



Expository Preaching from Ephesians

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Ephesians 1:1-2

“(Ephesians) is one of the divinest compositions of man. It embraces every doctrine of Christianity.” – Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Another writer calls it, “the crown of St. Paul’s writings”. – Another, the “queen of the epistles”.

F.F. Bruce calls Ephesians, “the quintessence of Paul’s writings, because it sums up all the key themes in all his letters,” and the “cosmic implications of Paul’s ministry as Apostle to the Gentiles”.

John Calvin states that Ephesians was his favourite book of the Bible. – And while John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, lay on his death bed, he asked his wife to read to him daily Calvin’s sermons on Ephesians.

John Mackay – “*To this book (Ephesians) I owe my life.*”

Australian scholar P.T. O’Brien, writes: “*Whether it is because of its magnificent sweep of God’s saving purposes from election before the foundation of the world to his summing up of all things in Christ, the place of the exalted Christ within those purposes and believers’ relationship to him, God’s victory in Christ over the powers, the grand presentation of the church, its language of worship and prayer, or the scope and depth of its ethical teaching, Ephesians has had a profound influence on the lives of many.*”

THREE initial OBSERVATIONS as we ready ourselves for take-off on our Ephesian journey – in order to raise our expectations as we soar with Paul and to feed our souls with his opening encouragements.

1. v. 1a, The

an apostle of Christ Jesus – An “apostle” = a “sent one”, an ambassador, an official representative – NOT sent by a mere earthly power or political leader, but one sent by Christ Himself. – Recall that it was at the Damascus off-ramp that Paul was confronted by the Lion of Judah and called into His service.

by the will of God – I.e., ‘I didn’t put myself in this position, God did; so I speak to you on divine authority, by order of the King.’

Paul was acutely aware of this fact: God had chosen him to be His messenger, not due to any merit or righteousness of his own, but based entirely on God's own gracious plan (cf. vv. 5, 9, 11, God's will = His saving plan)

2. v. 1b, The

a. Two DESCRIPTIONS:

(i)

v. 1b – Not just some super-Christian, elite group in the church, or some famous person etched in the stained glass.

NB, our “positional holiness” is a FACT from the day of our conversion, no matter how messy our life is and how massive the clean-up job will be. – In God's eyes because of what He has done for us in Christ, we have a permanent new identity: “saints, holy ones”.

(ii)

v. 1c – I.e., ‘true believers, those trusting in Christ’....

~ Said John Calvin, “No man is...a believer who is not also a saint; and, on the other hand, no man is a saint who is not a believer.”

b. Two LOCATIONS:

(i) At

(ii) v. 1d, In

Back to Rom. 6, our newfound identity, our permanent position, our inseparable union, being married to the God-man. – As Paul will show us throughout this epistle, at the moment of our salvation we are placed into a living fellowship and glorious relationship with Jesus of Nazareth – like branches on a vine, like parts of a body....

These two locations are a good summary of our Christian identity: we are citizens of two kingdoms, the 'city of God' and the 'city of man'. – I.e., we live both "in Christ" and in this secular world, both in the heaven and on earth, in the modern-day Ephesuses and Joburgs where God has placed us.

Don't forget how much our world today is like ancient Ephesus, as J.M. Boice notes: "*Was Ephesus crassly commercial and materialistic? So are our cities. Was it pagan, preoccupied with sex, superstitious? So are we.*"

What then can keep people today living 'saintly' lives, staying 'faithful' to Christ? – HOW, in this sinful world, how can this be possible?! – Only through divine resources, God's supernatural supply....

3. v. 2, The

v. 2b –

a. Grace – No other word better sums up God's glorious salvation plan for us than "grace", this free gift of God to undeserving sinners who only deserved His wrath. Paul uses the word 100x in his letters!

NB, for Paul, "grace" is never just a past tense word for what it took to get us saved; grace is also what it takes to KEEP us saved, present & future tense. –

Paul speaks often of the ongoing gift of God's grace for believers, enriching, equipping, enabling us to live the Christian life and to endure, strong to the end (2 Cor. 12; 2 Tim. 2; 2 Cor. 8:9, etc.).

b. Peace = cessation of war, absence of hostility, God's "shalom" (used 290x in OT to transl. *shalom*) which brings the tranquillity and harmony and stability that our disturbed hearts long for.

First and foremost, we as believers are at "peace" with a holy God who once called us His enemies (Rom. 5).

NB, This peace comes from God "the FATHER", 'our Father'! – The One who has adopted us into His family and invites us to call Him, "Abba"! –

The One who cares for us more than the greatest earthly father ever could!

NB, think of it this way: What is the CAUSE of God's wonderful work in our lives? – GRACE. – And what is the EFFECT of God's work in our lives? – PEACE! –

NB, Paul has hardly begun his letter with these two brief verses, and already he has referred THREE times to his Lord: “of Christ Jesus...in Christ Jesus...and the Lord Jesus Christ”. – Just like we said of the first Christians at Antioch, here is another example of a truly Christ-centred, Christ-saturated, Christ-dominated man. –

~ *In Christ alone, my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground;
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm,
What heights of love, what depths of peace!
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my all in all; here in the love of Christ, I stand.*

c. **An OVERVIEW** (a peek at the menu)

WHAT was one of the main ways that Paul now expected God’s ongoing grace & peace to flow into the lives of the Ephesians? – It wasn’t just some random wish or sceptical prayer, i.e., ‘Hope you stumble across some of God’s grace & peace someday, somewhere out there, good luck.’ No, Paul knew that God’s grace & peace were about to come to them through his letter, he knew that he as a God-sent apostle had the unspeakable privilege of being a CHANNEL of God’s grace & peace through his pen, through this epistle in which grace & peace are large themes! –

In 1:3-14 God’s grace & peace will come to us through one of Paul’s most famous, all-time favourite outbursts of praise for God’s predestined blessings to us in Christ!

In 1:15-23 by God’s grace coming to us through Paul’s first prayer in this epistle: a prayer of thanks, a request for wisdom and revelation that we might know Him better, and a prayer of more praise to God for raising and exalting Christ!

