

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
Ephesians

... an apostle of Jē'-sūs Christ by the
of God, to the saints which are at
ūs, and to the faithful in Christ Jē'-
... peace, from God our
... the Lord Jē'-sūs Christ,
... the God and Father of our
... Christ, who hath blessed us with
... blessings in heavenly places in
... as he hath chosen us in him
... undation of the world, that we
... ly and without blame before
... destined us unto the adop-
... by Jē'-sūs Christ to himself,
... e good pleasure of his will,
... ise of the glory of his
... e hath made us accepted in
... have redemption through
... tiveness of sins, according
... grace;
... h abounded toward us in
... dence;
... own unto us the mystery
... g to his good pleasure
... sed in himself:
... sation of the fulness of
... r together in one all
... which are in heaven, *us*
... ; *even* in him:
... ave obtained an in-
... inated according to
... worketh all
... vn will

... raised him from the dead, and set him at his
own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power,
and might, and dominion, and every name
that is named, not only in this world, but also
in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all things under his feet,
and gave him to be the head over all things to
the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him
that filleth all in all.

2 AND you hath he quickened, who were
dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according
to the course of this world, according to the
prince of the power of the air, the spirit that
now worketh in the children of disobedi-
ence:
3 Among whom also we all had our con-
versation in times past in the lusts of our
flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of
the mind; and were by nature the children
of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his
great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace
ye are saved);
6 And hath raised us up together
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace
ye are saved);
7 That in the

ephesians

THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN

A STUDY ON PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
(adapted from the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)



SERMON

- 01 THE CALL OF GOD (EPH.1:1-2)
- 02 THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (I) - ELECTION (EPH. 1:3-4)
- 03 THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (II) - ADOPTION AND REDEMPTION (EPH. 1:5-7)
- 04 THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (III) - DIVINE WISDOM (EPH. 1:8-10)
- 05 THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (IV) - INHERITANCE AND HOLY SPIRIT (EPH. 1:11-14)
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- 07 THE POWER OF GOD (EPH. 1:19-23)

THE CALL OF GOD (EPHESIANS 1:1-2)



INTRODUCTION

A. THE CITY OF EPHESUS

In the early days, the city of Ephesus was one of the most important city along the coast of Asia Minor. The city was at the crossroads of one of the main highways of Asia Minor. Ephesus was known for its natural harbor as well as the rich, fertile land that covered the inland area.

Endowed with a natural harbour, Ephesus became a very successful commercial city. However, in the middle of the first century, the harbor had silted up so badly that trade had declined.

Ephesus was also infamous for the temple of Diana, or Artemis, which was there.

The religion of Diana was promoted by a host of priestesses, and the worship of Diana was marked by gross immorality. The cult of Diana also led a flourishing idol-producing industry. This accounts for the guild of silversmiths (Acts 19:24).

The neglect of its harbour and the immoral indulgence of the cult of Diana resulted in the collapse of Ephesus. The city of Ephesus, stricken with the cancer of sin, slowly wasted away. The disease of Ephesus proved mortal. The “lampstand” of Ephesus crumbled, and the light of Ephesus died out (see Rev. 2:1-7, esp. Rev. 2:5).

B. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

The church in Ephesus had a small beginning. When Paul visited Ephesus, he found only twelve believers in the city (Acts 19:7). Paul stayed at Ephesus for three months, but the Jews were hardened and refused to believe the Gospel. They also vehemently opposed the preaching of the Gospel, and Paul was forced to move the church into the school of a philosopher, Tyrannus. There he preached Christ for two whole years.

During this time, it is said that the church became a Gospel centre “so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10).

The Lord worked miracles through Paul in Ephesus and the church witnessed some amazing things. From these, Paul was able to reach the Ephesians. As Paul preached and God worked miracles, many believed, and the church grew mightily. The genuineness of the faith of believers was evidenced by the public burning of the religious paraphernalia of the cult of Diana.

THE CALL OF GOD (EPH. 1:1)

- **Paul was called by the will of God.**

There is no greater privilege in all the world than the privilege of being chosen to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.



Believers must do God's will (Matt. 12:50; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 6:6; James 4:15; 1 John 2:17; Ps. 40:8).

- **Paul was called to be an apostle.**

The word "apostle" [Gk: **apostolos**] refers to one called and sent forth on a very special mission. Paul's mission was to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to the world.



Christ needs messengers. Are you willing to be one? (John 15:16; Acts 26:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 Tim. 1:12).

- **Paul was possessed by Jesus Christ.**

Christ came to earth so that we can know Him personally and savingly. This thought so captured Paul's heart that he surrendered his life completely to Christ.



All to Christ, we surrender (Matt. 16:24; Mark 10:28; Luke 14:33; 18:29-30; Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Phil. 3:7-8; Prov. 23:26).

THE CHURCH OF GOD (EPH.1:2)

- **God calls believers to be saints.**

The word "saint" [Gk: **hagiois**] means set apart, consecrated, sacred, and holy.



Believers are saints in the sense that we have been given a new heart by God (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:17).



Believers are saints in the sense that we are set apart to live consecrated lives in this world (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:14-15).

- **God calls believers to be faithful.**

The word "faithful" [Gk: **pistois**] means a person who has placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Believers must be faithful (John 3:14-16, 36; 5:24; 11:25; 12:46; 20:31; Rom. 10:9).

- **God calls believers by His grace.**

Grace [Gk: **charis**] means all the favours and gifts of God.



God bestows upon believers spiritual grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7; Phil. 4:19; 1 Tim. 1:14).

Grace also means the favour of God showered upon undeserving sinners.



Grace is a free gift (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:4-5; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:4-5; Tit. 2:11-14).



Grace is the only way that sinners can be saved (Rom. 5:15; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2 Cor. 8:9; Tit. 3:6-7).

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (PART 1)

(EPHESIANS 1:3-4)

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (EPH. 1:3)

God is to be blessed because He has showered His people with manifold blessings.

- God's blessings are spiritual rather than material.
- God's blessings are eternal rather than temporal.
- God's blessings are found only in Christ. When a person believes in Christ, he is in Christ. To be in Christ is to believe in God's Son so much that God counts the person to be just like Christ: acceptable and worthy to be blessed with all the blessings of heaven.



THE BLESSING OF BEING CHOSEN (EPH. 1:4)

God has chosen us to be holy and blameless. Before the foundation of the world, God determined that He would have a people ...

- who would be “in Him”, that is, in His Son, Jesus Christ;
- who would be “holy and without blame”;
- who would live “before Him in love” - forever and ever.

A. GOD HAS CHOSEN US TO BE HOLY

The word “holy” means to be set apart and consecrated to God. It is the same word that is used for “saint” in Ephesians 1:1.



What does it mean to be holy? (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 15-16; 2 Pet. 3:11)

B. GOD HAS CHOSEN US TO BE BLAMELESS

The word “blameless” means to be free from sin; to be above reproach and without blemish; to be without fault and defilement.



What must we do, so that we can be blameless? (Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:21-22; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23; 2 Pet. 3:14)

Note that no believer can live a perfect and sinless life. The Christian’s perfection is in Christ and in Christ alone. Our only hope of ever living with God is to believe in Jesus Christ—believe so much that God will take our faith and count it as the righteousness of Christ.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (PART 2)

(EPHESIANS 1:5-7)

THE BLESSING OF ADOPTION (EPH. 1:5-6)

God has adopted us as His children. Considering the nature of who we are, this is an amazing privilege!



A. ADOPTION IS PREDESTINATED.

The word “predestinated” is also translated as “determined before” (Acts 4:28) and “ordained before” (1 Cor. 2:7).

Predestination means that nothing can stop God’s purpose for the believer. A believer may struggle through the sin and shame of this world; he may even stumble and fall, but in Christ, he will “neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace” (WCF, Chap. 17.1).



Predestination does not mean that the offer of the Gospel is therefore not genuine (John 3:16; Rom. 10:13; 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2).



The believer can rest in this blessed assurance (Eph. 1:4-5; 3:11-12; Phil. 1:6).

B. ADOPTION IS BY CHRIST ALONE.

“Adoption” means “to be placed as a child”. God accepts us because we believe and trust His Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29-30). God “hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

C. ADOPTION IS AT GOD'S PLEASURE AND FOR HIS GLORY.

Adoption is a divine initiative.



The believer therefore has nothing to boast (Deut. 7:6-8; Rom. 9:15-16).

THE BLESSING OF REDEMPTION (EPH. 1:7)

“Redemption” has the idea of deliverance or setting a man free by paying a ransom. The sinner is powerless to redeem himself.



A. THE CAUSES FOR BONDAGE

Sinners are under bondage of the following:



Sin (Rom. 3:23; 7:14)



Corruption of this world and death (Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 15:42; Gal. 6:8; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Pet. 2:12, 19).



Satan (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19)

B. THE MEANS OF DELIVERANCE

Sinners need to be delivered from the power and the penalty of sin, but we are unable to deliver ourselves. God alone can deliver sinners.



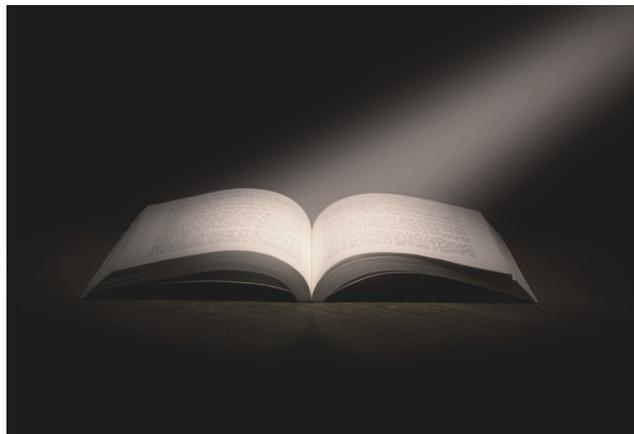
We are redeemed by the blood of Christ (Lev. 17:11; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Col. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:18; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4).

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (PART 3)

(EPHESIANS 1:8-10)

THE BLESSING OF DIVINE WISDOM (EPH. 1:8)

With deliverance from sin, God also gives the blessing of divine wisdom.



A. WISDOM

“Wisdom” means seeing, knowing and living out the truth. It is to see the problems of life, know the answers, and apply to life.



The wisdom of God is found only in Christ Jesus (Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; 2:9-16; Eph. 1:8; Phil. 2:5; Col. 2:3; James 1:5).

B. PRUDENCE

“Prudence” means understanding, insight, the ability to solve day to day problems. It is a down-to-earth practical understanding of things.



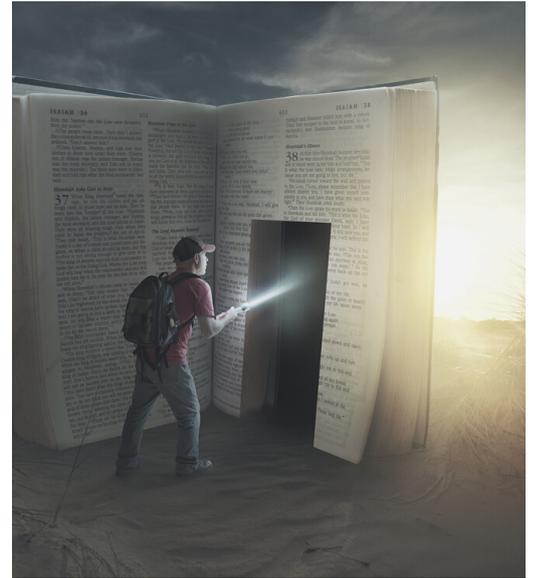
Prudence is having a renewed mind to think biblically (Eph. 1:17-18; Col. 1:9; 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:7; 1 John 5:20; Prov. 2:6; 8:14).

THE BLESSING OF KNOWING GOD'S WILL (EPH. 1:9-10)

God has revealed the mystery of His will to us. The word “mystery” as used in the Bible is not truth that is concealed and available only to a select few. The “mystery” in the Bible means that it is truth that can only be known by divine revelation.

A. GOD'S WILL FOR THE WORLD

God has an eternal purpose and plan for the world, and it is to gather all things in heaven and earth (Eph. 1:10). This implies a separation at the present moment, a separation that is due to sin.



B. GOD'S TIMING FOR THE WORLD

The “fulness of times” (Eph. 1:10) denotes that there is to be a consummation, a climax of history in which all things will be brought to a peaceful state under the authority of Jesus Christ.



At His appointed times, God will unfold His will that eventually leads to the redemption of the world (Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:4; 3:9-11; Phil. 2:9-11).

Paul uses the word “dispensation” [Gk: **oikonomia**] which means “household arrangement”.

C. GOD'S INSTRUMENTS OF RECONCILIATION FOR THE WORLD

Jesus Christ is God's appointed Head over the new creation and new order.



Christ is the head of the church and the new creation (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19). Christ is also the instrument of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19).



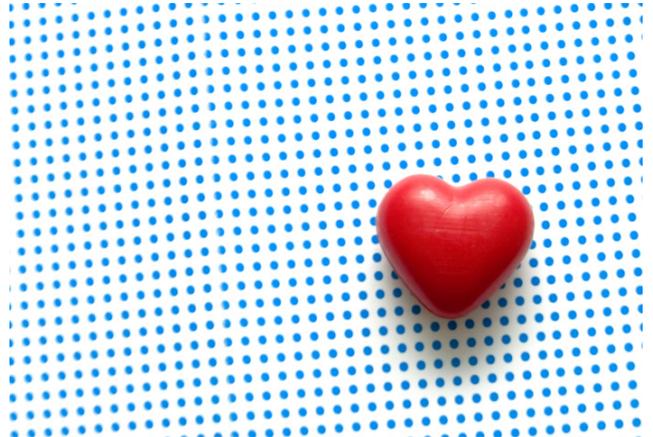
The church is also God's instrument of reconciliation. The church is to take Christ and His Gospel to the world (2 Cor. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:11-12).

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD (PART 4)

(EPHESIANS 1:11-14)

THE BLESSING OF INHERITANCE (EPH. 1:11-12)

God has given us an inheritance, meaning that we are made the heritage of God Himself.



A. PREDESTINED

God works all things out after the counsel of His own will. God's will is perfect.

B. PROMISED

"We should be ..." (Eph. 1:12). God takes the believer and makes him His own heritage and possession.



Regardless of the circumstances, we are God's cherished possession (Deut. 9:29; 32:9; Exod. 19:5; Ps. 135:4; Mal. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:9).

C. PURPOSE

The purpose God makes us His inheritance is so that we should exist "to the praise of His glory" (Eph 1:12).



The glory of God's eternal grace and love shown to the world in His Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:9).



God's love will be seen and glorified in His redeemed forever and ever. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever" (WSC, Question 1).

RECEIVING THE INHERITANCE (EPH. 1:13)

Paul states there are two requisites to receiving the inheritance.



A. HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

A person has to hear the Word of God before he can ever know the truth, the glorious gospel of salvation.



Without hearing the Gospel, no sinner can be saved (Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

B. TRUSTING IN THE SON OF GOD

Christ is the Living Word. A person has to believe in Christ in order to be saved.



Without faith in Christ, no sinner can be saved (John 5:24; Rom. 10:9-10).

THE BLESSING OF THE SPIRIT (EPH. 1:14)

God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit. The word “sealing” of the Holy Spirit guarantees the inheritance. The “earnest of our inheritance” is the guarantee of our inheritance.



We know that we are redeemed by the Holy Spirit who lives within us (Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6).

Testimony of Faith & Knowledge of God (Ephesians 1:15-18)



TESTIMONY OF THE EPHESIAN CHURCH (EPH. 1:15-16)

A. PAUL'S COMMENDATION FOR THE EPHESIANS

The Christian's testimony of faith in God is inextricably linked to his knowledge of God.

- Paul had heard about their faith in God's love.
- Paul had heard their great love for God's people.



Faith in God is demonstrated by telling others about the Gospel – the message of God's love and saving grace of Christ.



Love for saints is demonstrated by meeting the needs of other believers (Gal. 6:10).

B. PAUL'S DESIRE FOR THE EPHESIANS

The Christian life is never static. The Christian must continue to progress spiritually. Having heard of the testimony of faith and love of the believers, Paul desires and prays that they would continue to grow in the knowledge of God.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (EPH. 1:17-18)

Every believer must grow in knowledge and grace of God.

A. WHO IS THIS GOD?

The God we worship is not a figment of our imagination.

- The God we worship is the God whom our Lord Jesus Christ worshipped and prayed to while He was on earth.
- The God we worship is the Father of glory.

B. HOW DO WE KNOW THIS GOD?

Three things are essential if believers are to grow in the knowledge of God.

1. To grow in the knowledge of God, a believer must have the spirit of wisdom.

Wisdom is more than just knowledge. Wisdom can best be understood by the words **what** and **how**. Wisdom means knowing what something is, what is behind something, and what can be done. It is knowing how to use or relate to something.



To grow in the knowledge of God, you must hunger and thirst for the wisdom of God (Matt. 7:24; Col. 2:3; 2 Tim. 3:15; James 1:5; 3:17).

2. To grow in the knowledge of God, a believer must have the spirit of revelation.

The word “revelation” means “to manifest” or “to reveal”. Our knowledge of God is based on divine revelation, and it is the Holy Spirit who reveals God to us (John 14:26; John 16:12-15).



We must seek to have the truth of God revealed to us. This requires diligent study of the Word of God.

3. To grow in knowledge of God, a believer must have the eyes of his understanding enlightened.

The word “understanding” means “mind”. The Chinese translation renders it as “heart”. It means that a man’s mind/heart must be opened so that God’s truth can be seen and understood.



Worldly philosophies tell us to seek to know ourselves. Scriptures, on the other hand, calls on us to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ” (John 17:3).

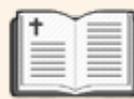


An open heart is the responsibility of both the believer and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit opens the heart of the person who seeks God (Acts 16:14; Ps. 18:28; 119:30).

C. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF KNOWING GOD?

1. A believer who knows God also knows the hope of God’s calling.

The believer’s hope is that one day we shall be like our Lord Jesus Christ, righteous and perfect, enabled to live in God’s presence, worshipping and serving Him forever and ever.



We are not perfect as yet, but one day when we see Christ, we shall be. Are you looking for and living in that hope? (Matt. 13:41; Rom. 8:16-17, 29-30; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2)

2. A believer who knows God also knows God’s inheritance.

Believers are promised the inheritance of God. And we are the inheritance of God. When we come to know God, we learn who we are—the glorious position God has given us.



Our inheritance is in heaven for us, and we are also kept by the power of God to enjoy that inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

Power of God (Ephesians 1:19-23)

POWER OF GOD

The power of God is exceeding great, and that power is to us-ward, meaning that God takes His power and avails it to the believer.



POWER OF GOD SEEN IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The resurrection of Christ shows that God has the power to give man a new life and the power to live a new life before Him (Acts 2:23-24; 3:14-15; 10:39-41; Rom. 1:4). When God raised Christ from the dead, it shows three important truths.

A. VICTORY OVER SIN AND DEATH

Christ's resurrection shows that God has the power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life.



Sin has no dominion over the believer (Rom. 6:14; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12:9).

B. NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Christ's resurrection shows believers can walk before God in newness of life.



Are you a new creature in Christ? Are you walking before God in newness of life? (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:24; Col. 2:6; 3:10; 1 John 2:6)

C. HOPE OF RESURRECTION

Christ's resurrection means that we will also be raised from the dead.



Because He lives, we shall live also (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:16-18).

POWER OF GOD SEEN IN THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

Believers will be exalted as Christ is exalted. Christ has been exalted above "all principality, and power, and might, and dominion" (Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 5:30-31).

A. CHRIST'S EXALTATION - HE SHALL RULE OVER ALL.

God gave Jesus Christ the authority to rule and reign over all.



In Christ, we will be exalted as well (John 14:2-3; Acts 7:55-56; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; Rev. 22:14).

B. CHRISTIAN'S EXALTATION - WE SHALL RULE WITH HIM.

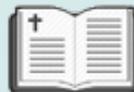
Christ's exaltation is seen in His reign over all creation. Our exaltation in Christ also means that we shall rule with Him.



In Christ, we shall reign with Him (Matt. 25:23, 34; Luke 19:17; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Heb. 6:5; James 2:5; Rev. 5:10; 20:4; 22:5).

C. CHRIST'S EXALTATION - HE IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

The church is called the body of Christ. Christ is the Head and the church being His body. The head cannot function without the body. The body cannot function without the head.



God has the power to make the body function and work for Christ (Acts 1:8; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27-28; Eph. 4:11-12; Col. 1:24; 2:19; 2 Tim. 1:7).



The church is the instrument of God for bringing His will about on earth. Are you doing God's will? (Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:16-20; 2:8-10; 2 Pet. 3:9-13)

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own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power,
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that is named, not only in this world, but also
in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all things under his feet,
and gave him to be the head over all things to
the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him
that filleth all in all.

2 AND you hath he quickened, who were
dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according
to the course of this world, according to the
prince of the power of the air, the spirit that
now worketh in the children of disobedi-
ence:
3 Among whom also we all had our con-
versation in times past in the lusts of our
flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of
the mind; and were by nature the children
of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his
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5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath
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SERMON

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- 10 THE WORK OF GOD'S GRACE (EPH. 2:8-10)
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LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST (EPHESIANS 2:1-3)

Ephesians 2 is a biography of the Christian. It discusses his past, present, and future, showing what life was like before Christ came, and what it is like since He has come.



SINNERS LIVE A LIFE OF DEATH (EPH. 2:1)

Man is dead in trespasses and sins. What does the Bible say about death? Death is separation from God, and one commentary says that means "separation of a person from the purpose or use for which he was intended".

A. PHYSICAL DEATH

Physical death is the separation of a man's spirit from his body.



Physical death is a certainty. It is the result of sin (Gen. 3; Gen. 6; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Heb. 9:27).

B. SPIRITUAL DEATH

Spiritual death is the separation of a man from God while he is still living. This is the natural state of a man on earth without Jesus Christ.



A person may live a religious life, but if he does not know (have a relationship) of the true and living God, he is spiritually dead. Are you spiritually dead?

- A person who wastes his life in riotous living is spiritually dead (Luke 15:32).
- A person who has not partaken of Christ is spiritually dead (John 6:53).
- A person who does not have the spirit of Christ is said to be spiritually dead (Rom. 8:9).
- A person who lives in sin is said to be spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13).
- A person who is alienated from God is said to be spiritually dead (Eph. 4:18-19).
- A person who lives in sinful pleasure is dead while he lives is spiritually dead (1 Tim. 5:6).
- A person who does not have the Son of God is spiritually dead (1 John 5:12).
- A person who does great religious works for show is spiritually dead (Rev. 3:1).

