosmos) and 'power' (kratos – same word translated 'power' in Vs. 10). They are "cosmic potentates" (Hoehner). This world system is the primary sphere of influence and activity for Satan and his demons.
 - ii. "darkness of this world" = The spiritual darkness that envelopes this world (1 Jn. 5:19; Jn. 3:19-21) is a darkness that is generated and controlled by these evil spirits. This world's system is the devil's base of operations. He exercises tremendous power over this world.
- d. The Perversity of the Demonic Host – "against spiritual wickedness in high places"
 - i. 'wickedness' = depravity. Descriptive of these evil beings.
 - ii. "high places" = same Greek word translated "heavenly places" four times in the Epistle (See Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10). There are three heavens:
 - The atmospheric heaven.
 - The stellar heaven.
 - The heaven of heavens (abode of God).
 - Satan and his demons have access to the first two heavens. At times Satan is summoned to the throne of God to give an account of his activities as revealed in the Book of Job.
 - Illustration: The answer to Daniel's prayer was delayed for 3 weeks by a high ranking, powerful demonic spirit behind the Persian Empire referred to as "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" (Dan. 10:13, 20).
 - iii. Praise God our Saviour is enthroned above all of Satan's host (Eph. 1:20-22) and we have been seated with Christ in that position of victory (Eph. 2:6).

III. THE EQUIPMENT FOR THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER (Vs. 11a, 13)

Paul was very familiar with the typical armour of the Roman soldier. While writing this very letter, Paul was being guarded by Roman soldiers (Acts 28:16, 20).

A. The Principle for the Armour (Vs. 11a; 13a)

1. The complete armour must be embraced.
 - a. 'wherefore' = on this account, because of this, "because you have such formidable enemies, and because the conflict is inevitable" (Hodge).
 - i. "put on the **whole** armour" (Vs. 11) The phrase "put on" means "to be clothed with".
 - ii. "take unto you the **whole** armour" (Vs. 12) The phrase "take unto" Means "to pick up" (Robertson). It means "Take up as one takes up armor to put it on. The aorist imperative gives the command a sharp military tone.
 - iii. The word "whole armour" is translated "all his armour" in Luke 11:22. It is made up of 'pas' ("whole") and 'hoplon' ("weapon") so literally "all the weapons" (Wuest).
 - iv. "Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul, take every virtue, every grace, and fortify the whole."
 - b. You cannot pick and choose which parts of the armour to put on in the battle. To neglect any piece of the armour is to invite defeat in the battle. To illustrate:
 - i. You may be diligent in relation to the Sword of the Spirit (God' Word) but be lazy in the area of prayer.
 - ii. You may have your Gospel shoes on, witnessing regularly, but not growing in faith and thereby become vulnerable to the devil's darts.
 - iii. You may be a person of great faith but dangerously weakened by a compromised view of Scripture (e.g., using a modern Bible version).
 - iv. You may have the assurance of your salvation (helmet), you know you are saved and on your way to heaven, but you compromise on the truth (belt of truth).
 - v. You may be quite fervent about all of the armour except soul-winning and do little to nothing to move your feet for the Gospel.
2. The character of the armour must be understood.
 - a. Observe that this armour is "**of God**" (Vs. 11, 13). It is of Divine origin. God has made provision for us to be able to survive the onslaught of the devil against us.
 - b. Man's armour will fail! Illustration: David refused Saul's impressive looking armour, choosing rather to go with the tried and tested weaponry of faith. 1 Sam. 17:39 "And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for **he had not proved it**. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have **not proved them**. And David put them off him."

B. The Purpose of the Armour (Vs. 11b; 13b)

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The word 'that' introduces the reasons why we are to put on the whole armour God has provided:

1. To Stand in the face of Satan's Deceptions (Vs. 11b)
 - a. "stand against" = means to "stand face to face. It is a soldier's expression, used for standing one's ground, as against taking to flight." (Wuest) It is the opposite posture to that of fleeing. In military terms it is a defensive stance. So much of the Christian life is about standing in the place of victory. We learned about that place of victory we have in Christ in the first section of the Epistle. Standing still in the battle is contrary to natural bent of human nature. Self wants to war its own way. We need to remember that we are most full of God when we are most empty of self.
 - b. Illustrations: Think about how often God's people in the O.T. were told to stand in the battle.
 - i. The Red Sea crossing – "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, **stand still**, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." (Ex. 14:13)
 - ii. Gideon & his 300 men – "And they **stood** every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled." (Judges 7:21)
2. To Stand in the day of Temptation (Vs. 13b)
 - a. 'withstand' = compound word made up of 'against' (anti) and 'stand' (histemi) hence to stand against, resist, withstand. It speaks of defense against a frontal attack. Much of the Christian life is about standing on victory ground and holding the line for the truth. Retreat isn't an option, there is no armour for the back! The old saying "he who fights and runs away may live to fight another day" does not apply in Christian warfare.
 - b. Illustration: Shammah (one of David's mighty men) – "And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. **But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it**, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory." (2 Sam. 23:11-12)
 - a. "the evil day" = a reference to the day of battle. The definite article ('the') marks it out as a particular day, probably "the day of violent temptation and assault whenever that may come to us during the present time." (Expositors) There are periods of quiet on the battle front but these are not times to lay aside the armour. The armour needs to be in place every day as Christian so we are ready when the attack comes.
 - i. The temptation of Christ highlights this principle – Luke 4:13 "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him **for a season**."
 - ii. Alexander Maclaren: "...the whole Christian life is warfare, but in that warfare, there are crises, seasons of special danger...whilst all days are days of warfare, there

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will be, as in some prolonged siege, periods of comparative quiet; and again, days when all the cannon belch at once, and scaling ladders are reared on every side of the fortress.”