In 2:1-10 with Paul’s classic passage on what it means to for the dead to be made alive, for the lost to be saved by God’s amazing grace!

In 2:11-22, God’s “peace” for us becomes very specific. Peace with God must lead to peace with one another, so Paul applies our individual salvation to our new corporate identity, as Gentiles being included with Jews into “one new man,” one body, and into God’s own household.

Chp. 3 carries on this theme of the church, God’s new society, the mystery of His grace now revealed through Paul’s ministry. – This then leads Paul, in vv. 14ff, to pour out more grace for us through his prayer for power, for love, and for spiritual maturity, climaxing with another doxology of praise to God who does the unimaginable!

~One top commentator says: “One of our chief evangelical blind spots has been to overlook the central importance of the church. ...our message is more good news of a new life than of a NEW SOCIETY! Nobody can emerge from a careful reading of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians with a privatised gospel.

For Ephesians is the gospel of the church. It sets forth God’s eternal purpose to create through Jesus Christ a new society which stands out in bright relief against the sombre background of the old world. For God’s new society is characterised by life in place of death, by unity and reconciliation in place of division and alienation, by the wholesome standards of righteousness in place of the corruption of wickedness, by love and peace in place of hatred and strife, and by unrelenting conflict with evil in place of a flabby compromise with it.

This vision of a renewed human community has stirred me deeply. At the same time, the realities of lovelessness and sin in so many contemporary churches are enough to make one weep, for they dishonour Christ, contradict the nature of the church, and deprive the Christian witness of integrity. Yet increasing numbers of church members are seeking the church’s radical renewal. For the sake of the glory of God and the evangelisation of the world, nothing is more important than that the church should be, and should be seen to be, God’s new society.” (Stott)

Having giving us three chapters of grace and peace through understanding our new POSITION in Christ, Paul now dishes up more grace & peace through explaining what our resulting PRACTICE in Christ should be in chps. 4-6.

In 4:1-16, we discover how to manifest God’s peace in our life together as a church body, and how we are each channels of God’s grace to one another through using our spiritual gifts so that the entire body may be built up.

In 4:17-32, we will see how God’s grace teaches us to put off the old life and to put on the new as we learn to live peacefully with one another.

Chp. 5 then begins by showing us that as God’s grace transforms us, we live less and less in the darkness and more and more in God’s light. – And specifically, from 5:15ff, we see that God’s gracious Spirit fills us and enables to be that new society, that community of peace which Christ creates, esp. in our marriages, and also, 6:1ff, in our homes and workplace.

Yet amidst God’s supply of grace and peace, there will be warfare – which is why we need His grace & peace all the more. – So in 6:10ff, God graciously walks us through each piece of our spiritual weaponry so that we can withstand the battle.

Then in his finale, Paul is back to these favourite twins (grace and peace): 6:23-24....

Someone has said Ephesians is a “magnificent combination of Christian doctrine and Christian duty”, a tour of the broad sweep of God’s majestic saving purposes, followed by wide-ranging practical application.

Another has called Ephesians ‘the purest symphony’, “truth that sings, doctrine set to music”. – Ephesians is the “Grand Canyon of Scripture”, breathtakingly beautiful, seemingly inexhaustible.

Ephesians 1:3-6

Before we get into our outline, we must feast for a moment on v. 3 which functions as a kind of umbrella or title or letterhead over the entire passage:

Like a good Jew, Paul uses a customary style of benediction heard often in the synagogues and in Jewish homes. – He raises his hands as it were and declares:

v. 3a – I.e., ‘God is to be praised, to be spoken highly of, to be honoured.’

WHICH God – any God you’d like, any ‘higher Power’, any superior Being out there? – No.

v. 3b – This is a song of praise to one God alone, the true & living God who had only one Son: our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHY do we exalt this God?

v. 3b – I.e., ‘We bless the One who has blessed us with every blessing.’

spiritual blessings = Supernatural benefits that are not seen but unseen, because they come to us from God’s unseen but ever-active and real Holy Spirit.

Rom. 8:32...! – Everything we could ever need for our spiritual well-being and eternal good! (Col. 1:10a; 2 Pet. 1:3)...

in Christ –

v. 4a –

~ Samuel Storms in his excellent book, *Chosen for Life*:

“Divine election is certainly one of the more profound and controversial doctrines in Holy Scripture. To some it is an idea conceived in hell, a tool of Satan to thwart the evangelistic zeal of the church and thus responsible for populating hell with those who otherwise would have been reached with the gospel. To others divine election is the heart and soul of Scripture, the most comforting and reassuring of biblical truths, apart from which grace loses its power and God his glory. To the former, then, election is a primary reason why people are in hell. To the latter, it is the only reason why people are in heaven! (p.19)”

In the NT, 17x the Greek word for “elect/chosen” appears, referring to those whom God has predestined for salvation – And the concept of election is found MANY more times than that – E.g.:

- _____ taught election; here’s but a few of many excerpts:

John 6 (vv.37,39) “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me...all that He has given me...” – Jn. 17, “...to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.” – Jn. 15 (v.13), “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that You go and bear fruit...”

- _____ taught election: Acts 13:48, “Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.” (NB, an incentive for evangelism, if God had not chosen, they would NEVER have chosen Him! cf. 18:10)
- _____, in addition to what we’ll see in Eph. 1: A whole chp. in Rom., chp. 9, on this grand theme of election & predestination. There he answers the biggest objection & most common complaint against election: that it is unfair, unjust....

If you are determined never to believe in election, I warn you: Don’t read Rom. 9, it could be hazardous to your health! (cf. 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1)

- _____ also clearly taught election in 1 & 2 Peter (1:1; 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:10).

FIVE REASONS to praise God for our election:

1. v. 4a, Praise God for

He chose US

→NB, the real question should not be, ‘Why did God only choose some?’ – No, the real question should be, ‘In light of our SIN, why did God choose any?!’

in Him

2. v. 4c, Praise God because of

before the foundation of the world –

Jesus marveled at this in **Jn. 17:24** when He prayed, “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

Peter marveled at God’s eternal plan in **1 Pet. 1:20**: “[Christ] was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in these last times for your sake.”