C. ETERNAL DEATH

Eternal death is the separation of man from God's presence forever. This is also known as the second death.



This is the most dreadful death ever because it is a hopeless and irreversible end (Rom. 6:23; 8:6; 2 Thes. 1:9; Rev. 2:11; 21:8; Ezek. 18:20).

SINNERS ARE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS (EPH. 2:1-2)

All sinners have a semblance of life, just like a flower separated from the stem. Sinners live a life of trespasses and sins.

A. TRESPASSES

The word "trespasses" means "to fall, deviate". A person trespasses when he falls from the right way, deviates from doing what is right, and wanders away from God and righteousness.

B. SINS

The word "sins" means "to miss the mark". Sin is the term that is most often used to describe man's fallen condition. A man sins when he comes short of the glory of God.



Man is ever short of God's perfection. He is also short of the purpose for which God created him (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:12).

SINNERS WALK ACCORDING TO THEIR LUSTS (EPH. 2:3)

The sinner's walk (a metaphor for "life") is described in three ways.

A. WALK AFTER THE WORLD

The sinner walks after the "course of this world [age]", meaning that he follows the world in its values, thinking, etc.



The world is doomed for God's judgment. Take heed that we do not pursue its ends (Matt. 16:26; Luke 21:34; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15).

B. WALK UNDER THE POWER OF SATAN

Satan is called the “prince of the power of the air”. Satan is also the “god of this world”. He influences man to sin and defy God's Word.



Do not walk in the way of the world for the end thereof is death (John 8:44; 13:2; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 6:12; Heb. 2:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8, 10).

C. WALK IN DISOBEDIENCE

The unconverted man lives a life in denial of and disobedience to God. He lives to fulfill the desires of his flesh and mind.



The unconverted is bound to the desires of his flesh, and there are eternal consequences (Rom. 1:26-27; 7:5; Gal. 5:16-17; James 1:15; 4:1-4; 1 John 2:16).



Christians are saved to be different (1 Thess. 4:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:11).

D. WALK IN THE WRATH OF GOD

The unconverted man is a child of wrath, not a child of God. Therefore, he shall reap what he has sown. What he has measured to God shall be measured to him.



It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 2:8; Eph. 5:6; 2 Thess. 1:7-8; Heb. 2:2-3).

THE WORK OF GOD'S MERCY (EPHESIANS 2:4-7)

The most astounding interruption in human history is the word "but" in this passage. Man is dead in trespasses and sins, but God is rich in mercy.



GOD'S WORK OF MERCY (EPH. 2:4-6)

God's work of mercy is His goodness and compassion toward undeserving man. God's mercy is seen in three ways.

A. HE QUICKENED US WITH CHRIST

The word "quicken" means to be made alive. We were dead in trespasses and sins, but God has made us alive.

1. The reasons for God's quickening

There are two reasons for God's quickening.

- He is full of mercy. He sees our need for mercy, and He is able to meet our need of mercy. God's work of mercy includes His withholding the judgement that we deserve and providing a way for salvation for us.
- He is of great love. God's love moves Him to sacrifice His only begotten Son to die for sinners.

2. The means of God's quickening

God quickens us together with Christ. Christ is alive.



Christ died for people who are utterly unworthy of being loved (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6, 8, 10).

B. HE RAISED US WITH CHRIST

Scripture plainly declares that God has raised up believers together with Christ. There are two reasons for the resurrection of Christ.

1. Christ lived a perfect and sinless life

Christ came to earth as a Man and lived a perfect and sinless life. He never broke the law nor went against God's will. With His life, He secured perfect righteousness.

2. Christ died for our sins

We are sinners, and we deserve the penalty of death, which has already been pronounced. But the sinless Christ stood in our place and bore the penalty of sin. His death could stand for and cover any man who really trusted Him.



When we believe in Christ, God loves His Son so much that He counts the person's faith as our identity with Christ (Gen. 15:6; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:23-24; 4:3; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

C. HE MADE US SIT WITH CHRIST IN HEAVENLY PLACES

As believers, we are physically on earth, but spiritually we have been placed in "heavenly places".



We are in this world, but we are not of the world (Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:1; Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 22:5; Dan. 12:3).

GOD'S PURPOSE OF MERCY (EPH. 2:7)

God's purpose of mercy is to show the riches of grace toward us demonstrated in Christ Jesus. The phrase "in the ages to come" means an eternity of ages.

God is going to be eternally glorified for His grace and kindness toward us (Matt. 13:43; Rom. 2:4; Eph. 1:7; 2:7; 1 Tim. 1:14).

THE WORK OF GOD'S GRACE (EPHESIANS 2:8-10)



It has been pointed out that this passage is the watchword for reformation theology: "By grace alone, through faith alone, to God alone be the glory" [sola gratia, sola fide, soli deo Gloria] (F.F. Bruce. The Epistle to the Ephesians, p.51).

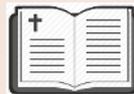
If a man wants to be saved, these verses tell him how to be saved. Salvation is the work of God, of God's grace and of God's grace alone.

WE ARE SAVED BY GOD'S GRACE (EPH. 2:8-9)

The major point of this passage is that we are saved by God and by God alone. God gives us His favour and kindness despite the fact that we - as sinners - deserve none of it.

A. WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE GOD GAVE US HIS SON

When Christ was crucified, He took our sins upon Himself. Christ died for us—in our place, as our substitute.



Christ died for ungodly and rebellious sinners, who are unable to save themselves (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10; Gal. 2:15-16, 19-21; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 2:4-5).

B. WE ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH

Faith in Christ means to believe that He died for us. When we believe in Christ, God takes our faith and counts it as the death of Jesus Christ for us.



To be saved, we have to believe in Christ, and reach out and receive the gift of God's grace (John 3:16; 5:24; John 20:31; Rom. 10:9-10).

C. WE CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES

We are sinners before the perfectly holy and just God. We cannot save ourselves because we are sinners to begin with. If we are ever to be acceptable to God, it will not be by our own good works.



Salvation is not of man (2 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:3; Prov. 20:6; 28:26; 30:12; Oba. 3-4).

D. WE ARE SAVED AS A GIFT OF GOD

Salvation is a free gift for the following reasons.

- Man cannot make God owe him (Rom. 4:4).
- Man is imperfect before God (Eph. 1:7).
- Man cannot make God forgive him (Rom. 3:23; 8:6-8).
- Man cannot heal God's heart (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10).
- Man cannot save himself (Eph. 2:8-9).
- Man cannot make God love him (Tit. 3:4-7).
- Man cannot set himself free and bring about liberty of conscience.



Our judgment is all of our own doing. Our salvation is all of God's work (Matt. 7:22-23; Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:4-5).

E. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO BOAST

If we play some part in our salvation, then some credit would be due us. However, we are saved by grace and not by our good works; therefore, God alone deserves the glory.



God alone deserves the praise for our salvation (Rom. 3:19, 27).

WE ARE SAVED TO BE GOD'S WORKMANSHIP (EPH. 2:10)

We are not saved by our works, but we are saved unto good works.

A. WE ARE CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS

The believer experiences two creations - a natural birth and a spiritual birth. When we believe Jesus Christ, God creates us in Him. This means ...

- God causes the believer to be born again spiritually (John 3:3, 5-6; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 5:1).
- God places His divine nature into the heart of the believer (2 Pet. 1:4).
- God makes a new creature of the believer (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).
- God renews the believer by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5).



To be created in Christ Jesus means that our inward man and our mind are renewed (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23; 2 Cor. 5:17).

B. WE ARE CREATED UNTO GOOD WORKS

A piece of art reflects the artist that created it. We are God's "workmanship" means that we are God's work of art. We are God's masterpieces to reflect His goodness. We are not saved by good works, but God saves us for good works.



Doing good works is not an option for believers. It is the very nature of believers (Matt. 5:16; Col. 1:10; 1 Tim. 6:18; Tit 2:7, 3:8; Heb. 10:24; James 2:17-18; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 John 1:7).

LIFE IN CHRIST – RECONCILIATION WITH GOD (EPHESIANS 2:11-13)

Ephesians 2:11-18 is an important passage because it provides the theological basis for one church, comprising of Jewish and Gentile converts. Believers in Christ are not to be segregated according to race, ethnicity, language, etc.

Historically, before the incarnation of Christ, God dealt with man through the Jewish nation. Since Christ, God has been moving on a world-wide scale to include both Jews and Gentiles who are willing to follow Christ. God takes both Jew and Gentile believers and He makes them the citizens of His new race, His new nation, His new creation.

Individually, whether Jews or Gentiles, God deals with each single person (1 Cor. 10:32; Eph. 2:10). Gentiles were included in God's salvation - example: Rahab the harlot, Ruth the Moabitess, Naaman the Syrian general, Cornelius the Roman centurion, etc.



Soteriologically, God no longer deals with divisions of nations; rather He is dealing with a new nationality of people, a new body of people who make up the true citizens of His Kingdom. These citizens are individuals from all the nations of the world who now approach God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God causes that person to be born again; He makes a new man out of him. God further promises the new man that he will become a member of God's new body and new nation of people - His true church (1 Cor. 10:32). It is these believers who constitute the true family of God, and they are reconciled to God and to one another.

SEPARATION FROM GOD (EPH. 2:11-12)

Sinners are separated from God. Paul is addressing Gentiles. There was a time when Gentiles were "far off" and separated from God. Paul gives six descriptions for this separation.

A. WE ARE UNCIRCUMCISED

God chose Abraham and made him the head of the Jewish nation to be born of Abraham. Through the Jews, God would send the Messiah. The Jews were supposed to be the missionary force to the world, but they failed.



Corrupt religion and religious practices can keep a man from God. Religious pride is detrimental to truth and dangerous (Rom. 10:12; Phil. 3:6).

They took the blessings of God and became insular. They called themselves Jews and classified everyone else as Gentiles. They had the covenantal sign of circumcision and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else as the Uncircumcised.

B. WE ARE WITHOUT CHRIST

Gentiles did not know about the Messiah. Thus, Gentiles had no hope of the coming Saviour for the world.

C. WE ARE ALIENS FROM ISRAEL

Gentiles were not citizens of God's people - the nation of people being built by God for Himself.

D. WE ARE "STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE"

Gentiles were not the covenant people of God. God did not approach the Gentiles directly with the covenant relationship.

E. WE HAVE "NO HOPE"

Gentiles lived in all the anxieties of life and the fears of death. Unbelievers know no hope of a life beyond this world.

F. WE ARE "WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD"

Gentiles went through life on earth on their own without any source of strength or hope beyond what they could muster themselves. Unbelievers have nothing to hold on, rest on, and hope for.



Unbelievers face an uncertain present on earth and a hopeless future in eternity (Rom. 1:20-22, 25; Eph. 4:17-19; Ps. 58:3).

RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST (EPH. 2:13)

Before, we are separated from God, "but now" we are drawn near by Christ. The phrase "but now..." makes a forceful contrast. In Christ, we are drawn near to God and to each other.

How does Christ bring us near God? The Holy Scripture declares: "by the blood" of Christ. Paul gives two reasons that the blood and death of Christ is necessary for our reconciliation with God.

A. WE ARE ESTRANGED FROM GOD

Sinners have rejected and rebelled against God. The only way sinners can be brought back to God is for God to forgive our sins and rebellion. However, God would not be holy and righteous if He did not punish sinners.



The glorious gospel is that God did love man that much (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 2:24; 3:17; 1 John 1:7).

Therefore, God must provide a perfect Man for sinful man. This is what God had done through Jesus Christ. This is what God has done. He loves us with a perfect love - a love so strong that He was willing to substitute His Son for man.

B. WE ARE LOVED BY GOD

The sacrificial death of Christ is the evidence of God's amazing love for us. God's love surpasses the love of man. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). But God's love is greater than that; Christ did not die for His friends, He died for His enemies. And by His death, we become His friends.

When Christ died, He died for man who were "without strength" (Rom. 5:6), "ungodly" (Rom. 5:6), sinners (Rom. 5:8), and His enemies (Rom. 5:10).

LIFE IN CHRIST – PEACE WITH GOD (EPHESIANS 2:14-15)

Sinners are separated from God by sin, but we are united to God in Christ. The Son of God who is the Prince of Peace died for us and offers us deliverance, from the bondage of sin and death, and a life of eternity with God.

Christ's peace also gives us strength to overcome the terrible weight of anguish and guilt, loneliness and emptiness, and fear. His peace also eliminates all divisions and barriers, and differences between God and us, and between one another.

Paul lists four things that the peace of Christ does for us.



CHRIST BRINGS MEN TOGETHER AS "ONE" (EPH. 2:14)

In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are brought together as one. How so?

A. WE ARE EQUAL IN CHRIST

When we come to the cross, we come as everyone else. We stand as one with everyone else – sinners who need a Saviour. All ethnic, economic and societal classifications are meaningless because, before God, we are all sinners. However, in Christ, we are all made acceptable to God.



The peace with God through Christ makes all the difference (Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20).

B. WE ARE BOUND BY A COMMON LOVE IN CHRIST

Every believer who comes to Jesus Christ loves Him, and that common love is shared by all believers. Love for Jesus Christ stirs love for all those whom Christ loves, namely the redeemed.



Christ leads us to love one another. Christ also gives us a common purpose which is to preach the glorious message of salvation (Rom. 12:5; Gal. 3:28; 1 John 1:7).

CHRIST BREAKS DOWN “THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION” (EPH. 2:14)

Herod’s temple was surrounded by a series of courts. The courts were separated from one another by high walls. As one approached the temple, he entered first of all the outer Court of the Gentiles, and he could not proceed farther. Likewise, women could not go beyond the Court of the Women. Jews were given access to the Court of the Israelites, but they were not allowed into the Court of the Priests. Finally, within the very heart of the temple stood the Holy of Holies where only the High Priest could enter.



Our society has walls built on race, economic status, ability, language, etc. But Christ has done away with all barriers and prejudices (Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28; James 2:5; Prov. 22:2).

CHRIST ABOLISHES “THE LAW” (EPH. 2:15)

Before Christ, man had to approach God through the law. But the law did not make him acceptable to God. On the contrary, the law condemned him. The law was at enmity with man. Christ, having fulfilled the law, did away with the enmity and condemnation of the law.



When Christ fulfilled the law, He became the embodiment of the law. He is now the Way for man to approach God (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:13; 4:4-5).

CHRIST CREATES A “NEW MAN” (EPH. 2:15)

The atoning work of Christ brings about a “new man” - one in whom Christ dwells. Individually when a man turns to Christ, Christ causes the man to be born again. The man has a new life; he begins life all over again. He has a new beginning.



If any man be in Christ, he is a new man. He has a renewed man. He lives a new life. He has new relationships (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Rom. 12:1-3).

LIFE IN CHRIST – RECONCILIATION WITH AND ACCESS TO GOD (EPHESIANS 2:16-18)

Christ reconciles us with God. The word “reconcile” means to “change from enmity to friendship”. Two persons who have been enemies are brought together and reunited.



THE MEANING OF RECONCILIATION WITH GOD (EPH. 2:16-17)

There are four things to note about reconciliation.

A. WE HAVE TO BE RECONCILED BECAUSE SIN HAS SEPARATED US FROM GOD

Sin separates God from the sinner. Sinners are enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). Sinners are antagonistic toward God. Sinners oppose what God stands for. When we sin, we are working against God and promoting evil by word and deed.



God reconciled us to Himself on account of His love. God reconciled and saved us when we were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him.

B. WE ARE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE CROSS OF CHRIST

When a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him, God accepts the death of Jesus Christ for the death of the man. The man is freed from the guilt of his sins, and delivered from the punishment due to his sins. Christ bore both the sins and the punishment for the man.

C. WE ARE RECONCILED TO GOD AND WITH ONE ANOTHER

In human relationships, two persons who quarrelled, are reconciled with each other.

- First, in our relationship with God, we are reconciled to Him. God is never reconciled to us.
- Second, God is the One who reconciles, not us. We do not reconcile ourselves to God. We cannot do enough good work to become acceptable to God.
- Third, we are reconciled to one another. In Christ, we are made acceptable to God, and we are also brought together.



Men receive the reconciliation of God, and in turn, we are reconciled to one another (John 14:27; 1 John 1:3-4; 2:1-2).

D. WE ARE RECONCILED BY THE PREACHING OF CHRIST

The message of reconciliation is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was the first to preach the message.



The means of reconciliation is the atoning work of Christ, and the message of the reconciliation is the glorious Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:20; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 4:19).

THE RESULT OF RECONCILIATION WITH GOD (EPH. 2:18)

By the blood of Christ, we have access to God. The word “access” means “to bring to”. The picture is that of being in a royal court and being presented and brought into the presence of the king.

Jesus Christ is the One who throws open the door into God's presence. He is the One who presents us to God, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe.

The Holy Spirit escorts us into God's presence.



The Holy Spirit is the Divine Nature of God within us that gives us permanent access into God's presence.
(John 3:5; Rom. 8:11; 2 Pet. 1:4)



The Holy Spirit works in us and stirs us to move more and more into God's presence (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 4:6-7).



The Holy Spirit is the constant companion with us, teaching us to live in God's presence (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:12-13).



The Holy Spirit is the One within us who bears witness that we are children of God (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-6).

THE PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH – NATION, FAMILY, BUILDING (EPHESIANS 2:19-20)

From Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul gives five pictures of the church – the body of believers.

- A nation
- A family
- A building
- An organism
- The temple

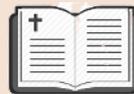


CHURCH AS A SOCIETY (EPH. 2:19)

In Christ, we are no longer “strangers and foreigners”. The word “stranger” means an “outsider” – one who does not belong. The word “foreigner” denotes a passer-by, a migrant.

Before we are converted, we are strangers and foreigners. There was a time when we were outside God and His kingdom. We did not belong to God and His kingdom. We were not citizens of God's kingdom.

However, in Christ, all is changed. Christ brought us to God so that now, we are fellow citizens with all of God's people. We now have a home and all the rights of citizenship in God's kingdom. In Christ, we are saints – a people set apart to God. We are also fellow citizens – a people being built into a new nation under God.



Our home is not on earth.
This is just a temporary abode
(Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16;
2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1, 27).

CHURCH AS A FAMILY (EPH. 2:19)

The church is also presented as a family – as the “household of God”.
As a member of the household of God, there is privilege and responsibility.

A. THE PRIVILEGE OF ADOPTION

We have been adopted as children of God. We are now in the family of God.



As members of the family of God, we are endowed with all the blessings and privileges of sonship (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 3:4-6; Heb. 2:11; 1 John 3:1).

B. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SERVICE

With privilege also comes responsibility. As members of the household of God, we have duties to perform, some service to render for the sake of the family.



We are responsible to love and care, provide for and teach one another (Matt. 12:50; 20:28; Mark 10:43-44; Luke 22:27; John 13:14; John 21:16; Rom. 12:10-11; Gal. 5:13; 6:2, 10; Tit. 2:7; Heb. 10:24; 12:28).

CHURCH AS A BUILDING (EPH. 2:20)

Believers are pictured as being building stones that are used to construct a building for God. There are two important lessons. First, our Lord Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. Second, we are living stones that build up the church.

A. CHRIST IS THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE

The symbolism of the chief cornerstone says three significant things to us.

The Cornerstone is the Foundation Stone. The cornerstone is the first stone to be laid. All other stones are placed after it. It is the pre-eminent stone in time. So, it is in the spiritual building.



Christ is the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). Christ is the author of eternal salvation and our faith (Heb. 5:9; 12:2). Christ is the beginning and the end (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). Christ is the forerunner, and we all enter into the presence of God after Him (Heb. 6:19-20).

The Cornerstone is the Supporting Structure. All other stones are placed upon it and held up by it. The cornerstone is the pre-eminent stone in position and power. In the spiritual realm, Christ is the support of the church.



Christ is the cornerstone, and we are fitly formed together upon Him (Eph. 4:16).

The Cornerstone is the Directional Stone. It is used to line up the whole building and all the other stones. So, it is with Christ. He gives the directions and instructions to God's people.



We are to build our lives upon His instructions and His instructions only (1 Pet. 2:6-8).

If Christ is removed, the church will collapse: no Christ, no church. Christ holds everything within the church together. Therefore, it is an absolute necessity that He and He alone be preached, taught, and lived (Matt. 7:24-27; 2 Tim. 2:19).

B. THE APOSTLES ARE THE FOUNDATION

We are built upon the foundation laid by the testimonies of the apostles and prophets. This simply means that the record and testimony of the Word of God by the Apostles are the foundation upon which the church is to be laid.



The Word of God is essential to the spiritual growth of believers (John 17:17; Rom. 1:16; 10:8-10; Eph. 4:11-12, 14-15; 1 Thess. 2:13).

THE PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH – ORGANISM AND TEMPLE (EPHESIANS 2:21-22)



CHURCH IS AN ORGANISM (EPH. 2:21)

The church is not an organisation; it is an organism that grows. The church is a union of various parts of a living being, of a dynamic body. The church is a building that grows as more believers are brought and fitted into the building. The church will continue to grow until the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

The Apostle Peter calls Jesus Christ the living stone upon which believers "are built up a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:4-5).

These are two lessons we must take to heart.



The Church must grow. It must be bringing new stones (believers) and fitting them into the building of God. As believers that makes up the building, we are expected to fulfil our function. Every believer is expected to be a labourer in the building of the church (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:2; Isa. 43:10; 63:7).

CHURCH IS A TEMPLE (EPH. 2:22)

The church is pictured as a temple universally and locally.

A. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

All believers make up the holy temple of God. This is the universal church, which comprises all believers across time (in every age) and space (in every corner of the world).

Every believer is placed into the temple by Christ alone. In Christ and in Christ alone, and upon the foundation laid by the apostles, is God's building being structured.



The gospel of Jesus Christ is open to all people everywhere regardless of race, class or status (Matt. 28:19; Mark 13:10; 16:15; Luke 24:47; Rom. 10:12; Gal. 3:28; Rev. 14:6).

B. THE LOCAL CHURCH

Paul switches from “all” (Eph. 2:21), which denotes all believers - Jews and Gentiles from every place - to “ye” (Eph. 2:22), which denotes believers in Ephesus. Here, Paul is referring specifically to the church at Ephesus - the local church.

Each local church is a testimony for Christ at a particular location. Every member in a local church is an integral and essential stone being placed and fitted into church at that place (Eph. 4:16; 1 Pet. 2:5).

The local church exists for the purpose of providing a habitation, a home for the presence of God – through His Spirit. The local church is where ministry is done, and believers serve.