- b. “having done all to stand” = means that we have done everything with God’s help to prepare for the conflict and to stand when it come. This is no half-hearted affair. This speaks of total commitment on the part of the Christian soldier. So many of Christ’s soldiers are missing in action today. Worse still, many of them spend most of their time firing on godly people trying to take a stand for the truth rather than directing their swords against the devil and his demonic host.

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? You need to be saved before you can be a soldier.
2. Are you involved in the battle for the Lord? Which side of the conflict are you on?
3. What part of the armour are you neglecting in your life right now?

The Weapons of our Warfare (Part 1)

Text: Ephesians 6:14-15

Introduction:

1. In our last lesson, we considered the Apostle's exhortation to put on the whole armour of God in order that we might stand in the spiritual battle we find ourselves in. We were also introduced to the fearful enemy we face.
2. The Apostle now proceeds to give us a piece-by-piece description of the armour we have been provided for the battle. God has given us 7 powerful weapons to use in spiritual warfare so that we might stand for Him.
 - The Belt of Truth (Vs. 14a).
 - The Breastplate of Righteousness (Vs. 14b).
 - The Gospel Shoes (Vs. 15).
 - The Shield of Faith (Vs. 16)
 - The Helmet of Salvation (Vs. 17a).
 - The Sword of the Spirit (Vs. 17b).
 - The Weapon of All Prayer (Vs. 18-20)
3. Each piece of armour must be consciously applied – “put on” (Vs. 14); “take unto you” (Vs. 13).
4. In this sermon we will consider the first three pieces of weaponry in the list.

I. THE BELT OF TRUTH (VS. 14A)

A. The Priority of the Belt

1. It is of significance that the girdle of truth is what is first mentioned. The belt was an essential part of the soldier's armour as it helped hold in place the other pieces. Expositors writes, “Passing round the loins and by the end of the breastplate (in later times supporting the sword), it was of especial use in keeping other parts in place, and in securing the proper soldierly attitude and freedom of movement.”
2. The ‘loins’ are the waist area, the middle of the body and the center of movement. The truth is to occupy a central position in the soldier's armament.

B. The Practice of the Belt

How do we put on the belt of truth in the Christian life? We need to...

1. Know the Truth
 - a. Ignorance of the truth leaves me vulnerable to spiritual defeat. It also means I will not be effective in the use of the other weapons as the truth is our Divine instruction manual that informs us on the nature and use of the other parts of the armour. “Let not any one imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness if his mind is stored with his own theories, or with the speculations of other men.” (Hodge)
 - b. The believer needs to make familiarity with the truth the foremost priority of his Christian walk. The Bible is to be our passion! We need to:

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- i. Read the Word – “Till I come, give attendance to reading...” (1 Tim. 4:13). See also Neh. 8:18 & 9:3.
 - ii. Mediate on the Word – Josh. 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt **meditate** therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Psalm 1:1-3 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he **meditate** day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”
 - iii. Memorize the Word – Psalm 119:11 “Thy word have I **hid in mine heart**, that I might not sin against thee.”
 - iv. Study the Word – 2 Tim. 2:15 “**Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
 - v. Hear the Word – Rev. 2:11 “He that hath an ear, let him **hear** what the Spirit saith unto the churches...” It is vital you not only study the Word in your personal life but that you make it your number 1 priority each week to get to as many church services as you physically can. The church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15) and you need to be under its influence as it is preached more than once a week!
 - vi. Fellowship in the Word – Acts 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and **fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (See also 1 John 1:7)
 - vii. Live the Word – James 1:22 “But be ye **doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
2. Live the Truth
- a. The picture of the loins girded is a figure used in the Scripture to describe an attitude of readiness. The picture therefore indicates that the soldier is equipped with the truth and ready for the battle.
 - b. The girdle held the sword. Unless we practice the truth, we cannot use the Word of truth. Knowledge of the truth on its own does not bring power. The truth needs to be applied to our daily lives.
 - c. James 1:22 “But be ye **doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
 - d. Alexander Maclaren: “God’s truth must be received and its power submitted to, if it is to implant in us the supreme grace of perfect truthfulness. Our minds and hearts must be saturated with it by many an hour of solitary reflection, by meditation which will diffuse its aroma like a fragrant perfume through our characters, and by the habit of bringing all circumstances,

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moods, and desires to be tested by its infallible criterion, and by the un-reluctant acceptance of its guidance at every moment of our lives.”

II. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (VS. 14B)

The ancient breastplate was “a coat of mail or scale plates that covered the trunk or chest. In Paul’s time it was probably a metal plate worn over a leather jerkin or a coat of mail to protect the chest. Polybius, the Greek historian, wrote that the common soldier had a brass breastplate covering his chest to protect his heart, while wealthier soldiers had a coat of chain mail.” (Hoehner) The spiritual breastplate provided for the believer is righteousness. The breastplate symbolizes several truths:

A. The Positional Righteousness of the Believer

1. Practical holiness is rooted and grounded in our positional holiness. Salvation precedes sanctification. Imputed righteousness makes practical righteousness possible.
2. The righteousness of salvation is not a self-made or earned righteousness. It is not man’s own righteousness but God’s Divine righteousness which He gives the repentant, believing sinner. It is imputed righteousness. The Book of Romans deals extensively with this righteousness.
3. Paul’s own salvation testimony summarizes it perfectly in Philippians 3:8-9 “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness**, which is of the law, **but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.**”
4. Romans 10:9-10, 13 – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus...”