John marveled at this in **Rev. 13:8**, saying that believers are those whose ‘names have been written before the foundation of the world in the Lamb’s book of life’.

See, if God had waited to choose us once the world was made and we arrived on the scene, then we would not be able to resist the temptation to think that it was our need or our virtue or our decision that in some way coerced His choice – something inherent in us that just happened to make us a ‘cut above’ the rest, something in which we could boast.

But as Paul said in **Rom. 9:11**, speaking of why God chose Jacob and not Esau: “...though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – *in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of His call....*” –

I.e., God wants to make it unmistakably clear that His choice to save some and not others is based entirely on His own free and sovereign will and unprompted grace – and nothing else!

~ Josiah Conder hymn:

Tis not that I did choose Thee,

*For, Lord, that could not be;
this heart would still refuse Thee,
Hadst Thou not chosen me.
Thou from the sin that stained me,
Hast cleansed and set me free;
Of old Thou hast ordained me,
That I should live to Thee.*

‘Twas sovereign mercy called me

*And taught my opening mind;
The world had else enthralled me,
To heavenly glories blind.
My heart owns none before Thee,
For Thy rich grace I thirst;
This knowing, if I love Thee,
Thou must have loved me first. (1789-1855)*

3. vv. 4d-5a, Praise God because of

a. v. 4d, Spiritual

Rom. 8:29 “For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” –

This is WHY God chooses to save people: that Christ might be magnified through a bunch of little replicas running around (and uniting together)! – NB, God chose us NOT because of who we WERE, but because of what He would make us:

holy & blameless

– *This doctrine of election must never be an excuse for sin, but rather an incentive for holiness (J. Stott).*

in love –

b. v. 5a, _____

v. 5a – In case we missed it the first time or are still resisting the idea, Paul reaches for another word to further emphasise and reiterate the fact that God chose us first before we could ever choose Him. – Lit., having been predestined = He “marked us out beforehand, He determined our destiny in advance”, used again in v. 11.

~ As an old poet wrote:

*If Scripture affirms in the plainest of terms,
The doctrine of predestination;
We ought to believe it, and humbly receive it,
As a truth of divine revelation.*

v. 5b –

HOW could such a glorious adoption, such a marvellous rescue, take place? – Only through Jesus Christ, through His shed blood, through His work on the cross that could bring filthy sinners to eat at the spotless table of the King.

4. v. 5c, Praise God for the

v. 5c – By what standard does God determine whom He does or does not choose? – Surely there must be some criteria?!...

the kind intention of His will = lit., “the good pleasure of His will”.

→ This 5th point brings us to the CORE ISSUE in the doctrinal debate over election (betw. Calvinists & Arminians), the ‘bottom line’ difference:

Scripture is clear: God chooses us based on HIS *sovereign grace alone* (v. 5c, etc.), NOT on the basis of *foreseen faith*.

5. v. 6, Praise God for

v. 6a –

v. 6b – Lit., ‘the grace with which He be-graced us’ in Christ!

NB, in the 6 vss. we’ve covered so far in Ephesians, every verse has had an ‘in Christ, from Christ, through Christ’ theme in it. NO ONE is more Christ-centred than God is! –

→ Circumstances can NEVER ALTER these five incentives for extolling our great God! – No matter how miserable our situation may be, we ALWAYS have cause to bless God and praise Him for His electing grace!...

→It is ONLY because of God's sovereign election by free grace that our salvation is secure. – Said Calvin, "If...our faith were not grounded in God's eternal election, it is certain that Satan might pluck it from us every minute."

Ephesians 1:7-10

~ J.M. Boice: *Redemption is central to Christianity. More than that, it is probably the single most beloved term in all the Christian's vocabulary.*

The great Princeton theologian B.B. Warfield said, *'There is no one of the titles of Christ which is more precious to Christian hearts than 'Redeemer''. This is because, he said, Redeemer is 'the name specifically of the Christ of the cross. Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that he paid a mighty price for it.*

NB, how commonly we sing of this title for Christ:

O for a thousand tongues to sing

My great Redeemer's praise.

*All glory, laud and honor,
To Thee, Redeemer, King.*

*There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son....*

* _____ of God's lavish _____ to us in Christ – so that we might _____ & magnify our _____:

1. vv. 7-8, God's grace has

v. 7a – NB, NOT "had" or "will have" or "may have" but "have, are holding on to" – as present possession and ongoing blessing in Christ!

And NB, not just a private possession but a corporate one: "WE have" – We don't have to share this great gift alone, but in the company of the redeemed.

☞ **Redemption** = (taken from the slave market) If you were a prisoner of war, a slave, or a condemned criminal in the ancient world, what would you want most? – To be *ransomed* and set free, redeemed!! – So redemption = to free a slave through the payment of a price.

_____ aspects of our redemption portrayed here:

a. v. 7a, the _____ of our redemption

– Heb. 9:22, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”

Rom. 3:24-25, We are “justified as a gift by His grace THROUGH the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood....”

Or as Peter pronounced, we know that we were “not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” (1 Pet.1:19)

There is a fountain filled with blood

*Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains! (W. Cowper)*

b. v. 7b, the _____ of our redemption

the forgiveness of our trespasses = lit., “to loose someone from what binds him” –

~ MacArthur: *Depressed Christians forget that God looked down the corridors of time even before He fashioned the earth and placed the sins of His elect on the head of His Son, who took them an eternal distance away. He dismissed our sins before we were born, and they can never return.*

Ps. 103:12 tells us, “As far as the east is from the west, so far as God removed our transgressions from us.”

Hundreds of years before Calvary, Micah declared: *Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity... He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in*

unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea! (Mic. 7:18-19)

c. v. 7c-8a, the _____ of our redemption

*Marvellous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt:
Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!*

v. 8a – Lit., “made abundant toward us, caused to excel, giving us more than enough”. – I.e., God has poured out His grace unsparingly – as we saw in v. 3, “EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”!

d. v. 8b, a further _____ of our redemption

v. 8b – Lit., “...with all wisdom and insight”. – As we saw in v. 4, here again the original verse-makers were probably right instead of the modern translators who tend to break the sentence unnaturally. Following the pattern elsewhere in this passage, and best matching the context, this phrase probably goes with that *precedes* not with what follows (v.9).

all wisdom = understanding of ultimate things, grasping the things of God.

As Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:12, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God. ...a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them.... But we have the mind of Christ!”

and insight = practical understanding, spiritual prudence in everyday life.

*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
Redeemed through His infinite mercy;*

Notes Prepared by Tim Cantrell

His child and forever I am! (Fanny Crosby)

2. vv. 9-10, God's grace has lavished us

the mystery of His will –

_____ *ASPECTS to this great revelation:*

a. v. 9b, the _____ for God's revelation

As Jesus prayed in **Matt. 11**, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

NB, v. 5c – It is God's purposes that prevail in the end, always tied to His Beloved Son, “in Christ”....

b. v. 10, the _____ of God's revelation

the fullness of times = God will make history ripe for Christ's return, God will bring time to its climax and consummation when Messiah comes again to rule the earth in fulfilment of prophecy.

Col. 1:20 - through Christ God will “reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

This is what it means in Heb. 1:2, that God has appointed His Son as “heir of all things” – He will inherit and unify the universe under His leadership one day!

NB, THIS is what it means to sing “joy to the world...let heaven & nature sing!”

*No more let sins & sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found! –*

~ D.M. Lloyd-Jones, “These things are so marvellous that you will never hear anything greater, either in this world or the world to come.”

Ephesians 1:11-14

* _____ **ASPECTS OF GOD’S** _____ – *so that we might praise God for His*
_____ **and our** _____ **in Christ:**

1. vv. 11-12, God in Christ!

v. 11a – Lit., “In Him [Christ], we were made a heritage, an inheritance, a portion” (cf. NASB marg. note). I.e., The verb is passive, as the NIV indicates, “In Him we were chosen”.

Deut. 4:20, “But as for you, the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are.”

Deut. 9:29, “But they are your people, your inheritance that you brought out by your great power and your outstretched arm.”

NB esp. the song of Moses in Deut. 32:8-9, we read that God gives each of the nations their inheritance and appoints their boundaries, but He reserves Israel as His own “portion”, as the “allotment of His inheritance”. (cf. 1 Kgs 8:51)

Ps. 106:40 - “Therefore the LORD was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance.”

Jn. 6:37,39, “All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me...And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing....”

Jn. 17, over & over again: ...that to all whom You have give Him/Christ, He may give eternal life...I manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; They were yours, and You gave them to Me. Father I desire that those whom You have given Me be with me where I am, that they may behold My glory....

v. 11c – I.e., God (*energeo*) “brings about, causes” everything that happens. – Not one atom in the universe, not one event in history, not one circumstance in your life occurs outside of God’s “working”. “All” means ALL!

~ On this verse, Hendriksen writes: *NOT ONLY did God make [a] plan that includes absolutely all things that ever take place in heaven, on earth, and in hell; past, present, and even the future, pertaining to both believers and unbelievers, to angels and devils, to physical as well as spiritual energies, to things great or small. [Not only does God make this all-inclusive plan, but] He ALSO carries out that plan. God’s providence in time is as comprehensive as is His decree from eternity.*

Ps. 33:11-12 ties together these two themes of God choosing a people for His inheritance and working out His sovereign will: “...the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.”

Ps. 103:19, “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; and His sovereignty rules over all.” – Ps. 135:6, “Whatever the LORD pleases he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.” – Dan. 4:35, “He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say to Him, ‘What are you doing?’”

My hope is built on nothing less

*Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name!*

*On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand (x2).*

Jer. 13:11, “For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to ME,” declares the LORD, ‘that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise, and for glory....’

2. vv. 13-14, God _____ us with His _____!

Rom. 10:14: How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ...Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

pledge of our inheritance = a “down payment, a deposit that guarantees something, an initial instalment ensuring the rest will follow”.

NB, the two other times Paul uses this same Grk word (*arrabon*): 2 Cor. 1:21-22 (fits w/Eph. 1:13 & 14!); 2 Cor. 5:5...!

Cf. Eph. 4:30 combines some of the ideas here in vv. 13-14: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” – a future, final redemption!

Rom. 8:23 also speaks of this final salvation which we look forward to. – Like all of creation, we too “having the firstfruits of the Spirit [the sealing & pledge!], even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”

As Grudem says in his excellent chapter on God’s Providence:

Scripture affirms that God causes all things that happen, but He does so in such a way that He somehow upholds our ability to make willing, responsible choices, choices that have real and eternal results, and for which we are held accountable.

...God brings about His plan through man’s willing choices. God ordained that evil would come about through the willing choices of His creatures. ...If evil came into the world in spite of the fact that God did not intend it and did not want it to be there, then what guarantee do we have that there will not be more and more evil that He does not intend and that He does not want...and will not be able to use for His purposes or to triumph over?

Ephesians 1:15-18

~ As MacArthur states:

...Our problem is not lack of blessings, but lack of insight and wisdom to understand and use them properly and faithfully. Our blessings are so vast that the human mind cannot comprehend them. In our own minds we cannot fathom the riches we have in our position in Jesus Christ. Such things are totally beyond the human mind to grasp. Only the Holy Spirit Himself can search the deep things of the mind of God, and only the Spirit can bring them to our understanding (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-12).

...Every Christian has many specific needs – physical, moral and spiritual – for which He must ask the Lord's help. But no Christian needs, or can have, more of the Lord or of His blessing and inheritance than he already has. That is why Paul tells us, as he told the Ephesian believers, not to seek more spiritual resources but to understand and use those we were given in absolute completeness the moment we received Christ.

*** _____ THINGS to pray for those who have everything – in your prayers for others and for yourself:**

1. vv. 15-16a, Pray & give thanks for

~ Jonathan Swift once wrote that some people have “just enough religion to hate one another, but not enough to love”. – May that never be true of us. – True Christianity ALWAYS produces love.