The effectiveness of any local church depends upon the extent in which we submit to the leading and control of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:14; 1 John 2:27).



SERMON

- 16 PURPOSE AND WILL OF GOD FOR THE BELIEVER (EPH. 3:1-2)
- 17 MYSTERY OF CHRIST REVEALED (EPH. 3:3-5)
- 18 MYSTERY OF CHRIST GIVEN (EPH. 3:6)
- 19 MINISTRY OF PAUL (EPH. 3:7-9)
- 20 MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD (EPH. 3:10-13)
- 21 MATURITY OF THE BELIEVER – PAUL’S PRAYER (EPH. 3:14-15)
- 22 PETITIONS OF PAUL (1) (EPH. 3:16-18)
- 23 PETITIONS OF PAUL (2) (EPH. 3:19-21)

PURPOSE AND WILL OF GOD FOR THE BELIEVER (EPHESIANS 3:1-2)



For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: (Eph. 3:1-2)

Ephesians 3 marks a new division in the epistle. Chapter 3 can be divided into two main sections.

First, God's purpose is to make a new body of people on earth who will love Him supremely. This is what is called the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:1-13).

Second, God's purpose also is to make the believer into a mature person filled with all the fulness of God (Eph. 3:14-21).

PAUL AS A PRISONER OF CHRIST (3:1)

The first two verses of Chapter 3 present God's will & purpose for Paul.

Paul's life mission was to serve Christ, no matter the cost. He calls himself a "prisoner of Jesus Christ". He was a **prisoner for Christ**, and he was a **prisoner of Christ**. The two ideas converged. He was in fact a prisoner in Rome when he penned these words. But he was also a prisoner of Christ in the sense he was captive to Christ and imprisoned for His cause. Paul was there because he was enslaved to Christ to the point that he would bear any suffering to share the glorious news of Christ even if it meant imprisonment and death.



Every Christian is a minister of Christ, and every minister of Christ is a slave of God. Christians are called to serve Christ no matter the cost (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:43-44; Luke 22:27; John 13:14).

PAUL AS A STEWARD OF CHRIST (3:2)

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward" (Eph. 3:2). The word "dispensation" denotes "stewardship". Paul was a steward of Christ, and he was to exercise his stewardship to others [you-ward].



Every Christian is a steward of God's grace (1 Pet. 4:10).

- We must be faithful (1 Cor. 4:1-2).
- We are put in trust of the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:4-5; 1 Tim. 1:11-12; Tit. 1:3).

DUAL ROLE OF PRISONER AND STEWARD

The dual role of a prisoner and steward are conjoined in Paul. As prisoner and steward, Paul's ministry was directed for the benefit of others - for you Gentiles (Eph. 3:1), and to you-ward (Eph. 3:2).



As servants of God, His grace is given to us so that we may "minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10).

MYSTERY OF CHRIST REVEALED (EPHESIANS 3:3-5)

Mystery as used in the Bible denotes knowledge that can only be known by revelation. The mystery of Christ “which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men” is now revealed (Eph. 3:5).

The mystery of Christ was not a creation of man's mind. Man could have never figured out the mystery. No man in this physical world could ever penetrate the spiritual world and discover the truth.

PAUL'S PRIVILEGE (3:3,5)

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words...” (Eph. 3:3). Paul was entrusted with the stewardship of grace by way of revelation – a divine communication. Paul always insisted that the stewardship which he had received was not of human origin.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE (3:4-5)

God revealed. Paul wrote. We read. There is no other means by which we can know the mystery of Christ.

The purpose is that we “may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4).

The privilege is that this mystery of Christ “in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:5).



The mystery of Christ was...

- a truth that was not known before the apostles and prophets.
- a truth that could not be discovered by human reason.
- a truth that had to be revealed by God if it was to ever be known.

From the divinely inspired revelation, Paul wrote. God's word is revealed through the “apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:5; 2 Pet. 1:21). This is the paradox of divine inspiration of Holy Scripture.

That was how the Word of God was propagated and passed on to us.



You are given and entrusted with this truth so that “when ye read, ye may understand...the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4, see Rom. 3:2). There is no other means to spiritual growth and understanding other than engaging with the Word of God. The question is – what would you do with the Word of God?

MYSTERY OF CHRIST GIVEN (EPHESIANS 3:6)



To the Jews “were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2). That privilege, however, did not benefit them because they did not believe. Paul’s calling from the very beginning was to bear the Name of Christ “before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

The mystery of Christ with respect to the Gentiles is manifested in three truths.

GENTILES ARE FELLOWHEIRS OF GOD WITH JEWS

Gentile believers – all peoples of the earth – are accepted by God in the Beloved. No matter who we are, we are now to approach God face to face through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

There are no barriers to prevent anyone from going to God and being adopted by God as an heir of God with all other believers.



In Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, you have an equal share in the future inheritance.

- We are “the children of God...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ... that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. 8:15-17).
- We have received “the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-6).
- We are “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit. 3:4-7).
- We are “heirs of promise” (Heb. 6:17).
- We are “heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7).

GENTILES ARE OF THE SAME BODY WITH THE JEWS

God's love is universal. God is now allowing all men to approach him through the Lord Jesus Christ. God is now creating a new body of people made up of people from all nations and races - all centred around His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers now form what is called the body of Christ.



There is only one body of Christ because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all believers.

- This means that there is only one Church (John 17:20-21, 23; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:23; 2:21-22; 4:11-12; Col. 1:24; 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:5).
- This also means you are fully included in the communion with God.

GENTILES RECEIVE THE SAME PROMISE OF GOD AS THE JEWS

Gentiles receive the same promise of Christ as the Jews did. The promise in Christ has to do with the glorious privilege of being saved and living with God and Christ for eternity in the new heavens and earth.



In Christ, you are heir of the promise of God (Heb. 6:17). The promise of everlasting life (John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 10:9-10; Tit. 3:4-7; 2 Pet. 3:10-13). This promise is centred in Christ and accomplished by the power of the Gospel.

MINISTRY OF PAUL (EPHESIANS 3:7-9)

Paul was made a “minister”, meaning he was a servant. There is nothing glorious about being made a servant, but Paul regarded God’s call and God’s work as his greatest glory. Paul saw the dignity of the ministry. The call to ministry was a privilege for Paul. God did not have to persuade Paul to be a minister. In these verses, Paul described his ministry as a gift.

How did Paul come to be what He was?



SALVATION IN CHRIST CAUSED PAUL TO BECOME A MINISTER (3:7A)

Paul’s conversion on the Damascus road was dramatic. It was also life-transforming. Paul’s immediate response was “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). Paul tells us that he was set apart in a special way to preach the Gospel (Rom. 1:1). Paul’s conviction and commitment to the Gospel was the result of his knowing that God chose him, even though he was a great persecutor of the church, to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ.



Paul was saved, and he was ready to serve (2 Cor. 3:6; 4:1-2; 5:18-21; Col. 1:23, 25; 1 Tim. 1:12).

Are you?

SALVATION IN CHRIST CAUSED PAUL TO BECOME A PREACHER (3:7B-8)

Paul was honoured to be the minister of Christ. He was also humbled because he knew that this was a work that he could not do on his own strength.

Paul's humility is expressed in two ways.

- He did not give himself the distinction of being a gospel-minister. He was assigned "by the effectual working of His power". Paul was given the "gift of God's grace".
- He was "less than the least of all saints" (1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:15).



The God who worked in Paul's life also works in yours. Paul made excellent use of the grace that was given him (Acts 9:20; 17:2-3; 1 Cor. 1:17, 30; 2:2-4; 9:16; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2 Tim. 1:11).

Will you do likewise?

SALVATION IN CHRIST CAUSED PAUL TO BECOME AN EVANGELIST/MISSIONARY (3:9)

Having seen the glory of Christ, Paul's life mission was to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9).

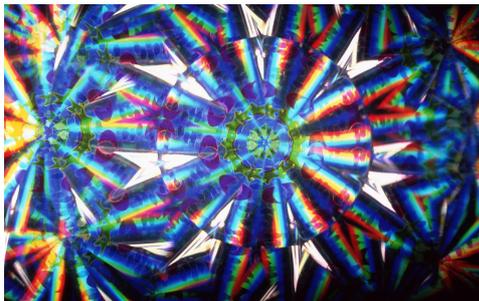
Christ is the Light, and He is the One who causes man to see (John 1:9; 8:12). Paul was the Light-bearer - the evangelist/missionary - who bore the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4).



Christ gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul and the apostles were examples (Acts 18:9-10; 22:14-15; 1 Thess. 2:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2:2).

We are to obey Christ's command and follow the apostles' example.

MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD (EPHESIANS 3:10-13)



The mystery of Christ that is revealed to the church also causes the angels - "principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (see 1:21; Col. 1:16; 2:18) - to marvel and rejoice at the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).

The "manifold wisdom" of God denotes the multifaceted wisdom of God, very much like a kaleidoscope. The intricacies of the multifaceted and unity of wisdom is unsearchable (Rom. 11:33).

THE WONDER OF GOD'S DOING IN THE CHURCH (3:10)

The church does not exist for itself. It exists for God and His glory. God's glorious purpose in salvation and in the church is to show His love and wisdom to the whole universe - to stir every creature in heaven to stand in stark amazement at what He is doing.



The preaching of the Gospel that leads to the salvation of sinners also calls for our praise (Rom. 11:33; 14:11; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:9-13). This should spur believers to strive earnestly to live to God's glory.

THE WONDER OF GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST (3:11)

God's salvation plan through the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus was not a contingency plan. God's eternal purpose which He formed in Christ Jesus would be revealed in time so that it might be made known through the church. This eternal purpose was centred in Christ. He is the very foundation of the church. He is the chief cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:6-7).

THE WONDER OF THE BELIEVER'S ACCESS INTO GOD'S PRESENCE (3:12)

By faith in Christ, believers have “boldness and access with confidence” to God the Father. The three important words here are “boldness”, “access”, and “confidence”.

A. BOLDNESS

That believers may boldly approach God as a result of Christ’s atoning sacrifice is one of the most consistent teachings of Scripture. The word “boldness” is derived from two Greek words, which means “telling all” (Phil. 1:20; Heb. 4:16). It has the idea of speaking “plainly” (John 11:14) and “openly” (John 11:54).

C. CONFIDENCE

The word “confidence” is also translated “trust”. The level of confidence is dependent upon the object of one’s trust. Paul writes that he had “trust” toward God. For Paul, confidence arises in a context of personal faith in God (Eph. 3:12). This faith refuses to place “trust” in any personal status or accomplishment (Phil. 3:4).

B. ACCESS

To have access is to have the freedom of approach to the Father. The access to the God the Father is always through the Son (Rom. 5:1-2; John 10:9; Eph. 2:18).



Such boldness of confident access to God the Father is only by the faith in Christ. In Him, we may have confidence – telling all – in our prayers (2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 3:12), and we may be assured in our faith (1 Tim. 3:13; Heb. 3:6).



Based on such confidence, Paul is willing to suffer for the church. And he asks believers not to lose heart. The glory of all that lies ahead for the believer is so glorious that any suffering is worth the reward. (1 Thess. 4:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:11).

MATURITY OF THE BELIEVER - PAUL'S PRAYER (EPHESIANS 3:14-15)

In the remaining verses of Chapter 3 - verses 13 to 21 - records Paul's prayer for the church and the believer. This is probably the second most important prayer in all the Bible, second only to the Lord's model prayer (Matt. 6:9-13).



There are several things to note about Paul's prayer.

THIS PRAYER HAS A SPECIFIC CAUSE

The prayer was for a specific cause, a specific purpose. The phrase "for this cause" refers back to the eternal plan of God and the life of the Christian believer which Paul has discussed earlier (Eph. 2:1-3:13). No greater thing has ever been wrought upon earth than what God has done through Christ. Through Christ...

- God has wrought salvation (Eph. 2:1-10).
- God has given birth to the church, the new body of believers which He is building (Eph. 2:11).



The work of salvation and the building of the body of believers (the church) must be completed. This is the great cause for which Paul prays, and this must be our prayers as well.

THIS PRAYER DROVE PAUL TO HIS KNEES

The prayer was so important that it drove Paul to his knees. The bowing of knees is a sign of great need and dependency. It shows that Paul was utterly dependent upon God; that he was earnest; that he was humble before God.



Prayer is an act of humility because we are a needy people. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

THIS PRAYER IS ADDRESSED TO GOD THE FATHER

Paul addressed God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the OT, while the people of God called upon Him in prayer, they never addressed God as Father. In Christ, there was a radical change in addressing God. Our Lord Jesus taught the disciples, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven..." (Matt. 6:9). God is not distant and aloof. On the contrary, He is near and vitally interested in man and his world.



When Paul prayed to God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was praying to the God who would listen and answer his prayer. God will answer when we call out to Him (Jer. 33:3).

THIS PRAYER IS FOR THE FAMILY OF GOD

The prayer was also addressed to the Father of the whole family of God. This means that God is the Father of all believers who have ever believed and trusted His promise. Paul had told us that all who believe in Christ – Jews and Gentiles – now constitute one family (Eph. 2:18-19). The "whole family" of God means all His children – no matter where they are, in heaven or in earth; no matter from what nation they are converted, whether Jews or Gentiles – have one name, and one Redeemer, and all belong to one family.



"The whole family" emphasises the oneness and unity of the church. Christians must, therefore, be "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

PETITIONS OF PAUL (1) (EPHESIANS 3:16-18)

In verses 16-19, Paul records six petitions followed by a conclusion, encouraging believers to pray and trust God (Eph. 3:20-21).



PETITION #1 - FOR POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (3:16)

Paul's first petition is for strength and power of God's Spirit, for His presence and power in the lives of believers. The word "strengthen" means to be made enduring to have energy to act.

- The believer needs to be strengthened with power in the "inner man" so that he can overcome the flesh with all its weakness. This is the only way he can conquer temptation, sin, trials, and adversities.
- The believer must be strengthened with power in order to break loose from the flesh and focus upon the eternal promises and call of God. He must be strengthened to be everything God wants him to be, and to do everything God wants him to do.

The source of such conquering strength is the Holy Spirit. There is no other source that has enough power to conquer the severe trials and corruptions of this world, all of which result in death and decay. And we know that our prayers will be answered according to the "riches of His glory".



We must pray that we "might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Eph. 1:19; Col. 1:11; Heb. 11:33; Isa. 40:31; 41:10).

PETITION #2 - FOR THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST (3:17)

Paul's second petition is for Christ to dwell in the hearts of believers by faith. The word "dwell" denotes a permanent dwelling. It means for Christ to take up permanent residence of reign in the believer's life.



To pray that Christ may dwell in our hearts means to be aware and conscious of Christ within us, and for Him to control and guide our lives. (John 14:20; 17:23; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; 1 John 3:24; Rev. 3:20).

PETITION #3 - FOR LOVE OF BELIEVERS (3:17)

Paul's third petition is for believers to be rooted and grounded in love. The object of love is not specified, whether it is in love to God, love to one other, or in the love of God to us, which is the root and foundation of salvation. The point is that this must be immovable and immutable.



Love was the great principle of true saving faith. The impossibility of holding the faith of Christ without love is one of the great themes of 1 John (1 John 2:5, 15; 3:1, 11, 14, 16-18, 23; 4:7-12, 16-21; 5:2-3).

To be rooted means to be firmly established, like the roots of a tree that reach deep and extend afar. This love is to be grounded as the foundation of a building so that love becomes the basis for our relationship with God and our ministry.

PETITION #4 - FOR SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING (3:18)

Paul's fourth petition is for believers' understanding of all spiritual things. God's love for believers cannot be measured. Therefore, believers must pray and seek God to increase their understanding of the breadth and length and depth and height of what God has done for them and the church. The more believers comprehend, the more they will surrender their lives to Christ and serve Him.



The more we understand what God has done for us, the more we will be devoted to Him, and the more we will reach out to take the love and salvation of God to sinners (1 Cor. 2:9-12).

PETITIONS OF PAUL (2) (EPHESIANS 3:19-21)



PETITION #5 - FOR LOVE OF CHRIST (3:19)

Paul's fifth petition is for believers to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge. It is impossible for believers to grasp and experience the love of Christ to its fullest measure, but we should pray for God to help us learn more and more of His love.

There is no greater description of the love of Christ than the words of the hymn penned by F.M. Lehman "Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies 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 ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky. O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forever more endure."



To know the love of Christ means to have a lively sense of, and to be affected by His love. Nothing will so much excite gratitude in our hearts; nothing will prompt us so much to a life of self-denial; nothing will make us so alive in Christ and so dead to the world (John 10:17-18; 15:13; Rom. 5:6, 8-10; 8:35; 2 Cor. 5:14-15, 21; 1 John 3:16).

PETITION #6 - FOR FULNESS OF GOD (3:19)

Paul's sixth petition is for the fulness of God. The believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Spirit, Christ, and of God (John 14:16, 23). Each Person of the Godhead has a different function within the believer.

The believer prays that he would be strengthened by the Spirit. Second, he prays to have Christ dwell in his heart. Third, he also prays to be "filled with all the fulness of God". This means that he is praying for God and His presence to have His perfect way in his life.



To be "filled with all the fulness of God" is to be totally consecrated to Him. This is the best gift of God to us. It gives us true dignity. It elevates our nature. We dwell with God; walk with Him; commune with Him. We become partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

CONCLUSION: ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAY AND TRUST IN GOD (3:20-21)

Paul concludes his prayer with the encouragement to believers to pray and to trust God. There are two reasons for persevering in prayer and trusting God.

A. GOD IS ABLE TO DO WHAT WE ASK

God is able to do ...

- "Exceedingly" - God is able to surpass any request; He is able to overcome and do anything.
- "Abundantly" - God is able to give more than what we ask.
- "Above" - God is able to go over, above, beyond what we need.
- "All that we ask or think" - God is able to surpass our own understanding of our needs.



God is able to fulfil promises even if they are humanly impossible (Rom. 4:21); to make grace abound (2 Cor. 9:8); to subdue all things (Phil. 3:21); to guard the soul's treasure (2 Tim. 1:12); to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).

B. GOD HAS EMPOWERED US

The power that works in us is that which God has put within us - the power of the Spirit strengthening us, the power of Christ indwelling us, the power of love working in us, the power of understanding all that God does, the power of the fulness of God Himself.



God's power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive (Matt. 19:26; Luke 1:37; Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 10:13; Eph. 1:19; 2 Tim. 1:7).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of God in answering prayer and in doing all this for us: that He might be glorified in the church through Christ Jesus.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
Ephesians

an apostle of Jĕ'sūs Christ by the
of God, to the saints which are at
s, and to the faithful in Christ Jĕ's-

be to you, and peace, from God our
nd from the Lord Jĕ'sūs Christ,
be the God and Father of our
s Christ, who hath blessed us with
l blessings in heavenly places in
g as he hath chosen us in him
undation of the world, that we
oly and without blame before

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n by Jĕ'sūs Christ to himself,
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ndence;
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r together in one all
which are in heaven, *us*
; even in him:
ave obtained an in-
nated according to
worketh all
vn will

raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his
own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power,
and might, and dominion, and every name
that is named, not only in this world, but also
in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all *things* under his feet,
and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to
the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him
that filleth all in all.

2 AND you *hath he quickened*, who were
dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according
to the course of this world, according to the
prince of the power of the air, the spirit that
now worketh in the children of disobedi-
ence:
3 Among whom also we all had our con-
versation in times past in the lusts of our
flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of
the mind; and were by nature the children
of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his
great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace
ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised *us* up together
with him, *us* sit together in heaven:
7 That in the

ephesians

THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN

A STUDY ON PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
(adapted from the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)



SERMON

- 01 WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING (EPH. 4:1-2)
- 02 WALK IN UNITY (EPH. 4:3)
- 03 MANIFESTATION OF UNITY (I) (EPH. 4:4-6)
- 04 MANIFESTATION OF UNITY (II) (EPH. 4:4-6)
- 05 DIVERSITY IN GIFTS (I) (EPH. 4:7-10)
- 06 DIVERSITY IN GIFTS (II) (EPH. 4:11)
- 07 PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (EPH. 4:12-16)
- 08 CHARACTERISTICS OF GENTILES (EPH. 4:17-19)
- 09 THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN (EPH. 4:20-24)
- 10 THE RENEWED MIND (EPH 4:22-23)
- 11 THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (I) (EPH 4:25-32)
- 12 THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (II) (EPH 4:25-32)
- 13 THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (III) (EPH 4:25-32)

WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING (EPHESIANS 4:1-2)



EPHESIANS 4 MARKS A MAJOR TRANSITION IN THE EPISTLE. IN THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS, PAUL DEALS WITH THE DOCTRINE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

- the eternal plan of God,
- the great blessings of God,
- the knowledge and power of God,
- the work of God's mercy and the gift of God's grace,
- the believer's great salvation,
- the believer's reconciliation with God,
- the church, which is the body of believers.

OVERVIEW OF EPHESIANS 4–6

In the remaining chapters (4–6) Paul beseeches believers to walk worthy of Christ. How are we to live our lives on earth? How does our position in Christ work itself out in our lives? Paul's instructions here will cover every aspect of our lives, and every sphere of relationship in our lives (marital, parental, professional and ecclesiastical).

- We are to walk worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1-6).
- We are to walk by using our gifts (Eph. 4:7-16).
- We are to walk differently from the other Gentiles (Eph. 4:17-24).
- We are to walk putting off the garments of the old man (Eph. 4:25-32).
- We are to walk following God (Eph. 5:1-7).
- We are to walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8-14).
- We are to walk carefully and strictly (Eph. 5:15-21).
- We are to walk a spirit of submission and love in marital relationships (Eph. 5:22-33).
- We are to walk under God's authority in parental relationships (Eph. 6:1-4).
- We are to walk under God's authority in professional relationships (Eph. 6:5-9).

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PAUL - “I BESEECH...” (EPH. 4:1)

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus presents two options – the wide gate that leads to the broad way or the strait gate that leads to the narrow way; the implication is that it is not enough to enter the gate, one must also walk in the way. Likewise, Paul here says that believers must walk – we ought to walk worthy of our calling.

Paul here did not assert his apostolic authority; rather he exercised his pastoral exhortation. Instead he said, “I beseech...” The word “beseech” means “to exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:9). Paul being a prisoner of the Lord used himself to encourage believers to walk worthy of the honoured position to which God has exalted us (Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 4:1).

THE ENTREATY OF PAUL - “WALK WORTHY...” (EPH. 4:1)

Walk is a metaphor for living. Walk describes the spiritual lifestyle of the individual; how one conducts his life. In the New Testament, “walk” denotes a person’s ethical, moral and religious life. A believer’s walk – by the help of the Holy Spirit – is pleasing to God. In contrast, sinners walk according to the spirit of this present evil age.