B. The Practical Righteousness of the Believer

1. Paul is speaking to those who are already saved – “my brethren” (Vs. 10) so this is not an exhortation to receive saving righteousness but an exhortation to live out sanctifying righteousness. Essentially Paul is saying “live right!” “Here Paul gathers up the whole sum of Christian character and conduct into one word.” (Maclaren)
2. “The righteousness here is not justifying righteousness given the believing sinner when he first believes, but sanctifying righteousness, the product of the Holy Spirit in the life of the yielded saint.” (Wuest)
3. Personal holiness is not a side note or a matter of personal preference in the Christian life. It is a key doctrine of New Testament Christianity.
4. 1 Peter 1:15 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy **in all manner of conversation;**”
5. 1 Thess. 4:7 “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto **holiness.**”

C. The Protective Righteousness of the Believer

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1. The breastplate shields the vital organs, most importantly, the heart. The heart represents the inner part of man, the mind and the seat of the affections. The mind and emotions are two areas where Satan most fiercely attacks us as believers.
2. Prov. 4:23 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”
3. Living in sin and spiritual compromise as a believer leaves my heart exposed and makes me susceptible to a knock out blow from the devil.
4. Someone has said, “When a man is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable. Words are no defense against accusation, but a good life is.” If our conscience is void of offense toward God and man, the devil has nothing to shoot at. (William Macdonald)

III. THE BOOTS OF THE GOSPEL (VS. 15)

The Gospel shoes speak of:

A. Our Standing in the Gospel

1. “feet shod” = the verb always means to bind or fasten under. Ancient sandals were bound on with straps. (Hoehner)
2. The ancient Roman sandals: “The Roman legionaries wore heavy sandals (caliga, a low half-boot) with soles made of several layers of leather averaging 2 centimeters (3/4 inch) thick, studded with hollow-headed hobnails. They were tied by leather thongs half-way up the shin and were stuffed with wool or fur in the cold weather. These were not running sandals but ones able to dig in with their hollow-headed hobnails and stand against the enemy.”¹
3. In the context of spiritual warfare, the primary truth in view is the shoes as being a part of the defensive armour provided the believer in his battle with principalities and powers. Now that we are saved, we stand in the assurance of our salvation in the face of the enemy’s attacks.
4. “preparation” = “in classical times the noun reflected the idea of “readiness” or “preparation”. The verb form means “to make ready, prepare.” (Hoehner) It means “preparedness; the state of mind of the man who is ready.” (Maclaren)
5. This state of readiness has its source in the gospel – “of the Gospel of peace”. We are in a state of readiness in the battle because we stand in our salvation. The truth of your salvation is what enables you to stand firm in the battle.
6. “the gospel **of peace**” = the good news that believers are at peace with God. By responding to the Gospel in repentance and faith, we are brought into a state of peace with God. We have the peace of our salvation in the midst of spiritual warfare.
 - a. Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

¹ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, Cited by Harold Hoehner (Bible Commentator), p. 842.

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- b. Col. 1:20 “And, having made **peace** through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.”
7. “It is the believer’s “surefootedness” in the tranquillity of the mind and security of the heart in the gospel of peace that gives them readiness to stand against the devil and his angelic host.”
(Hoehner)

B. Our Walking in Accordance with the Gospel

1. As Christian soldiers, our walk/conduct needs to be consistent with the Gospel. We are to be a witness both by our lives and our lips.
2. Php. 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it **becometh** the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;” The word ‘becometh’ is the same word translated ‘worthy’ in Eph. 4:1. We are to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel message we profess to believe.

C. Our Proclaiming of the Gospel

1. While the context primarily deals with the Gospel shoes as being a part of our defensive armour against the attacks of Satan, the importance of being ready and prepared to share the Gospel is certainly a valid application of the text.
2. Soul-winning Christians tend to be stronger and sharper spiritually as they are actively involved in the battle against principalities and powers for the souls of men. “The most victorious Christian is a witnessing Christian.” (Wiersbe)
3. Isaiah 52:7 “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that **publisheth peace**; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”
4. Romans 10:15 “...as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach **the gospel of peace**, and bring glad tidings of good things!”
5. Song 7:1 “**How beautiful are thy feet with shoes**, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs *are* like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.”
6. Macdonald: “This suggests a readiness to go out with the good news of peace, and therefore an invasion into enemy territory. When we relax in our tents, we are in deadly peril. Our safety is to be found in following the beautiful feet of the Saviour on the mountains, bearing glad tidings and publishing peace (Is. 52:7; Rom. 10:13).”

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? Have you made peace with God by accepting His offer of salvation through the Gospel?
2. Christian, which piece of the armour are you neglecting?

The Weapons of our Warfare (Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 6:16-17

Introduction:

1. In this section we have a piece-by-piece description of the armour we have been provided for the battle. God has given us 7 powerful weapons to use in spiritual warfare so that we might stand for Him.
 - The Belt of Truth (Vs. 14a).
 - The Breastplate of Righteousness (Vs. 14b).
 - The Gospel Shoes (Vs. 15).
 - The Shield of Faith (Vs. 16)
 - The Helmet of Salvation (Vs. 17a).
 - The Sword of the Spirit (Vs. 17b).
 - The Weapon of All Prayer (Vs. 18-20)
2. Each piece of armour must be consciously applied – “put on” (Vs. 14); “take unto you” (Vs. 13).
3. In this sermon we will consider the next three pieces of weaponry in the list.