~ MacArthur states, “Faith and love must be kept in balance. Many monks, hermits, and countless others throughout the history of the church have endeavoured to keep their faith pure but have not reached out to others in love as the Lord commands every believer to do. They often become heresy hunters, eager to tear down what is wrong but doing little to build up what is good, full of criticism but deficient in love.”

2. vv. 16b-18, Pray for

The commentator O'Brien writes:

[Paul] recognizes that the Christian growth of his readers, as well as the furtherance of his own ministry of the gospel, is [totally] dependent upon the living God, [a God] who gives generously to His children when they call upon Him in prayer. ...Petitionary prayer is an essential weapon in [Paul's] apostolic armoury. Paul knows that he is engaged in a deadly spiritual warfare and needs to make use of the whole armour of God; he heeds his own advice [later in Eph. 6], to "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (6:18)....

wisdom = insight into understanding God's will and what He has done for us in Christ.

revelation = unveiling God's previously hidden mysteries about His saving plan in Christ, mysteries which no amount of human research or investigation could ever uncover if God did not open our eyes!

in the knowledge of Him – Or as NIV states, "so that you may know Him better". – NOT just facts about God, not just His deeds, not just stories about Him, as important as all of these are. –

~ In the end, human philosophy basically says, "Know yourself". – In stark contrast to this, the Christian message declares that the first priority is not 'Know yourself' but "Know your God!"

Which brings us to the main question & debate here in v.17:

a spirit or Holy Spirit? – Some of you will be glad to know that I side with the NIV on this one, "the Spirit of wisdom & revelation." – This appears to be the majority view of the top commentators today, and there is good reason:

Cf. Eph. 3:4-5...

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:10, 12-14... Only by God's Spirit do we understand His wisdom & power to transform lives through the crucified Christ.

v. 18a –

More lit., NASB marginal note, “being enlightened,” or “having the eyes of your heart enlightened” (ESV).

Three things that God wants us to grasp more deeply – TWO we'll examine today (and the 3rd deserves a message of its own next, vv. 19-23!):

NB, all three things Paul prays for here are clearly listed out: “what is...what are...what is....”

a. v. 18b, the _____

*My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul, how near
At times to faith's foreseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear!*

*Ah! then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above. (James Montgomery, 1771-1854)*

b. v. 18c, the _____

v. 18c – Cf. what stunned us in v. 11...

~ Says F.F. Bruce: *That God should set such a high value on a community of sinners, rescued from perdition and still bearing too many traces of their former state, might well seem incredible were it not made clear that he sees them in Christ, as from the beginning he chose them in Christ.*

Ephesians 1:19-23

****TWO EXCLAMATIONS of God's great power in Christ given to His church – so that we will tap into more of His power to live for Him.***

1. v. 19, See the

NB, from using 2nd person pronoun, “you” in vv. 15-18, Paul now switches to 1st person, “us”. – Even the apostle Paul, with all His godliness and experience and apostolic powers and authority, even he, esp. he, knew how dependent he was on God's power, how weak he was on his own!...

v. 19b

The 1st power-word, power (*dunamis*), speaks of God's ability to accomplish something. – The 2nd word, working (*energeo*) = God's power in action. – The 3rd word, strength (*kratos*) = God's visible strength, unstoppable dominance. – The 4th word, might (*iskus*) = God's inherent strength that He possesses.

2. vv. 20-23, See the

FOUR Christ-centred EVIDENCES of God's great power for us:

a. v. 20a, God's power seen in

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son!
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won!*

What did Paul say in Php. 3 was the aim of his life, his one ambition: “that I may know Him,” Christ. – And what did Paul then say that knowing Christ involves? – The first thing Paul lists in Php. 3: “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection....”

b. v. 20b-21, God's power seen in

v. 20b – Remember what was THE favourite, most-quoted psalm in the early church? – Ps. 110, “The LORD said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool’. –

In the Gospels, Jesus claimed these words for Himself as He stood before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Matt. 26:64; Mk. 12:36). – And after Christ's rose and ascended, the apostles announced that Jesus was now enthroned at God's right hand. – The first Christians were unshakably convinced that the risen Christ was this exalted Lord that David prophesied in Ps. 110.

They knew that Jesus was at God's right hand = that place of highest privilege, honour & power. – God's right hand, that exalted position of sovereignty & universal authority (Matt. 26:64; 28:18; Heb. 1:3-4,13, etc.).

~ MacArthur: *Our Lord is above everything and everyone else. He is above Satan and above Satan's world system. He is above the holy angels and the fallen angels, above saved people and unsaved people, for time and for eternity. He is above all names, titles, ranks, levels, powers, and jurisdictions in the universe.*

c. v. 22a, God's power seen in

[~ As Geoff Thomas states: *The only rationality this world has is an orderliness imposed upon it by the infinite intelligence of Jehovah Jesus. He is the ultimate reality in this universe - the mind of Jesus Christ. The last thing, the foundational thing is a Person. It is not mathematics; it is not natural law or human rationality, or [physical] matter; it is not light; it is not energy. It is the Lord Christ, and it is his will that imposes upon the universe its every feature and characteristic and movement. ...He has given to every particle of matter the properties that he decides. He causes them to behave in the way he has decided. The thinking of Jesus Christ is the last and basic and foundational reality in the whole material universe. Everything else is responding to him.*]

d. v. 22b-23, God's power seen in

To the church? = From a very universal emphasis on Christ as Lord over “all things,” Paul now moves to a very specific, particular focus on the one group in all the universe TO WHOM Christ has been especially “given” as their Head and Leader.

Yes, Christ is Ruler over everything. – But He has NOT been “given” to all things in the way that He has been “given” to us, the church, His redeemed people. – All things know Him as their Lord & Sovereign; but all things do not know Him as their “gift” – Why not?

BECAUSE: Christ is NOT sovereignly ruling over all things for the equal benefit of all His creatures; sometimes God’s plan is at their expense, not for their sake. –

The ascended, exalted Christ is right now exercising His absolute authority and carrying out His dominion over all things for the BENEFIT and the GOOD of one beneficiary, “His church”, His precious flock – to make us more holy, more Christlike (Rom. 8:29), and to magnify His name in the world through us and to advance His kingdom.