Our Lord Jesus is “the light of the world” that shines in order to allow those in darkness to see (John 8:12). Without the light men stumble in their walk (John 11:10; cf. John 12:35). John uses “walking in the light” as an image of Christian faith (1 John 1:6; 2:6; 2 John 4, 6; 3 John 3, 4). Paul also uses the same metaphor in his epistles (Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 10:3; Gal. 5:16; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; cf. Eph. 4:1), not “according to the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2). Believers are to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), “in love. . . as children of light” (Eph. 5:2,8).

THE MOTIVATION TO WALK WORTHY - “YE ARE CALLED...” (EPH. 4:1)

Believers are “to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1).

“Worthy” is also translated “becometh” (Rom. 16:2; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:12; Col. 1:10). It denotes the proper way of doing things. The phrase “walk worthy” means that we are to live in a manner worthy of our position in Christ.

The word “vocation” has the same root as the word “called”. Verse 1 can be rendered as “that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1).



Paul writes that as God’s people, we are not to commit “fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Eph. 5:3; see also Tit. 2:3). We who bear the Christian badge must live the Christian life.

THE MANNER OF WALKING WORTHY (EPH. 4:2)

How does the worthy walk of the believer look like? He/she is to walk...

- with all lowliness and meekness. This is the fruit of the Spirit that controls one's self-interest.



As believers, we are to concentrate upon Christ and His ministry to people. We are not to be focused upon self. We must forget ourselves. We must quit looking upon our own things (Phil. 2:3-4; Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 19:21; 25:43; Luke 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 10:24, 33; 2 Cor. 8:9).

- with longsuffering. This is the fruit of the Spirit that enables one to be patient in all circumstances and with all people. Longsuffering is an attribute of God.



As believers, we are never to retaliate because we are given the power of longsuffering (Rom. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Peter 3:9; Col. 1:11; 2 Tim. 4:2).

- with forbearing one another in love. This is the fruit of the Spirit that extends selfless love to all persons, including those who do not deserve to be loved. This is the love of God for sinners.



This selfless love can be experienced only if a person knows God personally. This love has to be "shed abroad" (Rom. 5:5). This love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture (1 Cor. 13:1-13).

WALK IN UNITY (EPHESIANS 4:3)



BELIEVERS ARE TO WALK WORTHY OF THEIR CALLING. BELIEVERS ARE TO WALK IN UNITY. "ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE" (EPHESIANS 4:3).

THE PRESUMPTION OF UNITY IN THE CHURCH (EPH. 4:3)

Paul does not say that we are to work for the unity of the Church. The unity of the body of Christ is presumed. The middle wall of partition separating Jewish believers and Gentile believers have been torn down.



Every sinner regardless of race, nationality, social status, or gender can be saved (Gal. 3:28; James 2:5; Prov. 22:2; Rom. 10:12).

When a person comes to faith in Christ, the Spirit of God enters his life and binds the person to all other believers. Every believer comes through Jesus Christ and on the same ground and on the same level. Unity is the beauty and the strength of the church (Ps. 133).

However, it must be pointed out that there is a difference between unity and uniformity. Unity is when we are one – one mind, spirit, purpose, mission, and goal. Uniformity is when we all practice the same thing. As one writer puts it, "one star differs from another star in glory, but amid all the varied glories in the skies, there is no want of unity."

THE KEEPING OF UNITY IN THE CHURCH (EPH. 4:3)

Believers are to work at keeping the peace so that they can stay bound together in the unity of God's Spirit. Believers are to endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). The word "endeavour" has the idea of labouring diligently (2 Tim. 4:9, 21; Tit. 3:12; Heb. 4:11; 2 Pet. 1:10). To "endeavour" means to "do one's best".



Unity in the church is a precious commodity (Ps. 133; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12; Gal. 3:28). The lack of it spells trouble for the church (see 1 Cor. 1:10-13).



As God's people, we must always strive for unity, to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10; see also 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 1:27; 4:2; Col. 2:2; 1 Pet. 3:8).

THE FACTOR OF UNITY IN THE CHURCH (EPH. 4:3)

There is a great spiritual bond of peace wrought by the Spirit of God between all believers. All divisiveness, differences, and prejudices are set aside; and a spirit of love, peace, and unity exist.

The Holy Spirit is the bond that unites all believers, and it is a unity that is marked by peace. That means that within the church there is a prevailing spirit of peace wrought by God's Spirit. Nothing is more destructive than divisiveness between believers.



The only way to walk worthy of God's great calling is to work at keeping the peace and unity which God has given us. We, who are indwelt by the Spirit, must walk in the Spirit (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 1:27; 1 Pet. 3:8).

MANIFESTATION OF UNITY (I)

(EPHESIANS 4:4-6)

Unity in the church needs to be emphasized. This matter is so important to Paul that he gives seven reasons that believers should walk worthy and strive to keep the peace and unity of God's Spirit in the church.



THERE IS "ONE BODY" (EPH. 4:4)

There are not two bodies nor several bodies of believers. In this imperfect world, there are many different Christian denominations and churches. However, the intent of God is to have one body of people who trust and follow Christ. Every person who places his trust in Jesus Christ is placed into the body of Christ and enjoys the same privileges.

- He is born again (John 1:12-13; 3:3-6; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 5:1).
- He is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- He has a divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
- He has the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20).
- He is empowered to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
- He is placed into the new body of Christ, His church.



"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" (1 Cor. 12:13). As believers, we must be careful of attitudes that can hurt and damage the body, such as struggle for position, self-centered differences, envy, factionalism, etc. There is only one body, and only as we keep the peace and unity of the body, can we walk worthy of God's great calling (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:24; Col. 2:19).

THERE IS “ONE SPIRIT” (EPH. 4:4)

The same Spirit that indwells the Jewish believers also indwells the Gentile believers. The manifestation of the Spirit in the Jewish believers is also seen in the Gentile believers (Acts 1:8; see Acts 10:44-46; Eph. 2:14; 3:6).

- It is God's Spirit that causes a man to be born again (John 3:5-6; 6:63; Rom. 8:11).
- It is God's Spirit that calls and gifts and directs each member to fit in and work within the body (Acts 13:2; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:7).



As believers, we are indwelt by the Spirit, given gifts; thus every believer has to do his part in carrying out the mission of the body – for Christ. There is no room for independence for the believer, as we have “received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10).

THERE IS “ONE HOPE” (EPH. 4:4)

Every genuine believer has the same hope: the great day of redemption. Life in the new heavens and earth will be a life of love and joy and peace, a life of oneness and unity (Rom. 15:4; Col. 1:4-5; Tit. 2:12-13; 1 Pet. 1:3-4).



The hope for eternity is to be the driving force that stirs us to live together in peace and unity (1 John 3:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10-12).

The hope of the redeemed is that we shall be reconciled to God and to each other – all living together in a perfect world of love and joy and peace for ever and ever. And God's intent for believers is that we should live now as we shall live in the future.

MANIFESTATION OF UNITY (II)

(EPHESIANS 4:4-6)

THERE IS ONLY “ONE LORD” (EPH. 4:5)

There is only one “Lord” (Gk: kurios), which means “master, owner”. There is only one master (1 Cor. 12:5). Every believer who bows to the same Lord has to become His subject and to receive His orders. To this one Lord we owe absolute allegiance.

As subjects of the King, we are to...

- live as He said: holy and righteous and pure, bearing the fruit of His Spirit (Gal. 5:19-21)
- carry out His orders as one body (Matt. 7:21–23; 1 Cor. 12:5; Phil. 2:9–11)



To this one Lord we owe absolute obedience. Our Lord Jesus warns us that “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21–23).



As believers, our allegiance to Christ must be absolute. We cannot serve “God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24; see also Josh 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21).

THERE IS ONLY “ONE FAITH” (EPH. 4:5)

It is said that all roads lead to Rome. But there is one way that leads to heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth, and the life” and no man can go to the Father, but by Him (John 14:6).

There is only one faith that leads into God’s presence. The one faith here refers to the objective faith in Christ. There is no other approach to God (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). Therefore, there is no room for any differences. Every believer stands on the same ground of faith.



Every believer has come to God in the very same way - by believing the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is the only way, the only true faith (Gal. 1:23; Jude 3).

THERE IS ONLY “ONE BAPTISM” (EPH. 4:5)

There is only “one baptism”. Every believer must give public witness to his/her faith in Christ by submitting to the sacrament of water baptism. Every believer is in Christ and united to the body of Christ – the local church. Having entered the church through baptism, there is no room for division because divisiveness denies and brings reproach to the meaning of the baptism.



The sacrament of baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). It also signifies our unity in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

THERE IS ONLY “ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL” (EPH. 4:6)

There is only “one God and Father of all”. This is probably an ancient confession of faith.

- One God – God is creator of all and as such is supreme over all (Deut. 4:35, 39; Isa. 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21-22).
- One Father of all – As a Father, God protects, provides and loves all.
- God is above all – God is sovereign. He controls all.



If there is only one God and Father of all believers, how then could He be leading two believers to oppose each other? The answer is obvious: He could not. One or both believers are following their own fleshly carnal ways. Someone is not following the only God and Father (Mark 12:29; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

DIVERSITY IN GIFTS (I) (EPHESIANS 4:7-10)



There is "one body...one Spirit... one Lord... one God and Father of all... But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph 4:4-7). Paul has been focusing on the unity of believers (Eph. 4:2-6), and every believer is to strive to keep the oneness and unity of the Spirit.

Verse 7 is a contrast to the preceding verses. In verse 7, Paul will focus on the diversity of believers. There are differences between believers. The differences are spiritual gifts given by God which are to be used to strengthen believers and to reach the world.

GOD'S GIFTS ARE GIVEN TO ALL BELIEVERS (EPH. 4:7)

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. 4:7). Every believer is gifted. Our Lord Jesus Christ has given every believer some spiritual gift.

What are spiritual gifts? A spiritual gift does not mean the natural ability or talent of a person. Of course, God will give to believers spiritual gifts that are in line with their natural abilities and talents. Spiritual gifts refer to those gifts that are given to believers with the purpose of building up other believers in the church and in witnessing to the world.



God has given every genuine believer spiritual gifts to serve God (1 Pet. 4:10).

Christ gives to us the grace to use our gifts. Grace means the strength, wisdom, courage, and power. This means that not only are we given spiritual gifts, but we are also given the grace to use those spiritual gifts. And Christ measures out the exact amount of grace needed for the maximum use of a gift.

Believers do not have the same spiritual gifts. Believers also do not have the same spiritual gifts to the same degree (Matt. 25:15). Every believer is gifted by Christ. And every believer is given the measure of grace to use our gifts.



This means that our gift is the gift of Christ. We should not be displeased with our gift, nor should we covet to be like someone else and have his gift. Christ has placed us and given us the very best gift for us to serve Him (Rom. 12:3, 6; 1 Cor. 4:7; 12:7).

GOD'S GIFTS COME BY WAY OF CHRIST'S VICTORY (EPH 4:8)

Christ giving of gifts to men is pictured as that of a king who has defeated and conquered his enemies. On the king's victory parade as he returned from battle, the people lined the streets to welcome the king. Following in his triumphal procession is his army and the spoils of victory. The victorious king then bestows the gifts upon his own people (Ps. 68:18).

Man has two great enemies – sin and death. Christ has gone to war against both on behalf of man. Christ has conquered them, and now He gives the greatest gift of all – the gift of salvation and deliverance, the gift of eternal life, and the meaning, purpose, and significance in life. Christ has come to give life and life more abundantly (John 10:10). In addition, His gifts fill the believers' lives with meaning and purpose. Since Christ has given meaning and purpose to life, there is no reason for believers to find life meaningless. Those, who do, have not fully committed themselves to Christ.



Abundant life is found in total commitment to Christ (Luke 9:23). Abundant life is found in whole-hearted service to Christ (Matt. 16:25; 23:11; Luke 22:26; John 4:35). Abundant life is found in walking and sowing to the Spirit (Gal. 6:8).

GOD'S GIFTS ARE GIVEN AT GREAT COST (EPH 4:9-10)

Salvation is free to believers, but it comes at a great cost to God. He had to give His only begotten Son. The Son had to “[descend] first into the lower parts of the earth” (Eph. 4:9). The phrase “descended first into the lower parts of the earth” (Eph. 4:9) has three interpretations:

- The earth to which Christ came – His incarnation.
- The sepulchre in which the Lord’s body was laid – His burial
- Hades – the abode of the dead.

Christ died that He might ascend above the heavens and fill all things; that He might fill the whole universe with His presence. Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Lord of the universe. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and He rules and reigns over all.

“He ascended” is a clear reference to the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:20-21; 2:6). And that comes after he “descended first into the lower parts of the earth” (Eph. 4:9). This may simply denote this earth, which is so low in comparison with His heavenly home (Isa. 44:23). Or it may denote the fact that Christ suffered the greatest humiliation on Calvary when He endured death itself (Phil. 2:8; Ps. 69:15; Rom. 10:7).

The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that “Christ’s humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time” (WSC, Question 27).



Our Lord Jesus had to suffer humiliation and death in order to gain the right to give spiritual gifts to us. This is the enormous price of our gifts (Eph. 1:19-20; Phil. 2:8-9; Rev. 5:12).

DIVERSITY IN GIFTS (II)

(EPHESIANS 4:11)

“He gave...” Every spiritual gift is Christ-centered. Christ alone gives spiritual gifts to believers. And believers cannot generate the gifts themselves, nor give the gifts to other men. Christ alone possesses the spiritual gifts to give to men. Paul mentions five spiritual gifts.

APOSTLES

The word “apostle” (apostolos) means “to send out”. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador who is sent out into one country to represent another country.

In the New Testament, “apostle” has both a narrow and a broad usage.

- In the narrow sense, “apostle” refers to the inner group of twelve (Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Lord Jesus was replaced by Matthias) and Paul (Acts 1:21–22; 1 Cor. 9:1). These were the men who were directly chosen by the Lord Himself (see Matt. 10:1–2; Mark 3:13–14; Rom. 1:1), and who had seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus, and had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21–22; 1 Cor. 9:1). In the narrow sense, an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications.
- In the broad sense, an “apostle” refers to other men who preached the gospel, such as Barnabas (Acts. 14:4, 14, 17), Silas (1 Thess. 2:6), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7) are referred to as apostles. In the broad sense, we are all apostles.



An apostle...

- belongs to the Lord who has sent him out.
- is commissioned to be sent out.
- possesses all the authority and power of God who sends him out.



Every believer must have a personal relationship with an experiential knowledge of Christ. In that sense, we have seen Christ, and we are to bring the message of the Gospel to the world (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8).

PROPHETS

The prophet is blessed with the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. The prophet's ministry includes both prediction and proclamation; that latter being the more prominent gift.



The purpose of prophecy/proclamation is to edify the saints (1 Cor. 14:3).

EVANGELISTS

The evangelist is given the gift of carrying the gospel all over the world. It is the gift that specializes in proclaiming the gospel to the lost of the world. An evangelist is a missionary.



For every specific calling that God has for individuals, He also has a general calling for all believers (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5).

PASTORS AND TEACHERS

The word "pastor" means "shepherd". Our Lord Jesus called on Peter to shepherd His sheep (John 21:16). The Apostle Peter called on the elders in Ephesus to shepherd the church (Acts 20:28). The Apostle Peter exhorted the other ministers to shepherd the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2).

How does a shepherd look like, and what does he do? Christ is the chief shepherd of believers (1 Pet. 5:4), and pastors are under-shepherds to the Chief Shepherd.

- The shepherd knows the sheep; He knows each one by name (John 10:14; 1 Cor. 8:3; 2 Tim. 2:19; Isa. 43:1).
- The shepherd feeds the sheep even if He has to gather them in His arms and carry them to the feasting pasture (Isa. 40:11).
- The shepherd guides the sheep to the pasture and away from the rough places and precipices (Ps. 23:1-4).
- The shepherd seeks and saves the sheep who get lost (Matt. 18:11-12; Ezek. 34:16; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20).
- The shepherd restores the sheep who go astray and return (1 Pet. 2:25).
- The shepherd rewards the sheep for obedience and faithfulness (1 Pet. 5:4).
- The shepherd shall keep the sheep separate from the goats (Matt. 25:32-33).

Our Lord Jesus told Peter – feed my sheep (John 21:15-17). The feeding here denotes spiritual feeding by pastoral and pulpit ministry. Teaching is part of the gift of the pastor. The function of the teacher is the gift to instruct believers in the truth of God and His Word. The gift of teaching is one of the greatest responsibilities given by God. Thus, the teacher will be required to give a strict account to God for his faithfulness in using his gift.



As believers, we are to saturate ourselves with the Word of God. We must be like the Bereans who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:2-3).

PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (EPHESIANS 4:12-16)

The spiritual gifts are given for a purpose. The four offices with their accompanying gifts mentioned in verse 11 involve proclamation of the Gospel. In a sense, they are very specialized gifts, and they are not given in full measure to every believer although every believer should be a messenger (apostle) of God's truth, a prophet in declaring God's Word, an evangelist in bearing witness for Christ, a shepherd (pastor/teacher) in caring for others and teaching God's Word.



TO EQUIP BELIEVERS FOR MINISTRY (EPH. 4:12)

The primary purpose for the spiritual gifts is to equip believers to do the work of the ministry. The word "perfecting" means "to train" or "to bring to maturity". The primary task of the person who have been given the spiritual gifts of teaching and preaching is to be an equipper; his work is to make disciples and prepare them to serve Christ.

The church – the body of Christ – is not top heavy, meaning that it does not consist of a few professionals doing ministry. The church is made up of believers serving the Lord.



You must be involved in the work of the ministry. You must be equipped to reach the lost and to minister to the needs of a world. We are to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10).

TO PROMOTE UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS (EPH. 4:13)

Second, the responsibility of the minister of God is to promote for perfect unity, spiritual knowledge, and spiritual discernment of believers.

- The minister of God is called to bring about a perfect unity among God's people, to bring peace and reconciliation to the church, to lead people into perfect harmony and oneness of spirit, and to shepherd people out of divisiveness that works against a perfect unity.
- The minister of God is called to bring about the knowledge of the Son of God.
- The minister of God is called to bring spiritual discernment in the believers.



As a member of the body of Christ, you must be committed to the unity of the body (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 1:27; 1 Pet. 3:8), to growing in the knowledge of Christ (John 8:31-32; 17:3; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:10), to bring about a spiritually discerning believer (1 Cor. 13:11; Heb. 5:14; 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-6; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Tim. 4:15).

TO PRODUCE SPIRITUAL MATURITY OF BELIEVERS (EPH. 4:14-16)

Third, the spiritual gifts are to produce spiritual maturity of believers so that they would no longer be children, spiritually unstable and immature, being led astray by false teaching.

- The minister of God is given to us to keep us from being “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of [false] doctrine”. We must beware of the “the sleight of men”; these would be the deceivers who exchange the truth with error.

We must also beware of “cunning craftiness”; these would be the deceivers who impress believers with their “cleverness” whose real intent was to “lie in wait to deceive”.



As a member of the body of Christ, you are to be alert and sensitive to false teaching (Matt. 7:15; 15:9; Acts 20:30; Rom. 16:18; Heb. 13:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 2 John 7).

- The minister of God is given to us to help us grow in Christ through teaching and proclaiming the truth.



You are to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:3; 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22).

- The minister of God is to build up the church – the body of believers so that “every joint” [i.e. every believer] supplies something to the body of Christ [i.e. the church]. Every believer’s contribution to the church is very significant.



You must give all you are and have, to build up the church. This responsibility rests upon every single believer because each one is responsible for reaching people and building them up. As a member of a local church, you are to use your gifts for the good of the whole church (1 Cor. 12:4-7; 1 Tim. 4:15; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ps. 92:12).

Christ takes every joint or believer, and fitly joined each believer together with all the other believers. Thus, every believer is also edified by the contribution of other believers in the body of Christ. The result is that the whole body is increased, and edified.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENTILES (EPHESIANS 4:17-19)

In verses 17-24, Paul makes a distinction between the believer and the unbeliever. Believers are neither Gentiles nor Jews; they are a distinctive race of people. Therefore, they are not to walk like men; they are to walk like Christ.



Believers are not to walk as the Gentiles. The term “Gentiles” is used here to denote unbelievers and not a particular race of people. The church at Ephesus was a Gentile church. In other words, Paul was writing to Gentiles about not living as Gentiles. Believers are set off and set apart from Gentiles.



Believers are a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); thus, we are not to walk like unbelievers who do not please God.

Paul lists several traits about unbelievers that displease God. Believers are to have nothing to do with any of these; they are never to return to the paths of their former life.

UNBELIEVERS WALK IN THE VANITY OF THEIR MIND (EPH. 4:17)

The “mind” includes the ability to know, to will and to do. It includes morality as well as reasoning and understanding. The word “vanity” means “empty, futile, worthless”. When a man pushes God out of his mind, God is not in his thoughts. However, that is not to say that he does not think; it means that his mind is filled with the things of the world – pleasures, power, possessions, etc.



Your mind must be saturated with the Word of God. Beware of giving your mind to worldly thoughts and influences (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 10:4; 94:11; Prov. 6:16-19; 15:26; Ezek. 8:12).

UNBELIEVERS WALK WITH THEIR UNDERSTANDING DARKENED (EPH. 4:18)

To “understand” means “to grasp, comprehend, perceive”. It is the opposite of being “darkened”, which means to be blinded, and unable to see. The unbeliever does not understand God; his understanding is darkened and blinded, and unable to see God. As a result, he is not able to understand God and His eternal plan for the world through the Lord Jesus Christ.



You are not to return to the world of the spiritually blind (Ps. 82:5; Prov. 2:13; 4:19; Acts 28:27; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:7).

UNBELIEVERS WALK ALIENATED FROM THE LIFE OF GOD (EPH. 4:18)

To be “alienated” means “to be estranged and separated”. The unbeliever is alienated from the life of God because of their own willful ignorance and hardness of heart. The word “blindness” means that the unbeliever hardens his heart and chooses to be ignorant of God.



God had given His Son who had given His life to save us sinners, from our sins. The only way man can ever miss God’s gift of eternal life is to reject God and His gift (John 3:16-19; Acts 28:27; Eph. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:6; Ps. 58:3; Jer. 2:5; Ezek. 14:5).