I. THE SHIELD OF FAITH (VS. 16)

Historical background: At the time there were two main shields used by the Roman soldier. One was a small shield strapped on the arm with leather straps for close hand combat to ward off the blows of the enemy. The other was a large, oblong (rectangular) shaped shield, 4 ft high by 2.5ft broad (Polybuis), curved on the inner side and designed to be held in front of the soldier and thus protect the whole body. The outer surface was covered first with canvas and then with calf skin. On the centre front there was an iron boss that would cause most stones and heavy arrows to glance off. The edges of the shield were designed to be able to interlock with fellow soldiers so as to form a defensive front line. This larger shield is what is in view.

A. The Priority of the Shield (Vs. 16a)

1. “above all” = indicates that this piece of weaponry is of particular importance. It speaks of the primacy of faith in the Christian soldier’s life.
2. The Christian life starts in faith and must continue in faith. It is a walk of faith from start to finish. Our faith needs to be continually growing – “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that **your faith growth exceedingly...**” (2 Thess. 1:3).
3. Heb. 11:6 “But **without faith it is impossible to please him:** for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

B. The Principle of the Shield (Vs. 16b)

1. The Definition of Faith
 - a. “shield **of faith**” = faith is the principle of the shield. There are a lot of airy-fairy ideas about faith in our world so it is important to get a handle on what the word means in Scripture.

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- b. The word faith comes from the Greek word 'pistis'. It occurs 244 times in the New Testament and at its core means 'trust', 'confidence' and 'reliance.' It is translated 'assurance' in Acts 17:31 – "he hath given **assurance** unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - c. Faith is "primarily, firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing and is used in the N.T. always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual." This is distinct to human faith "which consists of an opinion held in good faith without necessary reference to its proof. The object of Abraham's faith was not God's promise (that was the occasion of its exercise); his faith rested on God Himself." (Vine's Expository Dictionary)
 - d. Consider some illustrations of faith in relation to our salvation to help us better understand what it means:
 - i. Faith is the hand that receives – John 1:12 "But as many as **received** him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that **believe** on his name." This verse makes it plain that believing involves more than just an acceptance of facts in my heart, as important as that aspect of believing is. To know the facts of what Christ has done for me in my mind is not enough. I must receive Christ into my heart.
 - ii. Faith is the eye that looks - John 3:14-15 "And **as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness**, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (Num. 21:8 – Look and live). Isaiah 45:22 "**Look unto me**, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else." Salvation comes by looking to Christ, and Christ alone. Not by looking to a church or a religious system, not by looking to a religious practice or ritual but by looking to Christ and Christ alone.
 - iii. Faith is the heart that rests – Acts 16:31 "And they said, **Believe on** the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Just as one trusts in a chair for support because it is trustworthy, so one trusts in God's gracious salvation because God is reliable and trustworthy. Illustration: When John Paton was translating the Bible for a South Seas Island tribe, he discovered that they had no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary's house, flopped himself in a large chair and said, "It's good to rest my whole weight on this chair." "That's it," said Paton. "I'll translate faith as 'resting one's whole weight on God.'"
2. The Direction of Faith
- a. Christian faith has an object. It is not faith in faith or faith in a feeling but faith directed towards God.
 - b. The power of the shield of faith is on account of the fact it represents faith in God Himself. Our faith is not in our own faith for protection. Remember, this whole section starts with the

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exhortation to “be strong **in the Lord**, and in the power of **his might**.”

- c. Repeatedly in the O.T., God is called our shield. For example:
 - i. Gen. 15:1 “After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy **shield**, and thy exceeding great reward.”
 - ii. Ps. 3:3 “But thou, O LORD, *art* a **shield** for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”
 - iii. Ps. 84:11 “For the LORD God *is* a sun and **shield**: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”
- d. 1 John 5:4 “...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

C. The Protection of the Shield (Vs. 16c)

1. The Completeness of the Protection – “**all** the fiery darts”
 - a. “ye shall be able” = there is personal responsibility to exercise faith in God. Faith equips us to meet the devil’s attacks.
 - b. “all the fiery darts” = every dart from the evil can be defeated with the shield of faith. “Faith is mightier than the mightiest assaults of the devil” (Maclaren)
 - c. Remember, Paul is not just addressing the individual but the whole church of Ephesus. An individual’s faith is powerful in combating the attacks against his life but locking our shields together as a church body is absolutely vital in combating the attacks that come against the church as a whole.
2. The Character of the Protection
 - a. ‘quench’ = to put out, extinguish. The ancient shield was covered with tough leather and metal plates which could deflect the darts. It was also a common practice to dip the shields in water before battle to help extinguish the flaming missiles.
 - b. ‘fiery darts’ = “In the N.T. times the tips of arrows would often be wrapped in pieces of cloth that had been soaked in pitch. The pitch burned fiercely, and on impact it would spatter burning bits for several feet, igniting anything flammable it touched.” (Macarthur) These arrows had the potential to not only pierce the enemy’s body but also to burn him and set things ablaze (e.g., the enemies’ clothing, camp or homes). They were probably one of the most formidable offensive weapons of Paul’s day. These darts are the temptations the devil hurls against us, the ‘wiles’ mentioned in Vs. 11.
 - c. Satan has multitudes of well-crafted arrows to fire at God’s people and he knows that in each of us, there is plenty of dry fuel for his arrows to get a fire blazing if he can get one past the shield of faith. The dynamite of the self-life is very explosive! You are a walking bomb, ready to explode anytime but for the grace of God. There are three main categories of temptation the devil uses – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Within each of those categories, he has a large supply of different arrows to use. I like to think of it as the devil having 3 quivers; one called the lust of the flesh,