Eph. 2:1-3

***THREE _____ OF _____ HUMANITY – that we might recall our own resurrection and might proclaim life to the dead.**

1. v. 1,

v. 1 – Lit., “And you, being dead” – past, continuous, ongoing condition. – I.e., this was the state you were in before God acted – As Paul will go on to describe in v. 12, “having no hope and without God in the world”, or in 4:18, “excluded from the life of God”....

v. 1b – It is sin that causes us to be born spiritually dead, and it is sin that keeps us in that condition.

v. 2a – Did you catch the irony here? – Dead, yet “walking”; a living corpse. – What an eerie image, what a gruesome sight. –

2. v. 2-3a, _____ – *Led by* _____

a. v. 2a, Led by the

the course of this world = lit, “the age of this world”,

b. v. 2bc, Led by the

v. 2b – I.e., “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (NIV), a powerful supernatural being who rules over a host of evil spirits who live in the “air”, i.e., in the heavenly realms. – I.e., as Eph. 6:12 will later tell us, “the rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”.

v. 2c – This evil Prince Satan controls all his subjects; not one of them ever escapes by their own strength or ingenuity. – Satan’s supernatural grip is far, far too strong for even the most determined person, or for a thousand mighty men for that matter.

~**Antioch Bible Church Declaration of Faith, Section 6, Satan:** *We believe that Satan is an evil personality, a created but fallen angel, the author of sin, the arch-enemy of God, and the great deceiver of man. Yet Satan is also a defeated foe through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and he will be eternally punished in the lake of fire.*

v. 3a – Included in the “sons of disobedience” (v. 2c) are not only the Ephesian recipients, but also Paul and all humanity. –

c. v. 3a, Led by

Cf. Rom. 5:12, “Just as through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because ALL sinned. ...Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men....Through one man’s disobedience the man were made sinners.” –

~ As the old Puritan primer for school children used to say (for learning the letter “A”), “In Adam’s fall,/We sinned all.”

3. v. 3b,

children of wrath = God does not stand idly by while His laws are despised, His glory is disregarded, and His kindness is spurned.

As Paul said in Rom. 1: WHY do we need to be saved, WHY do we need a powerful gospel of free righteousness from God that can save any sinner who will believe? – Why?

– “[BECAUSE] the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...” – And HOW is God’s wrath unleashed on humanity? – Rom.1 says it is by God “giving people over” more and more to the dark lords, to the world, the devil, and worst of all, delivering us over to our own enslaving, suicidal lusts.

But surely ‘gentle Jesus, meek & mild’ didn’t have this harsh view of humanity, did He? – Think again: John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

“even as the rest” – Despite what we might think, Paul is not here describing only some corrupt, pagan tribes or degraded heathen peoples. – He is declaring that this is the biblical diagnosis of fallen mankind *everywhere*, in every society, in every age and culture.

As Paul declared in Rom. 3: 9ff: *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.... so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.*

~ Section 7 from our ABC Decl. of Faith: Man & Sin

We believe that God created man in His own image, male and female, giving to human life an inherent sanctity (from conception). We believe God made man holy under the law of his Maker; but man voluntarily transgressed the command of God and fell from that holy and happy state. As a result of Adam’s sin, the whole human race was plunged into sin, guilt and ruin; and that all deserve death physically, spiritually and eternally. We believe all mankind are sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration; and that man is radically depraved in all areas of life and is spiritually dead and utterly incapable of pleasing God or saving himself, and thus is hopelessly lost unless God intervenes. The greatest need of humanity is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope for humanity is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to Himself.

[~ Whitfield: *Come, ye dead, Christless, unconverted sinners, come and see the place where they laid the body of the deceased Lazarus; behold him laid out, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, locked up and stinking in a dark cave, with a great stone placed on the top of it. View him again and again; go nearer to him; be not afraid; smell him. Ah! How he stinketh! ...Was he bound hand and foot with grave-clothes? So are thou bound hand and foot with thy corruptions; and as a stone was laid on the sepulchre, so is there a stone of unbelief upon thy stupid heart. Perhaps thou hast lain in this state, not only four days, but many years, stinking in God’s nostrils. And, what is still more effecting, thou art as unable to raise thyself out of this loathsome, dead state to a life of righteousness and true holiness, as ever Lazarus was to raise himself from the cave in which he lay so long. Thou mayest try the power of thy own boasted free-will, and the force and energy of moral persuasion and rational arguments...but all thy efforts, exerted with never so much vigor, will prove fruitless and abortive, till that same Jesus, who said, ‘Take away the stone,’ and cried ‘Lazarus, come forth,’ also quicken you.]*

Ephesians 2:4-7

- a. Is this not the **theme of the Bible**, “But God”?!

Gen. 8:1, after the Flood of God’s wrath had destroyed the earth, “BUT GOD remembered Noah....”

FOUR times in the life of Joseph we read these words: To his wicked brothers, he said, “It was not you who sent me here, BUT GOD.” – And, “You meant evil against me, BUT GOD meant it for good.” – And on their deathbeds, both Joseph and his father Isaac uttered to their family members these classic words of hope, “I am about to die, BUT GOD will bring you back to the land of your fathers.” (Gen. 45:8; 48:21; 50:20, 24).

Often in the Psalms were these two words of faith, e.g., Ps. 73, “My flesh and my heart may fail, BUT GOD is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

In the preaching of the Spirit-filled apostles after Pentecost, we often hear this great phrase: Acts 2, Peter declares, “You nailed Him to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death, BUT GOD raised Him up again!...” – And so says Paul also in Acts 13, “...they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb, BUT GOD raised Him from the dead.”

- b. Thus, “But God” is not only the theme of the Bible, but also the *story of our own lives*:

Do you often feel ignorant of God? – Indeed, we are:

1 Cor. 2:9-10, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ – BUT GOD has revealed it to us by His Spirit.”

Are we often tempted to sin? – Indeed we are: *1 Cor. 10:13, “Temptation...is common to man; BUT GOD is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear....”*

Do we feel foolish, weak, and unimpressive in the eyes of the world? – How true!