UNBELIEVERS WALK DESENSITISED TO THE WORD OF GOD (EPH. 4:19)

Unbelievers are “past feeling” meaning they have reached a point where they no longer have feelings for God. They have become callous, insensible, hardened. The more a person walks without God the more callous a person becomes to God. The more a person walks in sin, the more callous his conscience becomes to righteousness. Sin becomes more and more acceptable. The person’s conscience no longer bothers him.



You must be sensitive to sin in your life (Acts 28:27; Eph. 4:19; 1 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 5:11)

UNBELIEVERS WALK IN ALL FORMS OF SENSUAL LIVING (EPH. 4:19)

Unbelievers give themselves over to all forms of sensual living.

- Lasciviousness – lewdness, bestial pleasure (see Mark 7:22; Rom. 13:13; 2 Pet. 2:2, 7, 18).
- Uncleanliness – the word “uncleanliness” describes a man who is being infested with every kind of unclean, immoral, dirty, and polluted behaviour (see Matt. 5:28; Rom. 6:19; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:7; Heb. 13:4).
- The word “greediness” describes a covetous person who desires to have more and more; hoarding all he can get and still craves for more. Such a person is also being enslaved and held in bondage by the things of this earth.



Believers are not to walk in such a life. You are not to walk as the people in the world (Exod. 20:17; Jer. 6:13; Ezek. 33:31; Mic.2:2; Hab. 2:9; Luke 12:15; Col. 3:5).

THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN (EPHESIANS 4:20-24)



Ephesians 4:20-21 stand in contrast to the preceding verses. Here Paul makes a direct appeal to the Ephesian Christians (and us), emphasising the person pronoun –“but ye have not so learned Christ”. In Greek, it is even more emphatic, with verse 20 beginning with the word “you”, where great emphasis is placed. Paul is making the point that believers do not learn Christ so as to continue to live as the Gentiles are doing.



The person who has studied Christ must allow have his heart and mind dominated by the truth of God. You do not walk in darkness. Your minds are renewed. What we have learnt must be reflected in how we live.

SO LEARNT, SO LIVE

The believer is to walk in Christ. The reason is simple; the believer is a new creature in Christ, and believers who have heard and been taught the truth must also live by that truth.

The believer’s walk is a walk in Christ, and it involves three actions.

- The believer is to put off the old man (Eph. 4:22).
- The believer is to be renewed in the spirit of his mind (Eph. 4:23).
- The believer is to put on the new man (Eph. 4:24).

THE OLD MAN (EPH. 4:22)

The “old man” refers to what a man is before he has faith in Christ. It is the very nature of man, the natural, corruptible seed which is passed on from generation to generation and leads to death. It is what is called the nature of Adam.

The Bible teaches that in Christ ...

- The believer’s *old man* has already been put to death (Rom. 6:6).
- The deeds of the old man have been *put off* from the believer (Col. 3:9).

Thus, the believer is exhorted to exercise his own will in putting off the old man. What can you do to put off the old man?



As a believer, you must count the old man as already being dead (Rom. 6:11); you must not succumb to the temptations of the flesh, and to put off the old way as you walk day to day (Rom. 6:12-13); you put on the new man (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 1:9).

THE NEW MAN (EPH. 4:24)

The new man is regenerated, renewed, born again who has become spiritually minded. It is a new man created by Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The new man is given a holy nature.

The new man is ...

- in fellowship with God
- obedient to God’s will
- devoted to God’s service

There are two Greek words translated by the English word “new”. There is the word *neos* (see Matt. 9:17) which refers to something new that has just been made, but there are already many others existing just like it. There is the word *kainos* (see Matt. 26:28) which refers to something new, something just made and there is nothing like it in existence.

THE NEW MAN (EPH. 4:24) (CONT'D)

Our Lord Jesus makes a new [kainos] man entirely – a creation unlike any other creation existing. The Gentile believer is not made into a Jew; neither is a Jewish believer made into a Gentile. Each, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is made into a new kind of person in God.

Every person can begin life all over again; every person can have a new beginning, a new life by coming to Jesus Christ. When a person believes in our Lord Jesus Christ, God creates the spirit of the person in righteousness and true holiness. God takes the faith of the person and credits it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the person stands before God in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ.



in Christ, you are quickened [made alive] quickened us together with Christ (Eph. 2:5); you are a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17); you are a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

THE RENEWED MIND (EPHESIANS 4:22-23)

We are what we think. And what we think, we also do. The believer in Christ therefore has to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:22-23).



THE FORMER CONVERSATION OF THE OLD MAN

The manner of life of the unconverted sinner (old man) is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”. The word “corrupt” means “to lead astray” (1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 7:2; 11:3), just as Eve was led astray. The manner of life of the old man is corrupt and corrupting. The self-centred desires that belong to that old way of life, are deceitful and destructive.



Our personal evil desires corrupt us (Eph. 4:22; Jude 10). Our former manner of life (Eph. 2:2, 3; 4:17-19; 5:8, 14; Col. 1:21; 2:13; 3:7) must cease.

THE CORRUPT MIND OF THE OLD MAN

In Christ, however, the mind of man is renewed. A total and radical change of the mind is essential to a complete turnaround. The mind of the old man is affected by sin. It is centred on self, the flesh, the world and on this life.

What does the Word of God say about the mind of the old man? It is utterly corrupt. The mind of the unregenerate man is ...

- Vain and futile in its imaginations (Rom. 1:21)
- Reprobate (Rom. 1:28)
- Carnal and in enmity against God (Rom. 8:7; Col. 2:18)
- Blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4)
- Full of vanity (Eph. 4:17)
- Centred on earthly things (Phil. 3:18-19)
- Alienated from God (Col. 1:21)
- Defiled (Tit. 1:15)



Since the fall of man, God “saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Sinners are predisposed to wicked thoughts. Only the Word of God and the Holy Spirit can renew our mind.

THE RENEWED MIND OF THE NEW MAN

The believer's mind is to be renewed. The word "renew" means "to be made new, changed, turned around." The grammar of the phrase "to be renewed" implies that the believer both performs and receives the renewal of the mind, meaning that it is a collaborative effort.

A. THE MIND IS RENEWED BY THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

When a person receives the Lord Jesus Christ as His Saviour, he is spiritually born again (John 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:23); he is made into a new man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:17); and he is given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Only Christ can implant the mind of Christ within a person. Only Christ can give a person His thoughts and the Spirit to live out His thoughts.



When you believe in Christ, He changes your mind to focus upon God; whereas you centred your mind on worldly things, in Christ, your mind is now centered upon spiritual matters.

B. THE LIFE IS TRANSFORMED BY CHRIST

The believer is to live a transformed life; that means he is to walk day by day renewing his mind more and more.



As a believer, you are to walk humbly before God and men, have your minds centred on the praise and glory of God (Phil. 4:8); have the mind of Christ in every circumstance (1 Pet. 4:1).

- The believer is to love the Lord with all his mind (Matt. 22:37).
- The believer is to keep his mind upon spiritual things, not carnal things (Rom. 8:5-6).
- The believer is to cast down imaginations and every thought that interrupts his knowledge of God and to captivate every thought for Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5).
- The believer is to let the mind of Christ be in him by walking humbly before God and men (Phil. 2:5).

THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (I)

(EPHESIANS 4:25-32)

Eph 4:25-32 is filled with practical applications. Christianity is not just about knowing the Holy Scriptures and theology, but it is also about living out what we know. We are to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22-25).

Paul compares the Christian's life to putting on clothes. Just as a person must always dress appropriate to the occasion, so the Christian must put on the characteristics that reflect our Lord Jesus Christ. There are things that we are to put on, and things that we are not to put on. The believer is to put off the garments of the old man.

- The garment of lying (v. 25).
- The garment of anger (v. 26-27).
- The garment of stealing (v. 28).
- The garment of worthless talk (v. 29).
- The garment of disobedience (v. 30).
- The garment of unkindness (v. 31).
- The garments of the new man (v. 32).

PUT AWAY LIES AND PUT ON TRUTH

The believer is to strip away the garment of lying (pseudo), which encompasses all falsehoods, untruthfulness, deception, misrepresentation, exaggeration.

A. THE NATURE OF LIES

- Lying violates the Ninth Commandment (Exod. 20:16).
- Lying is one of the gross sins that defile men (Matt. 15:19).
- Lying takes its stand with the father of lies, the devil (John 8:44).
- Lying is closely associated with idolatry. It causes a person to profess something other than the truth (Rev. 21:27).
- Lying is to be a characteristic of the antichrist (2 Thess. 2:9).
- Lying is not what it professes to be (1 John 2:21).
- Lying is opposed to the truth (1 John 2:27).



B. THE WORK OF LIES

Lies do three things.

- Lies misrepresent the truth by camouflage and concealment. Camouflage and concealment of a truth deprive a person of truth so that he has to act upon a lie. If the lie is serious, it can be very damaging.
- Lies deceive a person. A person deceives another for several reasons – to get what he wants, to seduce someone, or to cause harm or hurt. Lying causes misunderstanding, disappointment, bewilderment, helplessness, and emotional upheaval.
- Lies build unstable relationships. Two people cannot possibly be friends if the relationship is based upon lies. Lying destroys confidence, love, trust, and hope.



Lies may get you temporal gain, but in the end, the losses will always be greater. However, a lie about the salvation of the gospel would have far greater and eternal consequences.

C. SPEAK THE TRUTH

The believer is to be what he says. There is to be nothing covered, nothing hidden. He is to be exactly the same in public that he is in private. Scripture gives one strong reason for believers to speak only the truth: we are members of one another. Every believer is a member of the great body of people which God is building – the church.



A body functions well when each part of it passes true messages to the brain and to the other parts. You are part of the body of Christ. If then we are all bound into one body, that body can only function when we speak the truth.

PUT AWAY ANGER

The Holy Scripture recognises that men do get angry. There are times when anger is called for. That said, we are to guard against sinning because anger is such a strong emotion that causes us to overreact, lash out and hurt others.

A. SINFUL ANGER

Sinful anger takes the following forms.

- Anger that is marked by malice. The angry person allows anger to fester. He will neither forgive nor forget. The angry person seeks revenge.
- Anger that is marked by contempt. The angry person despises and ridicules the other person. He exalts self and despises the other person (Prov. 21:24).
- Anger that is marked by curses. The angry person seeks to destroy a man and his reputation morally, intellectually, and spiritually.



Do not allow your anger to be exploited by the devil in sowing discord and disturbance and dissension. (Col. 3:8; James 1:19; 1 John 3:15; Ps. 37:8; Prov. 14:17; 16:32; 19:11; Eccl. 7:9).

B. RIGHTEOUS ANGER

Righteous or justified anger is that which is motivated by a just and legitimate cause, and is marked in disciplined and controlled expressions.



We must never allow anger to take hold of us without just cause. In expressing righteous anger, our goal must be to rectify the situation in the most peaceful way possible (Rom. 12:18; John 2:12-16).

THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (II)

(EPHESIANS 4:25-32)



PUT AWAY STEALING

To steal is to cheat, to take wrongfully from another person, either legally or illegally. Man-made laws do not determine whether a person is stealing or not because men can take from others without ever breaking a law. Example: when a man hoards, taking things well beyond what they need; and when they hoard, they are taking something that by nature belongs to others.

The Bible teaches that stealing is the taking of anything that rightfully belongs to others. There are at least three forms of stealing.

A. TAKING SOMETHING WHICH BELONGS TO OTHERS

A person steals by taking something which is personally owned by another person. It may be something as simple as a pencil from the office, an answer to a test from a fellow student, time from work, or funds through embezzlement.



If we take it, we have broken the Eighth Commandment (Tit. 2:10; 1 Pet. 4:15; Prov. 11:1; 20:14; 21:6).

B. HOARDING MORE THAN WHAT YOU NEED

The biblical understanding of stealing extends beyond taking something that is not ours; it is also keeping back from what is not needed for your own needs or depriving others of what is desperately needed by them.



Paul says that we are to “labour ... that [we] may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph 4:28). This means that when we use our God-given ability to make money, and then we keep it all to ourselves without helping those who have real needs, we are stealing (1 Tim. 6:9, 17-19; Ezek. 22:12).

C. LIVING EXTRAVAGANTLY BEYOND WHAT YOU NEED

A person steals by living extravagantly, beyond what he needs. Such a person indulges in his own fleshly material desires without paying attention to his needy neighbour. The income divide between the First World nations (rich ones) and Third World nations (poor ones) have been growing. The divide is not because of a lack but an unequal distribution of resources.



At the level of the local church, such a divide is tragic because it is God's intent for believers to meet each other's needs (Matt. 19:21; 23:25; Mark 4:19; Luke 12:33; Amos 5:11).

WORK HARD TO GIVE

The answer to stealing is diligent work. This is the will of God for the believer: working in order that we may have the means to help others who are in need. This is the divine purpose to work.



We work so that we do not have to steal. However, we work not just to enrich ourselves but also give to help others so that they do not have to steal.

PUT AWAY WORTHLESS TALK

Every believer is to put away filthy and foul talk. Paul uses the phrase "corrupt communication", referring to communication that is rotten and worthless, and this would include cursing and unholy talk.

Paul likens a man with a foul mouth to "an open sepulchre [grave]" (Rom. 3:13) – an open grave a symbol of corruption and uncleanness. A man's foul mouth tarnishes his character, destroys his attractiveness (Matt. 12:34; James 3:6; Prov. 24:2).

SPEAK TO EDIFY

Every believer is to speak only that which is good, and which will edify people. Speech is for the purpose of sharing good things, of building up and strengthening people, of ministering grace and helping each other as we plow through life.



Be careful not just about what you say but also the tone of your voice (Luke 24:32; Eph. 5:19; Ps. 141:3; 145:11; Prov. 16:24; 25:11; Eccl. 10:12; Isa. 50:4; Mal. 3:16).

THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (III)

(EPHESIANS 4:25-32)



GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The believer is not to grieve the Holy Spirit. The word “grieve” means “to cause pain or sorrow” (see Matt. 26:37; 17:23; John 16:20). In Ephesians 4:30, it denotes sorrow over sin by the believer (2 Cor. 7:11). It is possible to sorrow over sins without repentance (Matt. 19:22). And it is also possible to experience joy along with sorrow because of the hope ahead (1 Pet. 1:6).

The command in Ephesians 4:30 is very emphatic, and this is seen in the name of the Holy Spirit; He is addressed as “the holy Spirit of God” – a double reference.

A. HOW IS THE HOLY SPIRIT GRIEVED?

To grieve the Holy Spirit is to wound Him. There are at least four ways the Holy Spirit can be grieved.

- He is grieved when believers allow impure things to penetrate their life or thoughts (Rom. 8:5-7).
- He is grieved when believers behave immorally (Rom. 8:12-13).
- He is grieved when believers act unjustly (Acts 5:3-4).
- He is grieved when believers participate in anything contrary to the nature of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:8-10).

B. WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST NOT BE GRIEVED?

The reason we should not grieve the Spirit of God is because of His great ministry to us – He has sealed us until the day of redemption.



The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the assurance that you are a child of God and secures your eternal salvation. Though the Holy Spirit will not finally withdraw from those in whom He dwells, yet when the Spirit is grieved, He withholds the manifestations of his presence.

SINS OF THE OLD MAN

Every believer is to put off the following behaviours and attitudes (and this list is by no means exhaustive).



Every believer is to “put away” these attitudes and behaviour, meaning to say that these behaviours are to be cleaned out of your life. Let there be a holy intolerance of these things in your life.

- Bitterness – resentment, harshness.
A man who is bitter is often sharp, resentful, harsh, unpleasant. God desires men to be filled with love and joy and peace, and to express such. Thus, any expression of bitterness is sin (see Acts 8:23; Rom. 3:14; Eph. 4:31; Heb. 12:15).
- Wrath – angry emotion, rage, passion (see Luke 4:28; Rom. 2:8; Rev. 16:1, 19; 19:15).
- Anger – the nuance difference between wrath and anger is that whereas a person’s wrath can be justified; anger, on the other hand, is unreasonable, which results in verbal brawls and physical fights (see Mark 3:5; Rom. 3:5; Rev. 14:10).
- Clamour – argumentative, fussing, insulting behaviour that does not lend itself to calm and collected discussion (see Matt. 25:6; Acts 23:9; Heb. 5:7; Rev. 14:18; 21:4).
- Evil speaking – the Greek word is *blasphemia*, from which we get the English word “blasphemy”, which means “slander, impious and injurious speech” (see Matt. 12:31; 1 Tim. 6:4; Jude 1:9; Rev. 2:9).
- Malice – evil, wickedness, ill will. Malice depicts a behaviour that opposes godly living and righteousness (see Matt. 6:34; Acts 8:22; Rom. 1:29; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1, 16).

CHARACTER OF THE NEW MAN

Every believer is to put on the garments of the new man. Ephesians 4:32 is an example of “one another” verses which is easy to understand but not so easy to practise.



Having experienced God's goodness, mercy and grace, we are called to extend the same to others.

- Kind – gentle, caring, helpful, courteous, good, showering favours upon people. It is the opposite of being neglectful, harsh, sharp, bitter, and resentful. God's “goodness” is especially manifest in His willingness to forgive the unforgivable (see Matt. 11:30; Luke 6:35; Rom. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:3).
- Tenderhearted – compassionate, merciful, understanding. It means to be aware of a person's hurts and sufferings, problems and difficulties, emotions and mental state, physical and spiritual condition (see 1 Pet. 3:8; Matt. 5:7; Luke 6:36; John 13:35)
- Forgiving – gracious, to extend grace for wrong that has been done. The Apostle Paul links this word to God's graciousness in His giving of Christ on behalf of the world (Rom. 8:32; cf. 1 Cor. 2:12).

CONCLUSION

The reason we should forgive each other is because God has forgiven us. No matter how much a person has done against us, it does not come close to what we have done against God (Matt. 11:25; Luke 6:35–36; 17:4; Col. 3:13).

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
Ephesians

an apostle of Jĕ'sūs Christ by the
of God, to the saints which are at
ūs, and to the faithful in Christ Jĕ's-

be to you, and peace, from God our
nd from the Lord Jĕ'sūs Christ,
be the God and Father of our
s Christ, who hath blessed us with
l blessings in heavenly places in
g as he hath chosen us in him
undation of the world, that we
oly and without blame before
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n by Jĕ'sūs Christ to himself,
e good pleasure of his will,
ise of the glory of his
e hath made us accepted in
have redemption through
iveness of sins, according
grace;
n abounded toward us in
ndence;
own unto us the mystery
g to his good pleasure
ed in himself:
sation of the fulness of
r together in one all
which are in heaven, *us*
; even in him:
ave obtained an in-
nated according to
worketh all
vn will.

raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his
own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power,
and might, and dominion, and every name
that is named, not only in this world, but also
in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all *things* under his feet,
and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to
the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him
that filleth all in all.

2 AND you *hath he quickened*, who were
dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according
to the course of this world, according to the
prince of the power of the air, the spirit that
now worketh in the children of disobedi-
ence:
3 Among whom also we all had our con-
versation in times past in the lusts of our
flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of
the mind; and were by nature the children
of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his
great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace
ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised *us* up together
with him, *us* sit together in heaven:
7 That in the

ephesians

THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN

A STUDY ON PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
(adapted from the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)



SERMON

- 01 WALK IN THE LOVE OF GOD (EPH. 5:1-2)
- 02 CLEAN UP (EPH. 5:3-5)
- 03 BE SEPARATE - PERSONAL SEPARATION (EPH. 5:6-7)
- 04 YE ARE THE LIGHT (EPH. 5:8-10)
- 05 FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (EPH. 5:9)
- 06 AWAKE! (EPH. 5:11-14)
- 07 WALK CAREFULLY (EPH. 5:15-16)
- 08 WALK IN THE WILL OF GOD (EPH 5:17)
- 09 FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (EPH. 5:18)
- 10 MAKING MUSIC (EPH. 5:19)
- 11 BEING THANKFUL (EPH. 5:20)
- 12 SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER (EPH. 5:21)
- 13 THE GOD-FEARING WIFE (EPH. 5:22-24)
- 14 THE GOD-FEARING HUSBAND (I) (EPH. 5:25-33)
- 15 THE GOD-FEARING HUSBAND (II) (EPH. 5:25-33)
- 16 THE MYSTERY (EPH. 5:32-33)

WALK IN THE LOVE OF GOD (EPHESIANS 5:1-2)



"Be ye followers of God." This is one of the greatest challenges in all the Word of God. To follow God means to live a life after the pattern of God. In Ephesians 5:2-4, our following God means the following:

- Loving as God loves (v. 2)
- Being morally pure as God is (v. 3)
- Being truthful as God is (v. 4)

THE COMMAND TO FOLLOW

Everyone is commanded to follow God. This has the idea of commitment, devotion, allegiance and attention. Before a person can be a follower of God, he must commit and attach himself to God. He must surrender and devote his life to God and then begin to follow after God.

The word "followers" literally means "imitators". Just as small children learn by imitating their parents, so believers grow spiritually by imitating God.



We are to follow God in the following ways: "Be perfect" (Matt. 5:48). "Be holy" (Lev. 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). "Be changed into the same image of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:18).

THE PERSON TO FOLLOW

Christ the Son is in the complete likeness of God the Father. He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). He is "in the form of God ... equal with God" (Phil. 2:6). "In [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

We are to follow God by loving as Christ loved. Paul here mentions two things about the death of Christ -

- (1) He gave Himself for us;
- (2) He gave Himself as an offering.

A. HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR US

The statement "He gave Himself for us" does not mean that Christ died as an example for us. The statement means that Christ died in our place, as our substitute. (see 1 Pet. 2:21-25)



Christ died as a substitutionary sacrifice for us (John 6:51; 10:11, 15; 15:13; 17:19; Rom. 8:32; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:14).

B. HE GAVE HIMSELF AS AN OFFERING TO GOD

The second statement adds another depth to the meaning to the death of Christ. He not only died for us, but He also died as an offering.



We are to walk in love to the same extent as Christ has loved us. There is to be no limit to the offerings and sacrifice of our lives to God and to men (John 13:35; 15:12; Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-8, 20).

"Offering" alludes to the burnt offering of the Old Testament (Leviticus 1:1ff). The offering was given to God not only because of sin, but also because a person wished to glorify and honour God. The offering of was a picture of the offer's love and adoration to God.

In giving Himself as an "offering to God," the Son was looking beyond our need to His own intent of glorifying the Father. The lesson is that unlike the first Adam who lived unto himself, disobeyed and failed to glorify God, Christ - the second Adam lived unto God and made the glory of God His one pursuit (John 14:31; Luke 2:42; John 5:30).

CLEAN UP (EPHESIANS 5:3-5)

The Christian is to love as Christ loves. He is to be morally pure as Christ is pure. One who has been redeemed cannot continue in sin. Paul asked, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2). The reason is "that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:6-7).