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one the lust of the eyes and one the pride of life and within each of those quivers he has a large range of different arrows to fire at God's people. And remember, he has lots of archers around ready to help fire those arrows (Vs. 12)! To illustrate, there is:

- i. The Burning Arrow of Lustful thoughts. Many of these come to us through no fault of our own but some believers are careless enough to make themselves available for target practice with their approach to the world's media.
 - ii. The Burning Arrow of Bitterness.
 - iii. The Burning Arrow of Covetousness.
 - iv. The Burning Arrow of Doubt.
 - v. The Burning Arrow of Pride.
 - vi. The Burning Arrow of Division.
 - vii. The Burning Arrow of Anger.
 - viii. There are many others but remember, Satan has a dart with your name on it and if one doesn't work, he will try another one. We have a vicious, determined foe who will not relent in his attacks until we are safely home in heaven. The Christian life is a battle field and a war zone from start to finish.
 - ix. Maclaren: "There are things in us all to which the fiery darts do especially appeal: desires, appetites, passions; or – to use the word which refined people are so afraid of, although the Bible is not, 'lusts – which war against the soul,' and which need only a touch of fire to flare up like a tar-barrel, in thick foul smoke darkening the heavens. There are fiery darts that strike these animal natures of ours, and set them all aflame."
- d. Arrows fly **swiftly** and **suddenly** and that is how Satan attacks. That is why the shield of faith must be ready and in place as the attack tends to come when it is not expected. "Evil tempts us because it comes to us, for the most part, without any beat of drum or blast of trumpet to say that it is coming, and to put us upon our guard. The batteries that do most harm to the advancing force are masked until the word of command is given, and then there is a flash from every cannon's throat and a withering hail of shot that confounds by its unexpectedness as well as kills by its blow. The fiery darts that light up the infernal furnace in a man's heart, and that smite him all unawares and unsuspecting, these are the weapons that we have to fear most." (Maclaren)

II. THE SALVATION HELMET (VS. 17A)

A. The Area the Helmet Protects

1. "Some helmets were made of thick leather covered with metal plates and others of heavy molded or beaten metal. They usually had cheek pieces to protect the face. The helmet protected the soldier not only against the arrows but also against weapons such as the broadsword often wielded by cavalymen who would swing at

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the heads of enemy soldiers so split their skulls or decapitate them.”
(Macarthur)

2. The helmet protects the mind of the believer which tends to be the epicenter of the spiritual battle. How the devil loves to launch his darts into our minds!

B. The Assurance the Helmet Provides

1. It is the “helmet of **salvation**” and thus speaks of the assurance of our salvation. “With his head protected, the soldier feels safe in the midst of the battle. Likewise, the believers’ possession of salvation gives them confidence of safeness during the assaults of the devil.” (Hoehner) “That which enables the Christian to hold up his head with confidence and joy, is the fact that he is saved.” (Hodge)
2. Satan loves to make us doubt our salvation because it has a way of crippling you so that you are out of the fight. So long as you are entertaining burning doubts about your salvation, you will do little in the way of spiritual warfare.
3. The promises of God’s Word in relation to our salvation provide constant protection in the battle against the devil’s darts. There are many verses on the eternal security of the believer we could consider but since we are in Ephesians, let’s remind ourselves of the words of assurance it provides concerning our salvation:
 - a. Eph. 1:13-14 “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**, Which is the **earnest of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” The word ‘earnest’ means down payment, deposit, pledge.
 - b. Eph. 4:30 “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby **ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**”
 - c. Remember, not only were we sealed by the Spirit of God, but we were chosen, predestinated to adoption, accepted in the beloved, redeemed and forgiven through his blood.

III. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (VS. 17B)

The sword mentioned here was the Roman short sword. “The double-edged blade was two inches (5 centimeters) wide and two feet (60 centimeters) long and was admirably suitable as a cut-and-thrust weapon for close work. It was placed in a sheath attached to the girdle high on the right side of the body so it would be clear of his shield-bearing left arm and not become entangled with his legs.” (Hoehner) It was the kind of sword carried by the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus in the Garden (Matt. 26:47), wielded by Peter when he cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant (Vs. 51) and used to put James to death (Acts 12:2). There are two truths given concerning the Christian soldier’s sword:

A. It is a Supernatural Sword – “of the Spirit”

1. The Spirit Inspired the Word
 - a. This is why the Bible is so powerful. It is Divine in its origin.

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- b. 2 Tim. 3:16 “All scripture *is* given by **inspiration of God**, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”
 - c. 2 Pet. 1:21 “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were **moved by the Holy Ghost.**”
 - d. John Wesley: “The Bible must have been written by God or good men or bad men or good angels or bad angels. But bad men and bad angels would not write it because it condemns bad men and bad angels. And good men and good angels would not deceive by lying about its authority and claiming that God wrote it. And so the Bible must have been written as it claims to have been written – by God who by His Holy Spirit inspired men to record His words using the human instrument to communicate His truth.”
2. The Spirit Enlightens in the Word (John 16:13)
 3. The Spirit Enables to use the Word
 4. **Warning!** Watch out for the substitute swords that abound today. Stick with the tried and tested Sword, the KJV Bible.

B. It is a Sharp Sword – “which is the word of God”

Hebrews 4:12 says “the Word of God is quick (meaning alive), and powerful (meaning energy), and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The Word of God is sharp with penetrating power for the spiritual conflict we find ourselves in. It is...