“BUT GOD chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, the weak things of the world to shame the strong....”, says 1 Cor. 1:27.

- c. This is not only the theme of the Bible and of our own lives. – It is also the **theme of history**, the story of the church for the past 2,000 years!

* _____ *from which to view our great salvation – that we might forever have stamped across our hearts & burned upon our minds these words, ‘ _____ ’!:*

1. v. 4, the _____ of our salvation:

a. v. 4b,

v. 4b – Mercy = This is a huge word in the Bible, appearing 238x in the OT and 27x in the NT. – It refers to loving- kindness and sensitivity toward those in need.

b. v. 4c,

Remember Rom. 5:5ff: God’s love has been *poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. BUT GOD demonstrates His own love for us in this, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for US. ...For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son...!*

1 Jn. 4, “We love BECAUSE He first loved us.”

*For the love of God is broader,
Than the measure of man’s mind;
And the heart of the Eternal,
Is so wonderfully kind!*

3. vv. 5-6, the _____ of our salvation

THREE AMAZING ACTIONS of God on our behalf:

a. v. 5b, _____ with Christ

Paul uses a word found nowhere else in all of ancient Grk literature. He coins a word, makes up his own word to describe the wonder of what God has done. –

God “makes alive, gives life, resurrects” US “together with” someone else. – A kind of co-resurrection, a joint-venture in breathing new life into the dead. – Joint with WHO?...

With Christ = There at Calvary, on the cross, God viewed every sinner who will ever believe, all of God’s elect who would one day be saved – God viewed us as dying there with Christ, physically, spiritually

b. v. 6a, _____ with Christ

Rom. 6, We have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. ...Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus!

Col. 2:12, “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” – Col. 3:1, “Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God....”

~ As we sing with Wesley:
*Soar we now where Christ hath led,
Following our exalted Head:
Made like Him, like Him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.*

c. v. 6b, _____ with Christ

3. v. 7, the _____ of our salvation

v. 7a – I.e., ‘Throughout time and eternity, in wave after wave of future ages, as far into the horizon as our minds can reach, and then farther....’

~ F.F. Bruce, “Throughout time and in eternity the church, this society of pardoned rebels, is designed by God to be the masterpiece of His goodness.”

[~ Geoff Thomas adds this insight: *My friends, we are the tiniest specks, utterly insignificant in the vastness of the universe, but God's purpose is to show to all the creation his kindness to sinful men. Think of it. All creation are able to see right now the might and power and glory of the Godhead.*

Yes, but it is only in redemption, through the grace of God in Christ, that the creature discovers how extraordinarily kind the mighty Creator is. They will see the vast universe and all the redeemed people of God, and they will see its Creator in a new light. They will say, "How kind . . . how wonderfully kind . . . how surpassingly kind . . . is the Lord Jehovah. How incomparable his grace." The eternal theme of praise will be this wonderful kindness of God to save us.]

*When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's grace
Than when we've first begun!*

Ephesians 2:8-10

***THREE** _____ - _____ *of how our salvation, from start to finish, is ALL of _____ and all of _____!:*

1. v. 8a, By _____ you are _____ through _____!

v. 8a – “grace, saved, faith” – *THREE KEY words here, three of the first syllables that should be spoken by any newborn child of God, the three legs that our eternal life rests upon.* – So let’s be very clear on what they mean:

a.

This undeserved favour and unmerited kindness of God to rebels who deserved the opposite, to hell-deserving sinners.

cf. Acts 20:24, “the gospel of God’s grace”.

Chp 1 “To the praise of His glorious grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ...[redeemed, forgiven] according to the riches of His grace”.

And already in chp. 2:5c, 7...

And again in chp. 3, Paul will describe how his entire ministry to the Gentiles was owing to the grace of God, “a stewardship of God’s grace...I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace...To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given....”

b.

NB the verb tense used, same as v. 5c, i.e., “have BEEN saved” – i.e., past action with present, ongoing, glorious results!

*...Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

c.

*Nothing in my hand I bring
Simply to thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.*

Here again we come to the heart of it all, the crux of Christianity, the essence of salvation. – Which is why, again, Paul in his epistles is constantly at pains to explain and defend the concept of *saving faith*. – 35x in his writings, we hear Paul using this type of phrase, “through faith”.

2. vv. 8b-9, By _____ you are saved, **NOT** _____.

Paul now uses *TWO negative clauses* to explain this great message of a grace-alone salvation, to test whether we've really grasped grace:

a. v. 8b, **NOT** of _____ **but of God**

v. 8b – What does “that” refer back to? – Grammatically, in terms of the gender of this pronoun in the Grk, it probably refers back to all of v. 8a, the whole salvation gift, the grace, the salvation, and even the faith!

Rom. 6:23... Php. 3:9

*Not the labours of my hands
Could fulfil Thy laws demands
Could my zeal no respite know
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and Thou alone!*

b. v. 9, **NOT** of _____ (to crush _____)

Cf. Isa. 64:6, “All our righteous deeds are as filthy rags in His sight”.

Paul makes this so clear in Romans: 3:21, “By the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified in His sight. ...But now, a righteousness from God *apart from the Law* has been revealed....”

Or Rom. 4:4-5, “Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favour, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

[Or again, in Rom. 11:16, “If it is by grace it is no longer from works, otherwise, grace is no longer grace.” – Or Titus 3:5, “He saved us, **NOT** on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.” – Or 2 Tim. 1:9, “[God] has saved us..., **NOT** according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity....”]

~ *Christians are always uncomfortable in the presence of pride, for they sense its incongruity. We shall not be able to strut round heaven like peacocks. Heaven will be filled with the exploits of Christ and the praises of God. There will indeed be display in heaven. Not self-display, however, but rather a display of the incomparable wealth of God's grace, mercy and kindness through Jesus Christ. (Stott)*

~ Says Spurgeon, "Beware of self-righteousness. The black devil of licentiousness [loose living] destroys his hundreds, but the white devil of self-righteousness destroys his thousands."