FOUR THINGS THAT DEFILE OUR LIVES

Paul here mentions three ways that the Christian can be morally and spiritually defiled – fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness.

- **Fornication.** Christians must keep our bodies from fornication. The Greek word for "fornication" is the word from which we get "pornography". It denotes all forms of sexual immorality – pre-marital, extra-marital and virtual. It is also used as a metaphor for religious idolatry (Rev. 2:21; 14:8).
- **Uncleanness.** In the Gospels, our Lord Jesus gave a new and deeper understanding of "uncleanness" from that taught by the Pharisees. He put aside the ritualistic understanding of "uncleanness" and moved us toward a clean heart (see Matt. 5:8; Ps. 51:12).

We are not made clean or unclean by external objects, but by internal attitudes. It is "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man ... For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" (Matt. 15:11, 19).

FOUR THINGS THAT DEFILE OUR LIVES (CONT'D)

- **Covetousness.** Mark's Gospel includes "covetousness" in the list of the unclean proceedings from the heart (Mark 7:22). The sin of covetousness is the desire to accumulate possessions and wealth (1 Thess. 2:5; 2 Pet. 2:3). Covetousness is a manifestation of man's insatiable appetite for things to the extent that possessions are esteemed more highly than the Creator. Hence, covetousness is linked to idolatry.
- **Filthiness.** Filthiness refers to conduct and conversation that are repulsive, shameful, immoral as opposed to that which is godly and pure (Rom. 1:26-27; 6:19; James 1:21; 2 Pet. 2:9-10).



These sins are not to be named even once among believers. We are not to be associated with these things that will render us unclean. God's people must have nothing to do with such moral filth (Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:5; 5:22; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 3:14).

TWO THINGS THAT DEFILE OUR TONGUE

The believer who follows God must also watch his speech. He has to be pure in speech and conversation; he cannot let his mouth become foul and polluted, filthy and vile. Paul lists three things that will defile our tongue – foolish talking, and jesting.



We must guard our words so that they will not bring reproach to the name of our Saviour. We are to be engaged in conversation that builds people up and offers thanks and praise to God (Col. 3:17; 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:18; 2 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 2:8; Eccl. 10:12).

- **Foolish talking.** The believer is never to engage in "foolish talking", literally moronic words – the words that come forth the tongues of one who is foolish. It denotes speech that is empty, unthoughtful, senseless, silly, corrupt and purposeless talk. Foolish speech is talk that just fritters away and wastes time. It also denotes sinful, foolish talk (1 Tim. 1:10; Prov. 10:19; Eccl. 5:3; 10:13).
- **Inconvenient jesting.** The phrase literally means talk that is unbecoming. It describes clever and witty remarks, suggestive and off-coloured jokes that is used to attract attention (Prov. 26:18-19; 2 Tim. 3:6; 1 Pet. 3:10).

ONE DREADFUL OUTCOME

Filthy conduct and unbecoming conversation are not without their consequences. Paul uses three words to describe persons whose deeds and words do not reflect their redeemed state – whoremonger, unclean person, covetous man.

- **Whoremonger.** The term is generally used to describe one who engages in prostitution. In the Bible, it denotes one who practices sexual immorality or who is an immoral person (1 Cor. 5:9, 11; Heb. 12:16). Such a person may be a church-goer, but he is classified as a sinner (1 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 21:8; 22:15) and will be excluded from the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19-21).
- **Unclean person.** This speaks of a person's mindset, desires, and conduct. In 2 Corinthians 6:17, Paul used the words to describe someone outside of God's covenantal care.
- **Covetous man.** Such a person strives for material possessions. It describes a man who is motivated by an inordinate desire for things. In 1 Corinthians 5:10, Paul links greediness with sexual sins as well as the sins of immoderation, including gluttony and drunkenness. Paul also makes the link between covetousness and idolatry because the covetous man worships mammon (Matt. 6:24).



Paul's warning that the sinner will have no part with God. His profession does not matter; if he practices these things, he will not share in the kingdom of Christ and of God. His possessions does not matter too. He may have a lot, but he does not have the one thing that is really worth having – saving grace (Mark 8:36-37).

BE SEPARATE - PERSONAL SEPARATION (EPHESIANS 5:6-7)

Paul warns us about the deceivers that are in the world whose purpose is to lure believers into committing sin. These deceivers dangle the bait of carnal and sinful pleasure. Paul says that such people “serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18).

Some of these deceivers may appear in the pulpit. Paul says that “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” (2 Cor. 11:13-14; 2 Tim. 3:13; Tit. 1:10; 2 John 7).



WARNING OF GOD'S WRATH

The deceptions come in two forms.

- There are some people who think that they can do anything and still be acceptable to God. This thinking is based on the idea that the spirit is the only important part of man. The spirit is the only part that really matters to God. What a man does with his body does not matter.

The Bible says no. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). God saves the whole man – the body and the soul.

- There are some people who think that sin is irrelevant. God is love, and it is His business to forgive. It does not matter how much sin we have committed because God is there to forgive. The more we sin, the more God forgives. So, why not sin, and let God's mercy and love shine through us.

Again, the Bible says no. Christ has saved us from the power of sin. The believer, who has been forgiven and delivered from sin, cannot live a life of sin.

Paul's warning is that we are not to dismiss or forget the wrath of God against sin and sinners. The wrath of God is His anger against sinners. It is not an arbitrary anger. Rather, it is an anger that is based on His holiness. God's anger is righteous, just, and good. God's anger stands against the sins and evil of men, and the injustices and wickedness of a world.

MOTIVATION TO HOLINESS

The believer's duty, in the light of Paul's warning of God's wrath, is to follow God. Following God necessitates separation from the world that is unclean. No believer is to take part in the sins mentioned in the preceding verses (Eph. 5:3-5). No believer is to walk in sin. This is a call to personal separation.



"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20). The holiness of God will never cause Him to overlook sin, or He would not be God (Rom. 1:18; 2:5).



Every believer is to separate himself from those sins, and from all who commit such sins (Acts 2:40; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Cor. 6:14, 17-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 John 2:15-16).

YE ARE THE LIGHT (EPHESIANS 5:8-10)



At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus presents us with two ways: the wide gate and the broad way that leads to destruction, and the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to life. Paul also presents us with two ways: there is the life and walk of darkness or the life and walk of light. There is a world of difference between the two because a person's eternity is determined by the walk that he pursues.

In verses 8 to 14, Paul expounds on the significance of light.

- Light is the nature of believers (Eph. 5:8).
- Light bears the fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 5:9).
- Light shows what is acceptable (Eph. 5:10).
- Light exposes the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11-12).
- Light reveals and converts everything it touches (Eph. 5:13).
- Light awakens the sleeping (Eph. 5:14).

DARKNESS ENSLAVES

Before a person is saved, he is not only in darkness, but he is darkness. What does this mean?

- It means that he does not know where he has come from. The unbeliever is in darkness about the truth of where he originated.
- It means that he does not know why he is on earth. The unbeliever does not understand the real purpose, meaning, and significance of life. Life is all a mystery. He lives in darkness as to why he and everyone else are really on earth.
- It means that he does not know where he is going. The unbeliever is in darkness about the future.



Unbelievers are wrapped up in darkness: past, present, and future. Apart from God, no man knows the truth. Apart from God's truth, you are walking in darkness (Matt. 6:23; John 1:5; 3:19; Rom. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:4).

LIGHT SHINES

The unbeliever is in darkness, but truth is the light that dispels darkness. The believer is light in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 8:12). Christ brings light to life. He shows us the truth of life, of God, of creation, of death, and of destiny. He shows us ...

- the beginning and origin of all things.
- the purpose, meaning, and significance of all things.
- the truth of death and eternity.

Jesus Christ has not only shown us light; He has made us light. He has changed our nature from darkness to light.

LIGHT PROVES

Light proves what is acceptable. This means that as the believer walks in the light ...

- He proves what is acceptable and not acceptable to the Lord.
- He discriminates between what is acceptable and not acceptable to the Lord.
- He shows to the world what is acceptable and not acceptable to the Lord.
- He shows what path to take and what path not to take.
- He shows what a person should do and not do.



In Christ, we walk in the light, and we are now the very embodiment of light itself. Therefore, we are to walk as children of light (Matt. 5:14; John 1:5; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 5:5). When we walk as children of light, we shine in goodness, righteousness, and truth.



Because the Lord loved and gave Himself for us, everything we do is to be "unto the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:1; 5:21; Heb. 11:5; 13:16; 1 John 4:1).

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (EPHESIANS 5:9)



A person who shines for Jesus is one that bears the fruit of the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:9, Paul lists three aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. Bear in mind it is the fruit of the Spirit, meaning that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that produces the fruit.

GOODNESS

A person is good when he is full of virtue and excellence, kindness and helpfulness, peace and consideration. It means that a person is full of all good and he does all good. A man of goodness is one who will not give license to evil. He will not allow evil to indulge itself and treat others unjustly. He will not allow others to suffer evil.



As believers, we must bear the reputation of goodness. Believers are to be full of all goodness (Rom. 15:14; 2 Thess. 1:11).

RIGHTEOUSNESS

To be righteous means both to be right and to do right. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous without living righteously.

There are those who focus on being righteous and neglect doing righteousness. This leads to two errors.

- False security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has believed in Jesus Christ, but he neglects obeying God and serving man.
- Loose living. It allows one to live a life of sin because he feels secure and comfortable in his faith in Christ.

There are those who stress doing righteousness and neglect being righteous. This also leads to two serious errors.

- Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love – that God does not love him and accept him because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
- Being judgmental and fault-finding. It causes a person to think that he is righteous because he keeps certain laws. And he judges others who fails to keep those laws.

TRUTHFULNESS

Truth here denotes moral truth, saving truth, working truth, living truth. It is not simply something to be known; it is something to be done (John 8:31). It is truth in “the inward parts” (Psalm 51:6). It is diametrically opposed to hypocrisy. It does not compromise with evil. It abstains from the appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

Truth does the following to believers.

- Sets man free from the shadow of doubt and despair. Jesus Christ is the truth, and believers in Christ no longer have to grasp and grope about to know the truth (John 1:9, 14).
- Sets men free from the bondages of sin. Man no longer has to grasp after the power to overcome; nor does he have to struggle against the weight of guilt (John 1:12; 14:6; Rom. 7:23-25; 8:6, 15).



We are made righteous not because of our works. We are made righteous by the works of Christ. But having been made righteous by Christ, we are to do righteousness (Matt. 5:20; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:11; Tit. 2:12-13).



As believers, Christ has made it possible for us to live in His truth and for His glory.

- Sets man free from the bondage of death. Man no longer has to be subjected to the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15; John 5:24-29; Rom. 8:2).
- Sets man free from the bondage of eternal judgment and hell (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6, 8-9; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).
- Sets man free to be saved to the uttermost. Jesus Christ, the Truth, is able to save man to the uttermost – completely, perfectly, finally, and for eternity. All a person has to do is to come to Christ for salvation, for He lives forever to intercede for every man (Heb. 7:25; Col. 2:9-10).

AWAKE!

(EPHESIANS 5:11-14)



Just as light shows what is acceptable to God, light also exposes the works of darkness. And just as light keeps a man from falling, darkness leaves a man stumbling and groping about in the world, lost and unable to see where he is going.

DARKNESS IS UNFRUITFUL

Darkness is a mark of unfruitfulness. The unfruitful works of darkness are the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21; see also Eph. 5:3-6) - works that lead to death.



We are not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Acts 2:40; 1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Cor. 6:14, 17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:15-16).

DARKNESS IS SHAMEFUL

Just as light dispels darkness; the absence of light engenders darkness. Sin is never to be taken lightly. Paul says that it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret, meaning that we are not to engage in conversations about the dark works of this world. Instead, believers are charged to reprove it.



As believers, we are to reflect so much light that all the works of darkness around us are exposed and expelled. (Luke 17:3; 1 Tim. 1:13; 5:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Col. 4:6; Titus 2:8).

LIGHT REVEALS AND CLEANSSES

Light reveals and converts everything it touches. Note two things.

- When light touches something it becomes light. When the light of Jesus Christ touches the life of a person in darkness, that life is changed: it becomes light. And that person begins to touch the lives of those in darkness who surround him.
- When light is shone, the works of darkness are exposed. When a person is confronted with Christ, his dark works are exposed in all their filth and corruption. That is why sinners prefer their dark works (John 3:20). But when a man is confronted with Christ and abandons his dark sins, the light of Jesus Christ is just like the rays of the sun. The light of Jesus Christ not only illuminates and reveals, but it also cleanses.

LIGHT AWAKENS

Light awakens the sleeping, those who are spiritually dead. Sinners live in the darkness of spiritual sleep and spiritual death. Sadly, Paul was also directing these words to believers because many professing believers are passing through life just like unbelievers: living in the darkness of spiritual sleep, unaware of the dangers of sin, and ignorant of what God has called us to be.



As believers, we are the light of the world. We are to let our light of good works shine so that they may glorify God (Matt. 5:16; Phil 2:15).



As Christians, we must be awake; we must be alert (Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; John 8:12; 12:35, 46; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 John 2:8).

WALK CAREFULLY (EPHESIANS 5:15-16)



In Ephesians 5:15-21, the Apostle Paul deals with the Christian's way of life. He uses the metaphor of walking. Life is a walk, a path that believers trod every day. How the believer walks day by day throughout life is crucial to the cause of Christ. The believer's life is either a testimony for the glory of God or one that gives an occasion for unbelievers to reproach the Christian faith.

WALK CAREFULLY

First, Paul exhorts believers to walk circumspectly, that is, carefully and accurately. There are two ways to walk - foolishly or wisely.

A. WALK AS A FOOL

The fool is unthinking, careless, uncaring, and worldly-minded. The fool gives little thought about where he is heading. He just arises in the morning, goes to work or goes about his daily routine with little thought about God and about what happens beyond this life.

The fool is not concerned about watching every step and being alert to every temptation and pitfall in life. The fool goes through life carelessly not thinking of the eternal consequences of his decisions or actions.

B. WALK AS THE WISE

The wise man is a thoughtful, careful, caring, spiritually-minded person. The wise man knows God personally, and he knows that his purpose on earth is to live a righteous and godly life, and to bear testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the wise man walks in the presence and praise of God.



As believers, we are to watch our steps. We have to make sure that we walk in the path of righteousness and in the Spirit (Eph. 4:1; Col. 2:6; 1 John 1:7; 2:6).

REDEEM THE TIME

Second, Paul also exhorts believers to redeem the time. The idea is not to buy time because time is the gift of God. We are given time. What we have to do is to use the time that God has given us to buy things of value. This means two things.

A. USE TIME WISELY

Believers must use time wisely. We are not to waste time. Time exists. There is time here with or without us. What we need to do is to use time to do the best that we can for God's glory.



We have a choice in how we use our time. We can waste time engaging in activities of little value, or we can use time wisely, keeping our thoughts and hands busy serving God and ministering to the needs of others.

B. SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY

Believers can redeem time by taking advantage of the opportunities that God has placed in our way. Believers are to redeem the opportunities to live righteously and be godly.

CONCLUSION

Paul exhorts us to redeem the time because the days are evil. The word "evil" refers to the temptations and persecutions that confront believers each day. We must therefore stay alert to keep from falling. The task of every believer is to redeem the time and make the most use of what time and opportunities that God has given us.



How many of us waste time? So much time is wasted by so many being inefficient, by procrastinating, by being slothful, by worldly preoccupation (1 Cor. 7:29-31; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8; Col. 4:5; Ps. 90:12; Eccles. 12:1).

WALK IN THE WILL OF GOD (EPHESIANS 5:17)



To walk carefully is to walk understanding the Lord's will. Note how Paul describes the foolish and the wise man.

- The foolish man is one who does not understand the will of the Lord.
- The wise man is a man who does understand the will of the Lord.

The word "understand" means to grasp and to perceive. The emphasis is not only on the process of gaining information but also the process of obtaining comprehension. Quoting Isaiah 6:9 in reference to His use of parables, our Lord Jesus stated that physical hearing did not always bring mental comprehension (Matt. 13:13; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10).

Paul tells us that the "days are evil" (Eph. 5:16); therefore, believers must understand what God's will is in order to conquer the evil. If he does not, then he is as a fool and acting unwisely.

"Doing the will of God" is the supreme example of discipleship (Mark 3:35; Matt. 12:50; cf. Heb. 13:21; 1 John 2:17). Our Lord Jesus also states that it is doing the will of God that provides the proper credentials for entrance into the Kingdom (Matt. 7:21). Doing the will of God means obedience to Him (Matt. 26:42; Luke 22:42), and the suppression of one's personal desire (Rom. 1:10).

The question remains, how can a person know what the will of the Lord is? There are two things believers must do to know the will of God.

KNOW THE WORD OF GOD

When we know the Word of God, we will be able to apply the Word to situations that we encounter in our daily living, and that is knowing the will of God.



The will of God is found in the Word of God. Thus, when we obey the Word of God, we will actually be doing the will of God (John 8:31-32; 17:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 1 Peter 1:22; Ps. 40:8; 119:9).

BE SENSITIVE TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our Lord Jesus says that the Holy Spirit “shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit will neither teach us things nor lead us in a way that is contradictory to the Word of God (John 16:13-14).



The Holy Spirit leads you to walk by the Word of God. If we will walk in the Spirit, then we will most definitely be walking by the Word of God and doing His will (Rom. 8:4-5, 13-14; Ps. 143:10).

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (EPHESIANS 5:18)

For much of Ephesians 5, Paul's theme is "walk" - walk in love (Eph. 5:2), walk in the light (Eph. 5:8), walk circumspectly (Eph. 5:15). In Ephesians 5:18, Paul tells us how not to walk. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).



BE NOT DRUNK

Drunkenness means to be intoxicated with strong drink (Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; Prov. 20:1; Isa. 28:7; Ezek. 23:32; 39:19).

The word "excess" is also translated "riot" (see Tit. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4). When it applies to excessive drinking, it speaks of indulgence that leads to rioting, debauchery, wild and outrageous behaviour and conduct. An example is the prodigal son who "wasted his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:13).

Drunkenness is a work of the flesh and it often leads to other sins of the flesh - immoral behaviour, immodest clothing, violence and physical abuse.

The Bible says several things about drunkenness.

- Drunkenness excludes a person from the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21).
- Drunkenness is the gateway to other forms of sin (Luke 15:13).
- Drunkenness makes it impossible to grasp the fleeting opportunities of time (Eph. 5:16-18).



As Christians, we must beware of excess in and indulgence of other things - hobby, pleasure. Paul warns that we shall "not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23).

BE FILLED

Paul makes the contrast between the riotous and unrestrained behaviour of the drunkard, and sober and temperate conduct of the Spirit-filled Christian.

There is a difference between the indwelling of the Spirit which has to do with a man's salvation (see Rom. 8:9, 11) and the filling of the Spirit which has to do with the believer's sanctification. Indwelling of the Spirit is passive; whereas the filling of the Spirit is an imperative (command which we have to obey).

This command is in the present tense which means that the believer is to be constantly filled with the Spirit. The Spirit's filling is the personal manifestation of Christ to the believer who walks obediently day by day (John 14:21). It is a consciousness of His presence, of His leading. However, the Spirit's filling is not an automatic experience. The responsibility of being filled with the Spirit rests upon the shoulders of the believer.

The filling of the Spirit is given only to the believer who does two things.

- The believer who receives the commandments of Christ (John 7:38-39; 14:21-22; Ps. 119:11).
- The believer who keeps the commandments of Jesus.



When you do these two things, you show that you truly love the Lord Jesus. And it is he who loves and obeys the Lord Jesus who will be filled by the Holy Spirit.

MAKING MUSIC (EPHESIANS 5:19)

A Spirit-filled person will display the following traits:

- A spirit of praise
- A spirit of gratitude
- A spirit of submission

Martin Luther says that music is second to theology. God-honouring music aids the spiritual life of the individual Christian as well as the body of Christ.

A Spirit-filled person has a singing spirit. This is in contrast to the drunken person. The mention of singing is the picture of joy and happiness. The worldly person often seeks joy and happiness in carnal pleasure.

The true believer seeks joy in praise. He seeks his joy and happiness by being filled with the Spirit of God and by singing to himself.

THE TYPES OF SONGS

The Apostle Paul identifies three types of songs.

A. PSALMS

The New Testament writers used “psalms” to refer to Old Testament psalms (see Acts 13:33; Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20)

B. HYMNS

The way the word is used in Greek suggests that hymns might have represented different forms or aspects of a song, such as those found in the Early Church. In the context of the church, hymns would denote the songs that are sung in the New Testament church to praise God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Portions of such hymns are found in 1 Timothy 1:17; 2:5-6; 6:15-16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; and Revelation 4:11; 5:13 and 7:12.



C. SPIRITUAL SONGS

Spiritual songs denote the nature and the content of songs whose lyrics dwell on themes other than direct praise to God or to Christ. One writer suggests that spiritual songs may refer to songs being made up by the person as he walks along singing praise to the Lord throughout the day.

THE EXPRESSION OF SONGS

Believers are to go through life “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19b). There are some who think that the Apostle Paul is making reference to two kinds of singing – one that is audible (“speaking”) and another which is inaudible (“making melody in your heart to the Lord”).

However, there are others who see the two as parallel. The second explains and completes the first: when believers get together they should not be having wild parties but should edify each other, speaking to one another in Christian song, and doing so from the heart, to the praise and honour of their blessed Lord.



Knowing who God is, and what He has done for us, as God's people, we must obey His Word, praise His holy Name, and live for His glory.

BEING THANKFUL (EPHESIANS 5:20)

A Spirit-filled Christian is marked by three things – a spirit of praise (Eph. 5:19), a spirit of thankfulness (Eph. 5:20), and a spirit of submission (Eph. 5:21).

Our lives are in God's hands. He guides and directs us through all things. Therefore, we can thank Him for all things no matter what the things are. He controls all. Giving thanks as we walk along throughout the day always giving thanks helps us to experience the fulness of God's Spirit.



WHAT IS THANKFULNESS?

Thanksgiving is grateful acknowledgement of blessings that we have received. We are thankful when we realise that ...

- the blessings which we enjoy are bestowed upon us so that we cannot credit ourselves.
- the blessings for which we enjoy, we are totally unworthy of them.
- the blessings which we have received are great and manifold.



It has been said that gratitude is that which completes the circle whereby blessings that drop down into the hearts and lives of believers return to the Giver in the form of unending, loving, and spontaneous adoration. (1 Thess. 5:18; Ps. 106:1)

HOW ARE WE TO EXPRESS OUR THANKFULNESS?