1. Sharp for Offensive Maneuvers
 - a. The sword is an offensive weapon with which to go on attack. Napoleon once said, “the best form of defense is attack.”
 - b. Public preaching and personal soul-winning are examples of offensive uses of the Sword. The Sword of the Spirit is able to cut and pierce the hardest of hearts. It cuts through the lies of the devil in false religion and pagan philosophies (e.g., atheism, humanism etc...).
 - c. There is nothing more powerful in this world than the Word of God and the Gospel message it proclaims. Whenever you wield the sword of the Spirit, something happens!
2. Sharp for Defensive Maneuvers
 - a. In the context of this passage, the defensive use of the sword is what is primarily in view. It enables the believer to stand firm in the midst of Satanic warfare. We use the sword to strike down and parry the thrusts of the enemy against us.
 - b. Illustration: Christ’s use of the sword to defeat the 3-fold attack of Satan – “it is written”.
 - i. The Lust of the Flesh – “And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that **it be made bread**. And Jesus answered him, saying, **It is written**, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Lk. 4:3-4)

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- ii. The Lust of the Eyes – “And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**” (Lk. 4:5-8)
 - iii. The Pride of Life – “And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, **It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.** And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.” (Lk. 4:9-13)
3. Challenge: A soldier needs to know his sword and be practiced and skilled in its use in order to be effective in the battle. Too many believers hardly know their sword! Too many believers have their hands too full of worldly trash to grasp the sword they have received.
 4. The Scottish pastor and writer Thomas Guthrie said, “The Bible is an armoury of heavenly weapons, a laboratory of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth. It is a guidebook for every road, a chart for every sea, a medicine for every malady, a balm for every wound. Rob us of our Bible and our sky has lost its sun.”

Conclusion:

1. In a very real sense, the “whole armour of God” is a picture of Jesus Christ. Christ is the truth (John 14:6); He is our righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) and our peace (Eph. 2:14). His faithfulness makes our faith possible (Gal. 2:20); He is our salvation (Luke 2:30); He is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14) and He is the Mighty Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25). When you got saved you received the Christ of God and therefore you have every resource needed to make it in the spiritual warfare you find yourself in.
2. Are you saved? Have you put your faith in Christ and Christ alone for your salvation?
3. Christian, which piece of the armour are you neglecting in your life right now? Are you growing in your faith? Do you have assurance of salvation or are you plagued with doubts? How well do you know your sword?

Prayer: The Believer's Secret Weapon

Text: Ephesians 6:18-20 (also Colossians 4:2-4)

Introduction:

1. Prayer is as vital to the Christian soldier in the battle as all the other pieces of armor. In fact, it is arguably the key piece of the soldier's armor as without it, the other pieces are largely powerless. "Put on the Gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer."
2. Prayer is the most powerful weapon in the Christian's arsenal. A soldier can have superb equipment but without strength and energy to use it, it will help him little. Prayer is what links the believer with the strength of God (Vs. 10). "He is but a soldier in semblance (appearance) who wears arms without the courage and the strength to use them." (Expositors Bible)
3. In this message we will study this great exhortation on prayer as well as a brief overview of the conclusion the Epistle.
4. To use the weapon of prayer effectively we need the following four qualities:

The first quality we need is...

I. Persistence in Prayer (Vs. 18a)

A. Regularity – "praying always"

1. The idea is "in all seasons". This does not mean "always saying prayers" as we are not heard for our "much speaking" (Matt. 6:7) but that our prayers are constant and regular. "...continuing instant in prayer." (Rom. 12:12) It means "always be in communion with the Lord. Keep the receiver off the hook!" (Wiersbe)
2. "At no time dare we break contact with God. The enemy watches for prayerlessness in our lives and then takes advantage." (Strauss)
3. We are exhorted to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). The phrase "without ceasing" means "constantly, repeatedly" and was used of the Jewish Historian Josephus to describe the "the constant pounding of a battering ram against a city wall."
4. Ravenhill (Why Revival Tarries):

"No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying...Poverty-stricken as the Church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of prayer. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few prayers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere."

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5. Praying always in all places (e.g., at home, at church, at work)
Praying always at all times (morning, throughout the day, evening, wakeful hours at night).
6. Praying always with “all prayer” (every kind of prayer. e.g., intercessory, thanksgiving, petition).
7. Praying with ‘supplication’. The word means “petition, request, entreaty. It comes from the root word meaning “to plead, beg”. “For the most part in the N.T. it refers to specific petitions made to God.” (Hoehner)

B. Importunity – “with all perseverance” (Vs. 18c)

1. ‘perseverance’ = “to give constant attention or care to a thing” (Expositors). It means “constancy, diligence, persistence.” The word was used to describe someone who “diligently remained at his work.” In simple terms it means “to stick to it and don’t quit!”
2. The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-7) encourages us in this important aspect of persistent praying (See also Luke 11:8-13).
3. Rom. 12:12 “...continuing **instant** in prayer;” The word ‘instant’ means “to be earnest towards, to persevere” (Strong). It means “Pressing; urgent; importunate; earnest.”
4. Note: This persistence in prayer is not required to force the hand of an unwilling God. “Prayer is not getting man’s will done in heaven; it is getting God’s will done on earth.” (Robert Law) Often God has a purpose He is working in us during that time of waiting. Waiting refines our prayers and also causes us to search our hearts.
5. E.M. Bounds:

“Without continuance the prayer may go unanswered. Importunity is made up of the ability to hold on, to press on, to wait with unrelaxed and unrelaxable grasp, restless desire and restful patience. Importunate prayer is not an incident, but the main thing, not a performance but a passion, not a need but a necessity. Prayer in its highest form and grandest success assumes the attitude of a wrestler with God. It is the contest, trial and victory of faith; **a victory not secured from an enemy, but from Him who tries our faith that He may enlarge it: that tests our strength to make us stronger...** There is neither encouragement nor room in Bible religion for feeble desires, listless efforts, lazy attitudes; all must be strenuous, urgent, ardent. Inflamed desires, impassions, unwearied insistence delight Heaven. God would have His children incorrigibly in earnest and persistently bold in their efforts...Our whole being must be in our praying; like John Know, we must say and feel, “Give me Scotland, or I die.” (Purpose in Prayer P. 46)

6. Illustration: The example of the early church
 - a. Acts 1:14 “These all **continued** with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”
 - b. Acts 2:42 “And they **continued steadfastly** in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Corporate prayer in focus in this verse.

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- c. Acts 6:4 “But we will give ourselves **continually to prayer**, and to the ministry of the Word.” Testimony of the Apostles.
- d. Acts 12:5 “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made **without ceasing** of the church unto God for him.” Their prayers unlocked the prison gates for Peter!

The second quality we need is...

II. Power in Prayer (Vs. 18b)

A. The Spirit's Enabling – power

1. Jude 1:20 “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost.**”
2. Romans 8:26-27 “Likewise **the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities**: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”
 - a. ‘helpeth’ = means to lend a hand together with, to take hold with another, to come to the aid of someone. Same word used of Martha in Luke 10:40 where she desires ‘help’ from Mary.
 - b. ‘infirmities’ = weaknesses (note plural. They are many in number!).
 - c. “we know not” = specific weakness in view. In our trials and struggles, we so often are ignorant of how we are to pray. Sometimes the Lord has to say to us as He did to James and John, “Ye know not what ye ask.” (Matt. 20:22)
3. Challenge: If we are grieving the Holy Spirit in our lives through carnal and worldly living, then that will have a devastating impact on our prayer lives (Eph. 4:30).

B. The Spirit's Leading – direction

Our prayers can be energized from one of two sources:

1. From Self – these will not be answered (James 4:3).
2. From the Spirit – these will be answered as they will be in line with God's will as revealed in the Word of God (1 John 5:14).

The third quality we need is...

III. Perception in Prayer (Vs. 18c)

A. To be Watchful is to be Awake

1. ‘watch’ = means to be awake, alert, vigilant.

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2. Matthew 26:41 – Christ exhorted Peter, James and John to “watch and pray” Instead of heeding this command, they slept (Matt. 26:43).
3. Our hearts and minds need to be engaged when we pray. This can be a challenge in both personal prayer times and in church prayer meetings. How often we battle wandering thoughts when we try to pray.
4. John Phillips writes, “In prayer we battle wandering thoughts. My prayer for Aunt Susie reminds me of her cat. Thoughts of the cat remind me that Jim said there was a mouse in his office. That reminds me to get a mousetrap at the hardware store. The hardware store reminds me of the camera shop next-door and the roll of film I took in to be developed, and so on. Several minutes later I realize that I haven’t been praying; I have been daydreaming. The enemy has been busy.”

B. To be Watchful is to be Alert

1. Remember the context is spiritual warfare. This is military language! The soldier must be on the alert for the movements of the enemy. If you are not alert, you will not see the dangers and thus see no need to pray. Our prayerlessness is connected to spiritual sleepiness.
2. This speaks of a prayer life that is coupled with a spirit of discernment as to where the enemy is moving. When we learn to be watchful for the enemy, then we can meet his advances with the weapon of prayer. “Watching sights the enemy; praying fights the enemy”. (Phillips)
3. Illustration: Nehemiah 4:7-9 “But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. **Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.**”
4. The presence of a watchman in battle is a deterrent to the enemy. But when there are no watchmen on the wall, he will quickly exploit this to his advantage with devastating effect.

The fourth quality we need is...

IV. Purpose in Prayer (Vs. 18d-20)

Not only are we instructed when to pray and how to pray, we are also instructed for whom we should pray.

A. Pray for God’s People (Vs. 18d)

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1. While we are to pray for the lost (Rom. 10:1; 1 Tim. 2:1-8), there is an even stronger emphasis in the N.T. upon praying for believers. Every day is “All Saints Day”! We are to pray for our fellow soldiers in the battle.
2. The high priestly prayer of our Lord Jesus (John 17) and the prayers of the Apostle Paul (e.g., Eph. 1:15-23; 2:14-19; Col. 1:9-14) are wonderful examples of the sort of things we should be praying for each other. The emphasis is not upon the carnal and the temporal. Our prayers tend to be centered around people’s health and wealth, the physical and the financial.

B. Pray for God’s Preachers (Vs. 19-20)

1. The Appeal for Prayer (Vs. 19a)
 - a. “And for me” = don’t lose the impact of these words. Who is speaking? This is the great Apostle Paul but he needs the prayers of ordinary people! Paul evidently believed in the power of intercessory prayer.
 - b. Challenge: If Paul needed the prayers of God’s people for the success of his Gospel ministry, how much more do we!
2. The Aim for Prayer (Vs. 19b-20)

There are two needs Paul wants them to pray for and each minister of the Gospel has these same two needs:

 - a. **Utterance** – the words to speak
 - i. ‘utterance’ = comes from Greek word ‘logos’ (word).
 - ii. “may be given unto me” = Paul views this as something that is given to him by God. “They must intreat on Paul’s behalf that the word he utters may be God’s and not his own.” (Expositors)
 - iii. “to make known the mystery of the Gospel” = the specific word of utterance Paul has in mind. He needs God’s help to unveil the riches of the Gospel.
 - iv. “for which I am an ambassador in bonds” = Paul is a prisoner in Rome, chained in a prison cell. And yet he still views himself as God’s ambassador for the Gospel. He asks not for deliverance from prison but for God’s enablement that he might be a dynamic witness.
 - b. **Uction** – the boldness to speak.
 - i. ‘ambassador’ = “An ambassador is one through whom a sovereign speaks” (Hodge). Even in prison, Paul was still Christ’s ambassador.
 - ii. “that I may open my mouth boldly...that therein I may speak boldly” (Vs. 19 & 20)
 - iii. ‘boldly’ means to have “freedom in speaking; unreservedness in speech”. To have boldness is to have liberty. 2 Thess. 3:1 “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that

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the word of the Lord may have **free course**, and be glorified, even as it is with you.” Note: “free course” comes from the Greek word “to run” and was used of runners in a race course. The picture is of the Word of God moving swiftly and powerfully.

- iv. ‘boldly’ means to have confidence in speaking. Boldness is not brashness nor is it self-confidence. It is a Divinely given ability to speak the Word of God plainly and unashamedly.

c. Illustration: The ministry of C.H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon wrote the following in his autobiography: “When I came to New Park Street Chapel, it was but a mere handful of people to whom I first preached, yet I can never forget how earnestly they prayed. Sometimes they seemed to plead as though they could really see the Angel of the covenant present with them, and as if they must have a blessing from Him. More than once, we were all so awe-struck with the solemnity of the meeting, that we sat silent for some moments while the Lord’s power appeared to overshadow us; and all I could do on such occasions was to pronounce the Benediction, and say, “Dear friends, we have had the Spirit of God here very manifestly tonight; let us go home, and take care not to lose His gracious influences.” Then down came the blessing; the house was filled with hearers, and many souls were saved. I always give all the glory to God, but I do not forget that He gave me the privilege of ministering from the first to a praying people. We had prayer-meetings in New Park Street that moved our very souls. Every man seemed like a crusader besieging the New Jerusalem, each on appeared determined to storm the Celestial City by the might of intercession, and soon the blessing came upon us in such abundance that we had not room to receive it.”

A.T. Pierson, who ministered at the Tabernacle during Spurgeon’s last illness, said, “This Metropolitan Tabernacle is a house of prayer most emphatically ... prayer is almost ceaselessly going up. When one meeting is not in progress, another is. ... There are prayer meetings before preaching, and others after preaching. ... No marvel that Mr. Spurgeon’s preaching has been so blessed. He himself attributes it mainly to the prevailing prayers of his people”

V. Paul’s Parting Words (Vs. 21-24)

There is a...

A. Conclusion (Vs. 21-22)

1. Tychicus’ Description (Vs. 21a)
 - a. A beloved brother in the Lord – Tychicus was a native of Asia (Acts 20:4), possibly Ephesus, but most importantly he was a brother in Christ. How precious is the family of God. So deep are the bonds we share in Christ that it is not uncommon for a Christian brother to be closer than a blood brother. In the Christian church the older men are like fathers, the older women like mothers, the young men like brothers and the young women like sisters.
 - b. A faithful minister in the Lord – the word ‘minister’ means servant. We don’t know a lot about Tychicus but what the Bible does reveal is that he was a faithful servant of the Lord. He carried 5 letters for the Apostle (Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, 2 Timothy & Titus) and relieved Timothy (2 Tim. 4:12) and likely Titus (Tit. 3:12). He was one of those dear

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brothers, available to help the preacher do his job! Paul wouldn't be the preacher he needs to be without faithful men like Tychicus to help him. God calls some men to pioneer the work and lead out in front but he calls others into a ministry of support to such men. Both roles are of equal importance in the work of God. How we need more men like Tychicus in the local church! Men who are faithful, dependable and available.

2. Tychicus' Mission (Vs. 21b-22)

a. To inform the saints

- i. Historical snapshot: "Until this time papyri letters were sent by a relay of several messengers. However, in the first century, Augustus changed the Roman postal system from relays by messengers to a single messenger who would personally deliver the letter. Therefore, the delivery by Tychicus was in keeping with this newer method for the delivery of messages, enabling the recipients to receive first-hand information about the sender from the messenger, as indeed was the case here." (Hoehner)
- ii. 'affairs' = lit. "the things concerning me". Tychicus would bring news to the church concerning Paul's situation. Paul was a knowable man who was happy to share details of his personal trial with the saints.
- iii. Be a real and knowable Christian. This doesn't mean there won't be some things in your life that must be kept personal but some people won't let you into their lives at all. The door is shut and bolted if not on their actual homes, in their approach to the brethren in the local church.
- iv. While we are not to complain as Christians, we are to share one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).

b. To comfort the saints

- i. 'hearts' = the seat of the emotions. The brethren at Ephesus were likely concerned about Paul's welfare and an encouraging report from Tychicus would help lift their spirits. They were probably suffering persecution for their faith and experiencing distress of heart. The letter from Paul, packed with spiritual truth would encourage and strengthen them in their faith.
- ii. 'comfort' = to come alongside, to encourage. Same word used as title of the Holy Spirit who is the Comforter.

B. Benediction (Vs. 23-24)

1. Peace to the brethren (Vs. 23)
2. Grace to the brethren (Vs. 24)

Conclusion: Have you grown tired and weary of prayer? Press on to victory and keep on praying! Do you pray for God's servants? Do you pray for your pastor?