Paul said that this attitude of thankfulness is comprehensive and all encompassing. Note the words "always", which means "all the time" and "for all things", which means for all circumstances.

A. "GIVING THANKS ALWAYS ..." (EPH. 5:20)

This asks the question: "when must thanksgiving take place?" Paul says "always".

- It is proper to give thanks after the blessing has been received. Example: after God had delivered the children of Israel (Exod. 15). After God had answered the prayer (see Ps. 116).
- It is also right to give thanks in the midst of distress. Example: Jonah gave thanks when he was in "the fish's belly" (Jon. 2:1, 9).
- It is also proper to sing songs of praise and thanksgiving before God sends deliverance. Example: Jehoshaphat sent the singers to the frontline before the battle (2 Chron. 20:21).



"Giving thanks always ..." means that there is never a moment when we are not under the care of God, for which then we must give thanks all the time.

B. "GIVING THANKS ... FOR ALL THINGS ..." (EPH. 5:20)

This asks the question: "for what must thanks be given?" Paul says, "for all things".

This is entirely consistent with the rest of Paul's teachings because being thankful for all things recognises the sovereignty of God and the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).



We are to give thanks for all blessings: physical and spiritual; ordinary and extraordinary; past, present, and future; for things received and for things withheld (see 1 Thess. 5:18; Phil. 1:12-14; 2 Cor. 12:10).

TO AND THROUGH WHOM ARE WE TO EXPRESS OUR THANKFULNESS?

A. "GIVING THANKS ... UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER ... " (EPH. 5:20)

Our thankfulness must be directed to the source of our blessings. There are some who credit themselves for everything they possess or have accomplished. Example: the rich fool who was blessed with a bumper harvest (Luke 12:16-21). There are also people who give thanks for the help that was given them by others. They recognise the secondary causes, but never the First Cause (Rom. 1:21).



Since we know that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). We must direct our thankfulness primarily to God.

B. "GIVING THANKS ... IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" (EPH. 5:20)

We thank God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ because it is Christ who earned all these blessings for us. Furthermore, it is in the name of Christ that our thanksgivings are purified and accepted by the Father.

SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER (EPHESIANS 5:21)

Having exhorted the Ephesians with respect to their duty to God, Paul concludes this section on the marks of a Spirit-filled Christian, Paul further admonishes believers with regard to their obligation toward each other.

He exhorts that there be unity and harmony among believers. And these can come about only if Christians would be "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21).

THE DEFINITION OF SUBMISSION

The word "submission" literally means "to be under obedience". It refers to the submission of powers unto Christ (Phil. 3:21; Eph. 1:22), the submission of men unto Christ, and the submission of men to one another and to authorities (1 Pet. 5:5).

With respect to relationships among equals – man to man – Christians are asked to submit to one another "in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:13). This includes man's duty toward authority. Believers are to give deference to elders and those in positions of high standing (1 Pet. 5:5; cf. 1 Cor. 16:16).

With regard to the relationship between slaves and masters, while he does not approve of slavery, Paul also does not advocate revolt on their part. On the contrary, Paul admonish slaves to "be subject" to their masters (1 Pet. 2:18; cf. Tit 2:9).

Paul gives the reason for submission, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed" (1 Tim. 6:1) and "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit. 2:10).



As Christians, we must count the people whom God has placed over us worthy of all honour. "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." (1 Pet. 2:17-18)

A Spirit-filled person does not have a spirit of criticism, dissension, envy, divisiveness, or selfishness. He has a spirit of submissiveness. The same is true of churches: a Spirit-filled church is a body of people who are submissive, where there is no dissension or divisiveness, no envy or selfishness among its people.



The harmony and unity of the body of Christ is a thing of beauty to behold (see Ps. 133:1; Matt. 18:4; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 16:16; Phil. 2:3-4; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5).

THE REASON FOR SUBMISSION

Paul states that Christians are to submit to one another out of reverence for God. During His earthly ministry, our Lord Jesus emphasized this very truth (Matt. 18:1-4; 20:28), and He demonstrated it by washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17).



By mutual submission, we present a united front to the world, the blessing of true Christian fellowship will be promoted, and God will be glorified (Phil. 2:3-4).

Paul knew by experience what would happen in a church if there were no mutual submission (1 Cor. 1:11, 12; 3:1-9; 11:17-22; 14:26-33). He emphasises that the submission must be "in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). This means that every member of the body of Christ should be willing to recognize the rights and needs of the others.

It also means that in the body of Christ, there must be affection for one another, humility, and a willingness to cooperate with one another (see Eph. 4:2-3).

THE GOD-FEARING WIFE (EPHESIANS 5:22-24)

From Ephesians 5:18, the Apostle Paul has been describing the Spirit-filled Christian in general. A Spirit-filled Christian is full of praises to God, thankful, and submissive. From verses 22 to 31, Paul would be directing these thoughts to specific people - the Spirit-filled wife (Eph. 5:22-24) and the Spirit-filled husband (Eph. 5:25-31).

Christians are to be mutually submissive to one another (Eph. 5:21). This truth applies to all believers - men or women, husbands and wives. But Paul in verse 22 makes a direct application of the principle of submission to the wives.

THE CONCEPT OF SUBMISSION

The wife is to walk in a spirit of submission to her own husband. The word "submission" means to come under the authority of someone, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

The concept of submission often occurs in passages which deal with the ethical standards of a Christian community. They were imperatives addressed to masters, slaves, wives, husbands, children, and to Christians in general. Although all believers are equal in Christ, we are to give deference to certain people: to elders, persons in positions of high standing (1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Cor. 16:16), and of wives to their husbands, and children to parents.

In Ephesians 5:22, the act of submission is reflexive - the wife is to submit herself to her own husband. This speaks of the duty of the wife toward the husband's divinely ordained authority.



THE REASONS FOR SUBMISSION

There are three reasons why the wife is to be submissive to her husband.

A. TO SUBMIT IS GOD'S WILL

This is a commandment of God. That said, the phrase "as to the Lord" gives the motivation for the wives' submission. Whatever we do, we do it unto the Lord because we love Him, and we want to please Him.



God instructs the wife to walk in a spirit of submission with her husband. The wife obeys the Lord out of love because she loves the Lord and her husband.

B. TO SUBMIT IS GOD'S ORDER FOR THE FAMILY

There is to be a partnership and order within the family. This is basic for the family and society to exist. Paul gives three important facts.



The wife is not inferior to the husband spiritually or intellectually. However, the order for the family set by God is for her good.

- The husband is the head of the wife. The word "head" in Scripture refers to authority not being, meaning to say that neither man nor woman is superior to the other in being. They are equal in God's eyes (1 Cor. 11:11-12; Gal. 3:28).

When God talks about man being the head of the woman, He is not talking about ability or value. God is talking about function and order within the family. Within God's order of things there is a partnership, but every partnership must have a head, and God has ordained that man is the head of the partnership.

- The great pattern for the wife to follow is Christ and the church. Christ is the head of the church, meaning that Christ has authority over the church. So long as the church lives by this rule, the church experiences love, joy and peace. So it is with the husband; he is the head of the family, the ultimate authority in the family. So long as she and the rest of the family live by this rule, the family experiences love, joy, and peace, and it fulfils its function and purpose on earth.
- Just as Christ is the Saviour of the church, the husband is the "saviour of the body", meaning to say that he is the protector and comforter of the wife.

C. TO SUBMIT IS A SPIRITUAL MYSTERY

The wife's submission is comparable to Christ and the church. Again, Christ is the pattern for the wife:

- As she submits to Christ, so she is to submit to her husband.
- As she depends upon Christ for help and protection, so she is to depend upon her husband for help and protection.
- As she depends upon Christ for companionship and comfort, so she is to depend upon her husband for companionship and comfort.



The submission that wives are to show to their husbands is an example of the submission that all believers are to show to one another (Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11-13; 3:11; Tit. 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:1).

THE GOD-FEARING HUSBAND (I)

(EPHESIANS 5:25-33)

God's instructions for the husband are twice as long as that for the wife. To put it simply, the husband's duty is to love his wife. Paul gives three important lessons for the husband.

- The husband is to love his wife the way God loves.
- The husband is to love his wife the way he loves himself.
- The husband is to love his wife exclusively.



A HUSBAND LOVES HIS WIFE THE WAY GOD LOVES

The love which the husband is to have for his wife is the very love of God Himself. This is agape love. Agape is a selfless, unselfish, and sacrificial love. It is the love of the mind and will as well as of the heart. It is not only a love of affection and feelings. It is a love that wills and commits itself to love a person.



Think what would happen if the husband so loved his wife selflessly and sacrificially, with all his heart. His wife would willingly accept his authority as the head of the family.

Agape love...

- works for the highest good of the person loved;
- loves even if the person does not deserve to be loved;
- loves even if the person is utterly unworthy of being loved.

The standard of the husband's love is the love of Christ for the church. The love of Christ for the church can be described in one simple statement: Christ gave Himself for the church. This is the love the husband is to have for his wife.

The sacrificial love of the husband involves three things.

A. SANCTIFYING AND CLEANSING LOVE

The husband's love involves being set apart and cleansed. The word "sanctify" means to be set apart. When a man marries a woman, he is to set himself apart for her and for her alone. His promise of marriage also causes her to set herself apart.

The one thing above all else that will keep the marriage sanctified and cleansed is the husband's sacrificial love. His sanctifying love will not only protect him, but it will also protect the sanctity and purity of his wife.

B. SPOTLESS AND WRINKLELESS LOVE

The husband's love for the wife involves having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

- Spots denotes the mistakes that tarnish one's life and marriage. Spots are mistakes so serious that they are very difficult to wash off one's body and out of one's mind. They would include such things as mistreatment, abuse, immoral behaviour.
- Wrinkles would mean things that cause friction and rattle the nerves, and that need to be ironed out. They would include such things as short temper, broken promises, selfishness and rejection.

C. HOLY AND UNBLEMISHED LOVE

The husband's love involves being holy and without blemish. The word "holy" means to be separate and untouched by evil. The husband's love will stir him to be holy and unblemished, which will go a long way in stirring his wife to be holy and without blemish.



Husband, your love for your wife determines the quality of your marriage. Your wife will not reject such love if your love for her is proactive and sacrificial (1 Pet. 3:7).

THE GOD-FEARING HUSBAND (II)

(EPHESIANS 5:25-33)

Paul gives three important lessons for the husband.

- The husband is to love his wife the way God loves.
- The husband is to love his wife the way he loves himself.
- The husband is to love his wife exclusively.



A HUSBAND LOVES HIS WIFE THE WAY HE LOVES HIMSELF

The love which the husband is to have for his wife is the very same love he has for his own body. This does not mean that the husband must first love himself before he loves his wife. This is the false teaching of self-love and self-esteem. No man has to be reminded that he must love himself. Paul here is making the point that the husband must love his wife to the same extent as he loves his own body.



You should seek your own highest spiritual welfare, and also the highest good of your wife in every way.

This means that the husband is required to do two things. He is to nourish and cherish his wife as he does his own body.

A. NOURISHING LOVE

The word "nourish" is used only twice in the New Testament (Eph. 5:29; 6:4). It is translated "bring...up" in Ephesians 6:4 in reference to parents' responsibility to their children.



No man in his right mind would hate his own flesh; on the contrary, he nourishes it; he pays attention to the needs of his body. The lesson is would you do the same to your wife?

To "nourish" a person means to feed, clothe, nurture, and look after until he/she is mature and then to continue nourishing him/her after that. With regard to the husband's responsibility for his wife, he has the responsibility of providing for her needs both materially and spiritually. And Paul has in mind not just providing the bare minimum but to grant bounteous care.

B. CHERISHING LOVE

The word “cherish” means to hold a person so dear within the heart; to treat with warmth, tenderness, care, affection, and appreciation. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7, Paul likens his care of the Thessalonians to that of a mother who “cherishes” her children.



This means that the husband and wife become one body. Two people could never become any closer. This is complete absorption and assimilation of each into the other – a complete union and oneness.

THE HUSBAND LOVES HIS WIFE EXCLUSIVELY

The third lesson that Paul has for the husband is that the love for his wife must be exclusive. The love which the husband is to have for his wife is to be the love that will stir him to leave his parents and be joined to his wife (Gen. 2:24).



This spiritual union is made possible only by God. Therefore, both husband and wife must have a union with God through Christ before there can be a union between them. They must share God and His saving grace together.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph. 5:31). The phrase “joined unto” means to hold fast together in the closest union possible. It denotes a spiritual union. It is a union higher and stronger than the union of parent and child.

It is a union that places man above the physical plane of animals. It is a spiritual sharing of life together. Both husband and wife must be willing and submissive for God to bring about such a cleaving in their lives.

To be joined means to be yoked together, God binds the couple together into such a spiritual union that causes them to become one person.

THE MYSTERY (EPHESIANS 5:32-33)

Marriage is for procreation (Gen. 1:28). Marriage is for sanctification (Eph. 5:26). Marriage is also an illustration (Eph. 5:32-33). The marital union is an illustration of the relationship between "Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32).



MARRIAGE IS A SPIRITUAL UNION

Marriage is more than two people merely agreeing to live together and to be committed to one another. It is much more than natural affection. Marriage is a spiritual union that can be wrought by God and by God alone. This means that the love which the husband is to have for his wife is a spiritual mystery – a spiritual love – a love just like Christ's love for the church.

Marriage is a unique union that is unlike any other relationship in life; one that surpasses even the love between parents and child. It is a spiritual union full of splendour, warmth and tenderness. It is the real experience of love and warmth, tenderness, and the complete sharing of two persons.

Marriage is a spiritual experience that is beyond anything known in the physical world. It is a spiritual union mutually experienced only by the couples who truly know the love of Christ for His church.

- A true marriage is sacrificial love (Eph. 5:25); a love for another person that is to the same degree and extent of one's love for oneself (Eph. 5:28, 33). It is a love that nourishes and cherishes (Eph. 5:29).
- A true marriage is a union (Eph. 5:30). It is a union so completely and spiritually wrought that two persons become as one body and as one flesh (Eph. 5:30-31).

MARRIAGE IS A GREAT MYSTERY

The word “mystery” simply means that it is a truth that can only be known by divine revelation. It is a spiritual fact that has to be revealed by God if it is to be experienced by couples (Eph. 5:32). It is a spiritual mystery that can be illustrated only by the great love Christ has for His church (Eph. 5:23-33; see also Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 6:19; Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Tim. 3:9, 16).

Paul makes very clear that he is not thinking of marriage in and by itself. Christ and His love for the church are the symbolic example for the husband’s love for his wife. The church and its love for Christ are the symbolic example for the wife’s love for the husband. This picture says several practical things.

It is a great mystery because the union of Christ with the church is such an intimate relationship that no earthly metaphor is adequate. But the fact that the relationship between Christ and His church is actually reflected here on earth by the marriage union is that the husband and wife can draw strength from the love that Christ has for His church and the church’s submission to Him. This is the basis for joy in the marriage relationship.



The Christian home is to be lived in the very presence and atmosphere of our Lord Jesus.



The Christian home is to be governed by Him. And decisions are to be made in light of our Lord Jesus and His will. The husband is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to reverence (respect and esteem) her husband (Eph. 5:33).

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
Ephesians

an apostle of Jĕ'sūs Christ by the
of God, to the saints which are at
s, and to the faithful in Christ Jĕ's.

be to you, and peace, from God our
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vn will.

raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his
own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power,
and might, and dominion, and every name
that is named, not only in this world, but also
in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all *things* under his feet,
and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to
the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him
that filleth all in all.

2 AND you *hath he quickened*, who were
dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according
to the course of this world, according to the
prince of the power of the air, the spirit that
now worketh in the children of disobedi-
ence:
3 Among whom also we all had our con-
versation in times past in the lusts of our
flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of
the mind; and were by nature the children
of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his
great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath
quickened us together with Christ, (by grace
ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised *us* up together
with him, *us* sit together in heaven:
7 That in the

ephesians

THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN

A STUDY ON PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
(adapted from the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)



SERMON

- 01 CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS (EPH. 6:1-3)
- 02 PARENTS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN (EPH. 6:4)
- 03 PARENTS, NURTURE YOUR CHILDREN (EPH. 6:4)
- 04 MASTERS AND SERVANTS: THE WORKMAN (EPH. 6:5-8)
- 05 MASTERS AND SERVANTS: THE MASTER (EPH. 6:9)
- 06 THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARGE, ARMOUR AND OPPOSITION (EPH. 6:10-11)
- 07 THE SOLDIER'S WRESTLE (EPH. 6:12-13)
- 08 ARMOUR OF GOD I (EPH. 6:13-17)
- 09 ARMOUR OF GOD II (EPH. 6:13-17)
- 10 ARMOUR OF GOD III (EPH. 6:18-20)
- 11 THE CHRISTIAN'S EXAMPLE (EPH. 6:21-24)

CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS (EPHESIANS 6:1-3)

Ephesians 5:22-6:4 is known as the domestic code. The section in Ephesians 5:22-33 is God's instructions for husband and wife. Ephesians 6:1-4 is intended for parents and children. This is an important passage because children and parents are to walk together under God's authority.

Children are to obey their parents. The word "obey" means to "submit to", "to comply with", "to follow the directions or guidance of some instruction". When a parent guides and directs a child, the child is to obey the parent.

OBEDIENT PARENTS IN THE LORD

Children are to obey parents "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1). The phrase "in the Lord" implies two fundamental principles.

- All human authority - including parental authority is derived. There is a limit to the child's obedience. When a parent is not acting in the Lord, he is not to be obeyed. The Lord has nothing whatsoever to do with unrighteousness.
- Obedience is the first law of the universe - that the law of obedience regulates everything in the world. Children are to obey because it pleases the Lord and it is the right thing to do.



Parents are ministers of the Lord to their children. Warning: God will not take lightly parents who abuse their authority and stumble the faith of their children (Mark 9:42-48).



The child is to know the Lord to such a degree that he is continually thinking about the Lord and about pleasing Him (Mark 7:10; Col. 3:20; Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 7:1; 10:1; 20:11; 23:22; Eccl. 12:1).

HONOUR YOUR PARENTS

The word “honour” means “to esteem and value as precious”, “to show respect and reverence”. This is the fifth commandment (Exod. 20:12). The Bible does not put an age limit to this matter of honouring parents. This command is given to children with parents still living. Teenagers fail to honour their parents when they despise their parents. Grown-up children despise their parents when they ignore their needs and fail to adequately care for them.



This command is also not conditional, meaning even if the parents failed to be and to do all they should have, Christian children are to honour their parents (1 Tim. 5:4, 8; Prov. 20:20; 30:17; Lev. 19:3, 32; Deut. 27:16).

PROMISES OF OBEDIENCE

The fifth commandment is the first commandment with promises. God gave two promises that are made to children who honour their parents.

A. “IT MAY BE WELL ...”

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord ... that it may be well with thee” (Eph. 6:1-3). This does not mean that the child will never have problems. The point here is that God will be with the child to strengthen and take care of him so that he can walk through the trials of life victoriously.

B. “THOU MAYEST LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.”

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord ... and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3). The child is assured that he will live a long life on earth. A child who lives in obedience to godly parents would have been taught biblical principles, and that would have prepared him for life.



The promise of long life is a general promise, meaning that obedience or disobedience to parents is not the only factor that determines a person’s span of life, but it is an important factor. When a child is really obedient, God knows what is best for him.

PARENTS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN (EPHESIANS 6:4)

Children, obey your parents. Parents, do not provoke your children to wrath. The word “provoke” means “to enrage”, “to make angry”. It is rendered “will anger” in Romans 10:19 when the Apostle Paul is describing Israel’s provocation of God to anger. The idea of “provocation” here is not just to arouse a momentary angry outburst, but to cause a lasting bitterness and resentment.



There are four things that parents can provoke their children.

FAILURE TO TRAIN

Times change. Parents who fail to adapt to change around them can provoke their children to anger. This does not mean that the children are given free rein, but it does mean that parents need to be alert to the changes of their children’s generation.



Parents must not resist normal and natural changes that take place between generations. Parents need to guide and train their children in the Word of God especially in the areas of immorality, sin, and injustice.

OVER-CONTROL OF A CHILD

Over-controlling a child ranges from overly stern restriction and discipline to child abuse. Over-control and punishment that is disproportionate to a misdeed will either stifle the growth of a child or stir him to react and rebel.



There must be a balance between family life and the child’s community life. A child needs family time as well as some free time away from the parent and family in order to grow into a healthy person.

UNDER-CONTROL OF A CHILD

Under-controlling a child can also provoke a child. Under-control is indulgence, giving a child well beyond what he needs and what is really best for him. It is giving a child too much freedom at an age when he is neither trained nor ready to handle that freedom.

Parents pamper and indulge children for the following reasons.

- **Parental selfishness.** Parents who want to escape responsibility for their children. Parents who do not want their children to interrupt their schedule, would not want to care for their children.
- **Erroneous understanding of parental love.** Parents who indulge their children to compensate for their own deprived childhood. A parent who was deprived as a child tend to indulge in the child's desires thinking that this is parental love.
- **Erroneous philosophy of parenting.** Parents who have a false understanding of child-rearing tend to give in to bad behaviour and temper tantrums just to secure peace and quiet.
- **Parental insecurity.** Because of misguided devotion and love, to keep from losing the loyalty and affection of their children, parents "buy" their children's devotion with material things. Parents indulge in their children because they lack any other purpose.



Parents are to discipline their children (Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15; 1 Samuel 3:13).

INCONSISTENT EXAMPLE

Parents who live an inconsistent life can provoke a child. A parent who tells a child one thing, then turns around and does the opposite thing himself is full of hypocrisy and false profession.



Parents whose behaviour are inconsistent are hypocrites (1 Kings 22:52; 2 Chron. 22:3; Jer. 9:14; Matt. 14:8).

PARENTS, NURTURE YOUR CHILDREN (EPHESIANS 6:4)

Parents are to “bring [their children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

BRING UP

The phrase “bring up” is also translated “nourisheth” in Ephesians 5:29, which Paul uses to describe physical nourishment of a body. In Ephesians 6:4, Paul uses the word to describe the loving provision for children.

NURTURE

The word “nurture” means “to train” or “to discipline”. Nurture involves the whole training and education of children which involves cultivating the mind and morals, correcting mistakes, and curbing the passions.

The word nurture is used in several ways:

- Training through correction (Acts 7:22).
- Training through punishment (Luke 23:16, 22).
- Training through law (Acts 22:3; Rom. 2:17; Gal. 3:24; Rom. 3:19). In Acts 22:3 Paul spoke of how he had been “taught” according to the strictness of the Law and that he had received his education at the feet of Gamaliel. In Romans 2:17, Paul told the Jews who thought they had learned to discern the will of God by studying the Law. In Galatians 3:24, Paul described the Law as a schoolmaster (or tutor) given by God.
- Training through grace. God’s work of grace has made believers free, and by that same grace believers can be obedient. Paul said that the grace of God, which entered this world through Jesus Christ for the salvation of man, “teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12).
- Training through authority. God has established three primary means by which His work of education may be accomplished through grace and the Holy Spirit – Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:17), teachers (2 Timothy 2:25f), and believing fathers (Eph. 6:4).
- Training through tribulation. God “uses” tribulation as a means of training believers. The purpose of using tribulation is twofold: to purify His people and to forewarn those who may go astray (2 Cor. 6:9; 12:7; Heb. 12:4-11; Rev. 3:14-22; 1 Cor. 11:27-34).
- Training through judgment. In 1 Timothy 1:20 Paul spoke of two members of the church at Ephesus who failed to retain “a good conscience” and thus had made a “shipwreck” of their faith. It is possible that God uses judgment as a “punishment” by way of illness or disaster (cf. 1 Cor 11:32).



ADMONITION

The word “admonition” means “counsel, exhortation, correction”. It is often associated with warning someone of the danger their actions entail (see Tit. 3:10; 1 Cor. 10:11). Believers are admonished, instructed, and warned to correct their lives and to turn to the Lord continually in repentance and faith.

Parents are exhorted to admonish their children in contrast to provoking them to anger. This concept of admonishment as part of parental discipleship for their children.



Note that the parent is not to rear the child after his own ideas and notions of what is best for the child, but after the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that means that the Lord’s Word is to be the guide for Christian parents in rearing their child.

BENEFITS OF BRINGING UP A CHILD IN THE LORD

It is important for parents to “bring [their children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

- To teach Christian love. When a child is loved by God and by all who trust God, he learns that he is to love others.
- To teach to trust God. When a child is taught to trust God, he will know that God is always there to help when human help is exhausted; that no matter how great a trial, he can still trust God and hope in Him.
- To teach perseverance in service. When a child is taught that God has given us abundant life and promised grace sufficient for life, he will serve God faithfully.
- To teach endurance in trials. When a child is taught God will always provide a way of escape from the temptations of life, he will follow Christ faithfully; that there is an inner peace in following Christ.



Parents are to be teachers, disciplers and mentors for their children (1 Tim. 3:4, 12; Tit. 2:4; Deut. 4:9; 6:6-7; Prov. 22:6; Isa. 28:9; 38:19; Lam. 2:19).

MASTERS AND SERVANTS: THE WORKMAN (EPHESIANS 6:5-8)

Moving away from the domestic code, Paul moves to the relationship between masters and servants. Paul points out that problems in work relationships is primarily a spiritual problem, which can only be solved when men turn to our Lord Jesus Christ. This means that they see work as serving Him.

Slavery was very much a part of the Roman Empire. That is the reason the New Testament has much to say to slaves (1 Cor. 7:21-22; Col. 3:22; Col. 4:1; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; Tit. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:18-25, and Philemon).

On the institution of slavery, the Expositors Greek Testament comments: "In the NT, slavery is accepted as an existing institution, which is neither formally condemned nor formally approved. There is nothing to prompt revolutionary action ... The institution is left to be undermined and removed by the gradual operation of the great Christian principles of ... the equality of men in the sight of God a common Christian brotherhood, the spiritual freedom of the Christian man, the Lordship of Christ to which every other lordship is subordinate."

While slavery is a bygone institution, Paul's instructions to slaves and masters may be applied to employees and employers today.



THE WORKMAN: TO OBEY (EPH. 6:5-8)

The worker is to “be obedient” to the masters “according to the flesh”. This means that employers are to be obeyed in matters involving the workplace. The employer has no authority in the spiritual realm.

A. WORK WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING

To be obedient to masters “with fear and trembling” does not mean working with the slavish fear of men, but with the fear of God in the heart.



As a Christian, we must do our work with fear and trembling before God. This means that we must be eager to serve our employer, and to keep from doing some irresponsible work and bring reproach upon the name of Christ (Luke 1:50; Acts 10:35; 1 Pet. 1:17; Ps. 25:12; 31:19).

B. WORK IN SINGLENESS OF HEART

To work in “singleness of heart” means with purpose and focused attention. It is to work in sincerity and without any slack. It means that the workman does not waste time. He is focused on his work because he offers his labour to the Lord.



As a Christian, we must be totally committed and focused on our work. We must focus on doing our job well as we are doing it for the glory of God (1 Cor. 6:20; Isa. 1:19).

C. NOT TO WORK WITH EYESERVICE AS A MAN-PLEASER

To work with eyeservice as a man-pleaser is to have a hypocritical attitude, to work only when the master is looking. It also means to work with the purpose of currying favour with the master. This kind of attitude robs work of its dignity.



As a Christian, our work attitude must be to please God. At the end of the day, the question we need to ask is - Will God be pleased with my work today (John 12:43; Prov. 29:25).

D. WORK AS THE SERVANT OF CHRIST

No matter what we do, our work must be seen as a service to God “from the heart”. The phrase “from the heart” means to work with passion, energy, and drive. The opposite is to regard our work as mundane, and to have a disinterested attitude.



As a Christian, we must see ourselves as servants of Christ, and our work as doing the will of God (Heb. 12:28; Exod. 23:25).

E. WORK WITH GOOD WILL

The Christian workman is to work with good will, and he must do it as to the Lord, and not to men. No matter where he works and no matter what he does, the believer is to work diligently.



As a Christian worker, we must be faithful to our employers and our Lord (1 Cor. 4:2; 15:58; 1 Pet. 4:10).

MASTERS AND SERVANTS: THE MASTER (EPHESIANS 6:9)

Diligent labour has reciprocal reward. God gives the Christian workman exactly what he laboured for. Regardless of a person's profession, position or status, everyone is going to get what he has laboured for on this earth. There is no respect of persons with God.

If a person has been working diligently as though he is working for Christ, he shall be rewarded. If he has been working for men and for self, he shall have his reward too. Whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord.

THE MASTER: TO MANAGE

Masters and employers are given two clear commandments governing how he is to treat the workmen under him.

A. DO THE SAME THINGS

The phrase "do the same things unto them" means the employer is to do the same things that he requires of the workman. He is to treat the workman just like he expects the workman to treat him.

As the workman, the employer must realise that he lives and works to serve both the Lord and the employees with fear and trembling. He is to manage with respect and concern. He is to manage his workers in singleness of heart. He is to serve as the servants of Christ.



This principle applies equally to servants and masters (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:23; Col. 3:25).



As a Christian employer, you are charged to be diligent in your management and in your loyalty to the workmen under you. This is proved by providing fair wages and job security.

B. FOREBEAR THREATS

“Masters ... forbearing threatening” (Eph. 6:9). To “forebear threats” does not mean that the employer cannot exercise discipline when there is good reason for it. God does not condone slothfulness or indulgence.

When the situation calls for it, God approves of discipline. However, stern measures are taken only after all other corrective measures have been exhausted. Every worker is a creature of God and deserves to be nurtured. Thus, every step should be taken to teach and train even the most unproductive workman.



As a Christian employer, we must hold every workman accountable to us; so the Lord holds us accountable to Him (Col. 4:1).



Whether we be workmen or employers, we have a Master in heaven, who has no favourites, and to whom we must give an account (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15; Job 31:13; Jer. 22:13; Mal.3:5).

THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARGE, ARMOUR AND OPPOSITION (EPHESIANS 6:10-11)



This is the last section in Paul's epistle, and he makes a switch from addressing the believer's walk (Eph. 4:1-6:9) to the believer's spiritual challenges (Eph. 6:10-24).

Paul says that the believer's life is a battlefield. The believer is a soldier engaged in a constant spiritual battle. He is called not to a life of enjoyment and ease, but to a life of hard conflict. His opposition comes from all quarters. The reason is that the believer lives in the realm of Satan.

THE SOLDIER'S CHARGE AND ARMOUR (EPH. 6:10-11A)

Paul gives a charge to the "brethren", speaking directly to believers only. Christians need to pay attention to what Paul says - "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). Christians who ignore this charge will likely fall into temptation and sin, and failing to experience our Lord's promise of abundance and joy of life in Him. The charge is twofold.

A. BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT

The believer must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Three different words are used to describe this strength – be strong, in the Lord's power, in the Lord's might.

- "Strong in the Lord" means that for the believer to persevere in his spiritual journey, he needs the power of God; the arm of flesh will not do.
- "Power" denotes the Lord's sovereignty.
- "Might" describes the Lord's authority to use His strength so that His will will not be thwarted.

In essence, it means that the believer is to be strong in the sovereign unlimited power of the Lord, in the power of His might, and in His ability to use His power to fulfil His will.

B. PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF GOD

Having exhorted believers to be strong in the Lord, Paul then urges us to put on the armour of God. The sequence is important because no armour will serve any good without the heart to fight. The believer must be strong in the Lord before he can be clothed with the armour of God.

Believers must put on the **whole** armour of God, leaving nothing out. The whole armour serves a dual purpose – to equip and to protect. A missing piece of the armour will leave us unguarded and unprotected against the enemy.



The strength for our spiritual journey is found in the Lord. It is neither human strength nor worldly power that gives us victory. And this strength is found in a living, dynamic relationship with Him.



Christians, be strong in the Lord, in the power of His might, and put on the whole armour of God for a good fight (Luke 1:37; Eph. 3:16, 20; Col. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:7; Isa. 41:10).

THE CHRISTIAN'S OPPOSITION (EPH. 6:11)

The Christian's enemy is the devil. He is a living being in the spiritual world. He is described as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Paul warns us about the "wiles of the devil". The word "wiles" refers to the crafty methods and deceitful strategies which the devil uses to wage war against the believer.

A. APPEAL TO THE HUMAN LUST

Satan will present something to the eyes that is so appealing to entice the believer into sin. Examples: temptation of Eve (fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), Achan (material greed), David (physical attraction), etc.



Satan will appeal to our flesh and pride (John 8:44; Rom. 6:16, 19; Eph. 2:2-3; James 4:1-4; 1 John 2:15-16).

B. DECEIT BY FALSE TEACHERS

The devil also uses false teachers to deceive believers. The false teachers preach a false Gospel, proclaiming a righteousness other than that of Christ; that of human goodness and works.



Satan will deceive us with false teachers and ministers and their appealing but false messages. The believer is doomed unless he is clothed in the full armour of God (2 Cor. 2:11; 11:3, 13-15; Eph. 4:14; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 12:9).

THE SOLDIER'S WRESTLE (EPHESIANS 6:12-13)



The Christian's warfare is neither human nor physical; it is spiritual. Paul uses "wrestle" to describe our spiritual warfare. The word "wrestle" is an athletic term in which the two contestants are engaged in a match. In the spiritual battle, Paul says that we fight "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

- "The principalities" denotes "the first ones, preeminent ones, leaders".
- "The powers" is a reference to "the authorities, the demons of Satan in the lower atmosphere who constitute his kingdom in the air".
- "The rulers of the darkness of this world" comprises Satan and his demons.
- "The spiritual wickedness in high places" implies that Satan and all his demonic forces rule even in the high places.

SPIRITUAL ENEMIES ARE NUMEROUS

The forces of evil are not only powerful, but they are also numerous. "Principalities, powers, rulers" convey the idea of a large number of evil forces facing the believer.

SPIRITUAL ENEMIES ARE ORGANIZED

The forces of evil are apparently organized. "Powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places" point to ranking of spiritual forces with enormous authority, position, and rule.

SPIRITUAL ENEMIES ARE RULERS OF DARKNESS

The forces of evil are the rulers of the darkness of this world. Darkness in the Bible denotes ignorance of truth and reality. As opposed to coming to the light, which is knowing God and His Son, Jesus Christ; darkness is staying away from the light. Spiritual darkness comes by two ways.

- Darkness caused by the devil who blinds the minds of men lest they believe the glorious gospel of eternal salvation (2 Cor. 4:4).
- Darkness caused by wilful ignorance. Sinners "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

SPIRITUAL ENEMIES ARE WICKED

The forces of evil are wicked, seeking to receive the loyalty and devotion that is due God alone. They also seek to entice man into doing wickedness. When we look at the current state of affairs in the world - violence, hate, immorality, etc. - we cannot but be convince of the wickedness of unregenerate man, and the dominion of Satan in this world. The Destroyer destroys.



Satan is real. He rules over the darkness and spiritual wickedness of this world. Sin is also real (Luke 4:6; 22:31; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 1 Pet. 5:8). The only hope for the believer is to put on the whole armour of God.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR (I)

(EPHESIANS 6:13-17)

Paul tells Timothy that he must "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). Spiritual warfare, however, is not restricted to an elite few. Every Christian is a soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God gives the marching orders He will not send us into the battlefield unequipped. Our duty is to take the whole armour of God so that we "may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13).

ARMED FOR THE EVIL DAY

The evil day has several connotations.

- Today, referring to the onslaught of evil that is in the world today: "the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16).
- Any day, referring to the onslaught of temptations and trials that confront us at any given moment during a day.
- The day of unusual temptation and trial, pointing to the special onslaught and barrage of evil that is thrown against us.



We must withstand the day of evil, but we cannot withstand unless we have obeyed and prepared ourselves by taking the whole armour of God (Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 10:4; 1 Tim. 6:12).

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

There are several parts to the armour of God. It is important that Christian soldier put on the whole armour of God to combat the forces of evil.

A. THE GIRDLE (BELT) OF TRUTH

The Christian is to have our "loins girt about with truth". The girdle/belt is used to hold the soldier's clothing next to his body. This kept his clothing from flapping about and allowed him freedom of movement. The belt was also used to strengthen and support the body. The sign of the Christian soldier is the belt of truth.

This truth is not derived from man's own ideas. It is not subjective. This girdle of truth refers to ...

- Christ. He is the truth. He is living Word (John 14:6; 1:14). The believer is to put on Christ (Eph. 4:24).
- The Holy Scriptures. The written Word of God is truth. The believer is to put on the Word of God. He is sanctified by the Word of God (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26).

Truth has a sanctifying effect on the Christian.

- Truth anchors the believer. It keeps the believer from being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).
- Truth keeps the believer focussed. It keeps him from becoming entangled with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2:3-4).
- Truth fortifies the faith of the believer. It supports him in the battles and trials of life.



Having put on the girdle of truth, we must speak and live the truth (Eph. 4:25; 1 Pet. 1:22; Zech. 8:16; Mal. 2:6).

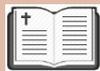


"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). God's truth will strengthen our faith, and comfort us in our trials (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15-16).

B. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The breastplate covers the body of the soldier from the neck to the thighs. It is used to protect the torso of the body, where the heart is located. The believer's heart (his whole being) is focussed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and that focus must be protected.

Righteousness is the mark of the Christian. When a man is saved, God imputes the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ to him. As the Christian stands in the righteousness of Christ, he manifests it by righteous living.



We must strive after the righteousness of Jesus Christ and to live righteously in this present world (Rom. 3:21-22; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 1:11; 3:9; Tit.2:11-12).

C. THE SANDALS OF THE GOSPEL

The believer's feet are to be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). In other words, believers are to put on the sandals to prepare for the work of the Gospel.

What does it mean to be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"?

- It means that we are standing on the sure Word of God, and not the slippery opinions of man.
- It means to be ready. Putting on the sandals is an indication of going out. It is a sign of preparedness. Spiritually speaking, it is to be ready to do battle for the Gospel.



The world is the mission field; when we leave our home, and wherever our feet may take us, we must be ready to preach the Gospel (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:15).

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR (II)

(EPHESIANS 6:13-17)

THE ARMOUR OF GOD (CONT'D)

We have considered the first three of six components that made up the armour of God, namely, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the sandals of the Gospel.



D. THE SHIELD OF FAITH IN GOD

On the battlefield, the shield protects the soldier from enemy attacks. Paul says that with the shield of faith "ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). In ancient warfare, arrows are coated with some other combustible material and set afire, serving the purpose of incendiary bombs. Satan has his fiery darts aimed at the believer, causing doubts and discouragement.

To ward off these fiery darts, believers must put on the shield of faith. This shield of faith is faith in God - a complete and perfect trust that God will deliver and protect us from evil doubts and fears.



We must arm ourselves with the faith of God to protect ourselves (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 33:20; 84:9, 11; 3:3-4; 34:22; 118:8). God will keep us "in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee ... Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26:3-4).



We must trust in the LORD so that we may live in His blessings and His promise of deliverance (Mark 11:22, 24; Acts 27:25; Heb. 11:6).



The shield of faith protects us, and in turn we must earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3).

E. THE HELMET OF SALVATION

The helmet protects the head and the brain of the soldier. The head denotes the thinking of the soldier, which is essential for his victory.

Spiritually speaking, the helmet of salvation protects the believer's head and mind. It protects our minds and thoughts, keeping them focused on our Lord Jesus Christ, "and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).



Believers are "renewed in the spirit of your mind;" (Eph. 4:23). We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Having the mind of Christ protects us from the fiery darts of temptation, carnal desires and worldliness.



Having the mind of Christ also gives us spiritual discernment and to know the things of God because the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God (see 1 Cor. 2:14-15).



To put on the helmet of salvation also means to have the knowledge and hope of salvation. This in turn spurs us to focus on Christ and His mission to carry the Gospel to a needy and dying world.

F. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

The sword was a weapon used for both defence and offence. The sword was used both to protect and to fight off and slay the enemy.

The last item in the armour of God, and its only offensive component is the sword. Our Lord Jesus overcame the onslaught of the devil by using Scripture (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).

The Word of God "is quick, and powerful, 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" (Heb. 4:12).

When we are armed with the Holy Scriptures, we are able to protect ourselves against the onslaught of the enemy (Ps. 119:9, 11; Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16).



When we have the Word of God, we are liberated from the bondage of sin (John 8:32).

CONCLUSION

All six items in the armour of God are linked to the Word of God -

- the girdle of truth,
- the breastplate of righteousness has to do with our knowledge of Christ,
- the sandals of the Gospel of peace,
- the shield of faith is our ability to use the Word of God to fight off the enemy,
- the helmet of salvation is our understanding of the Word of God,
- the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.



These six items are given us. To the extent that we hone our skills in using them, we will "be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). So, we must "as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR (III)

(EPHESIANS 6:18-20)

There are six pieces in the armour God has prepared for believers. The six pieces are held together by prayer (Eph. 6:18). Prayer is the thread that binds the six pieces. Prayer is also God's provision for believers. Prayer is essential as it is the grounds for the believer's confidence and assurance and courage in spiritual warfare.

The following things need to be noted about the soldier's prayer.

PRAY ALWAYS

He must pray always. The Christian who is not always praying cannot be certain of God's protection. The Christian soldier must pray all the time to maintain a constant unbroken consciousness of God's presence and care. Such infuses the needed assurance, confidence, and courage.

PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

He must pray "in the Spirit" - the Holy Spirit of the only living and true God, who knows our needs and has the power to provide what we need.



Pray for all things! Pray in all circumstances! Pray without ceasing! Pray! Pray! Pray! That is what we are called to do (Matt. 7:7; John 16:24; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; James 5:13; 1 Chron. 16:11).



We have the Holy Spirit as our prayer partner (Rom. 8:26-27).

PRAY PERSEVERINGLY

He must persevere in prayer. The Christian soldier must be intensely involved in prayer every day of his life. He must not give up when God's "answers" do not seem to be forthcoming. The Christian soldier must not be like the three disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane who fell asleep because their flesh was weak.



Pray! Pray! Pray! Pray! Persevere in prayer (Matt. 26:41; Luke 18:1; 22:26; 1 Thess. 5:17).

PRAY UNSELFISHLY

He must pray unselfishly. The Christian is not engaged in spiritual battle alone. All believers are engaged in the same warfare, and that is why we must pray for fellow believers. The Christian soldier must pray as much and as intensely for others as for himself.



Be a prayer partner. Pray for others. Ask others to pray for you (Eph. 1:15-16; 6:18).

PRAY FOR LEADERS

He must pray for leaders in particular. Leaders, their decisions and example, often determine the outcome of the battle. The Christian soldier has leaders who teach and preach and administer throughout the church and around the world. Boldness and decisiveness and purity are needed to put the enemy to flight and to capture souls for the Gospel (Acts 28:20).



Pray for your pastors and church leaders (Acts 8:24; Rom. 15:30; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; Heb. 13:18).

THE CHRISTIAN'S EXAMPLE (EPHESIANS 6:21-24)



In the concluding verses of Paul's epistle to the Ephesian church, he mentions the examples of two faithful Christian soldiers.

TYCHICUS (EPH. 6:21-22)

Who is Tychicus?

- He was a native of Asia. He was a companion of Paul who often travelled with him (Acts 20:4).
- He was commissioned by Paul as a messenger to various churches (Eph. 6:21f; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12).
- He was entrusted to deliver the letters of Paul to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon (Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-8).
- He was sent on a special mission to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12).
- He was to be sent to Crete for the purpose of relieving Titus (Titus 3:12).
- He was called not only Paul's beloved brother and faithful minister, but also his fellow-slave (Col. 4:7).

Paul commended Tychicus for three significant things.

A. TYCHICUS WAS A BELOVED BROTHER

Tychicus was a man who had believed in Jesus Christ and demonstrated it by loving others ever so deeply. He treated others as brothers, loving and helping them as he could. Therefore, others counted him as dear to their heart as a beloved brother.



Be a loving Christian and you will be a well-beloved Christian (Acts 20:35; Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:17-18; Heb. 13:16; 1 John 3:16).

B. TYCHICUS WAS A FAITHFUL MINISTER

Tychicus was a man called and gifted by Christ to preach the Gospel and to minister to the needs of God's people. He was neither slack nor complacent.



Be passionate and faithful in your ministry (Acts 4:20; 1 Cor. 4:2; 6:20; 9:16; 15:58).

C. TYCHICUS WAS AN ENCOURAGER

Tychicus was a messenger of encouragement. Paul was in prison, and it was Tychicus who gave of his time and energy to minister to Paul.



Be a minister to others (James 1:17; 1 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 2:3-4; Luke 14:10; 22:26; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5).

PAUL (EPH. 6:23-24)

Paul was a faithful soldier by his life and ministry. We see this in the final words of his letter.

A. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Paul was a spiritual brother to others because he was always concerned for the spiritual welfare of others.

- He invoked peace upon them.
- He invoked love upon them.
- He invoked faith upon them.

B. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Paul was a prayer warrior for other believers. He prayed that God's grace would rest upon them.