~ This is why Section 8 in our ABC Declaration of Faith, on "Salvation & Justification", reads as it does:

Because of man's lost and sinful state, we believe that salvation is totally of God, not of man, through the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross. We believe that we are saved because God, by His free and sovereign grace alone, has chosen from eternity past to regenerate us by His Spirit and to grant us faith and repentance by which we freely embrace Christ. We believe that by faith alone in Christ alone, apart from any human merit or works, the believing sinner is justified and declared righteous as an act of God through an astonishing transfer, in which our sins are imputed to Christ and His righteousness is imputed to us. Thus, we are given eternal life and adopted into God's family to be conformed to the image of Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace.

3. v. 10, By grace you are _____, *for* _____!

Reminiscent of Ps. 100, "It is HE who made us, and NOT WE ourselves."

Lit., *poiema*, from which we get the word, "poem," a literary work of art. – Through salvation, we become God's "work of art", His "craftsmanship, masterpiece". –

v. 10b – I.e., created "through God's activity in Christ and our union with Christ". – Just as God created the universe through Christ the Mediator (Col. 1:16; Jn. 1), so also He made us His new creation through that same Mediator, Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

Titus 3: “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done.... Be careful to engage in good deeds.”

Same in 1 Cor. 15:10, “By the grace of God, I am what I am; and His grace toward me was not without effect; but I laboured even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.” (cf. Jn. 15:8, etc.)

Ephesians 2:11-15

* _____ *contrasting our lives before and after Christ:*

1. vv. 11-12, Remember

Therefore = Or, “For this reason” – I.e., Paul is saying, ‘In light of your great *personal* salvation displayed in vv. 1-10, come now in vv. 11-22 and see the *corporate* implications of your faith. –

Remember = Pres. tense, ‘Keep remembering, don’t ever forget, don’t ever outgrow the gospel, don’t ever graduate beyond the joy of your salvation.

Like God often urged Israel to do in the OT: Deut. 5:15, “You shall *remember* that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm...” – Deut. 15:15, “You shall *remember* that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you...” – At least 3x more after this in Deut., God urges His people to do this one thing (an act and a motive and a mindset out of which all their obedience must flow): remember, remember their salvation!...

Three quick ‘elbow-jabs’ (critiques) against empty Judaism:

NB, v. 11b, so-called “Circumcision” = He was clearly not happy with this way of putting things. – Their circumcision wasn’t the real thing.

performed in the flesh = purely external religion, nothing more. – I.e., ‘You say the Gentiles are physically different from you; but that is the only difference, because your faith is merely external and hollow.’

by human hands = A phrase in the Bible that always refers to the work of man in contrast to the work of God. – I.e., that which can be explained on merely human terms.

Recall that the OT prophets emphasized that man’s greater need was not physical circumcision, but spiritual, a circumcision of the HEART (Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; Jer. 6:10; 9:24-25; Ezek. 44:7,9). –

Paul reiterates this even further in the NT: As Paul said in Rom. 2, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.” In Php. 3, Paul affirms that the truly circumcised people, the true “circumcision” are “those who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh” – Gal. 5, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” – Gal. 6, “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.”

**FIVE DISADVANTAGES of the ‘far off’, five ways that we were cut off from God and alienated from spiritual life:*

(i) v. 12a, separate from Christ =

(ii) v. 12b, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel = “Excluded”; few words have a more harsh ring to them: ‘Uninvited, alienated, cut off, left out in the cold’....

~ As one writer puts it: *God chose one nation on earth to be a theocracy, a nation of which He was Head, King and Lord. He gave them His special blessing, protection and love. He gave them His covenants, His law, His priesthood, His sacrifices, His promises, and His guidance. The psalmist said that God “has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them” (147:20).*

(iii) v. 12c, strangers to the covenants of promise = Before Christ, we had NO relationship to all the amazing promises God made to Israel. –

WHICH promises? – Recall God’s promises to give to Israel seed, land, & blessing:

LAND:

SEED:

BLESSING:

(iv) v. 12d, having no hope

(v) v. 12e, without God in the world – *Atheos*, from which we get “atheist”.

Ps. 16, “I said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord,’ apart from you I have NO good thing.” – Other Scriptures, ‘There is no other Rock, no other God, no other foundation upon which to build our lives!’ – Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life” – Outside of Christ, we have no place to go, no hope!

2. v. 13, Remember

v. 13a – NB all the hope packed into this opening phrase, another version of the “But God” that we saw in v.4. – All the promise, all the grace, all the irony, all the love, all the salvation packed into this one precious little word, “But”, “But now”.

v. 13d – Like we saw in chp. 1, “In Him [Christ] we have redemption *through His blood*”. – Heb. 9, “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.” – Only a blood price was acceptable. –

And not just any blood, but the blood of a sacrificial lamb. – And not just any lamb, but a spotless lamb, dying a violent and bloody death....

[As Paul said in Rom. 3, We are “justified as a gift by His grace THROUGH the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation [an atoning sacrifice] in His blood....”

Or as Peter pronounced, we know that we were “not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” (1 Pet.1:19).

What could be more important than drawing near to God? – Ps. 73, “the nearness of God is my good”! – There is no greater good! –

*Let us love and sing and wonder,
Let us praise the Savior's Name!
He has hushed the law's loud thunder,
He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame.
He has washed us with His blood,
He has brought us nigh to God.*

*Let us love the Lord Who bought us,
Pitied us when enemies,
Called us by His grace, and taught us,
Gave us ears and gave us eyes:
He has washed us with His blood,
He presents our souls to God.*

*...Let us wonder; grace and justice
Join and point to mercy's store;
When through grace in Christ our trust is,
Justice smiles and asks no more:
He Who washed us with His blood
Has secured our way to God.*

*...Hark! the Name of Jesus, sounded
Loud, from golden harps above!
Lord, we blush, and are confounded,
Faint our praises, cold our love!
Wash our souls and songs with blood,
For by Thee we come to God.*

Ephesians 2:14-18

Turn back to Eph. 2....

v. 14a –

****FOUR WAYS that***

1. vv. 14b-15a, By DESTROYING the

v. 14b –

v. 14c – I.e., a massive fence or wall – But to WHICH wall is Paul referring?

(a) Some have seen this to be the veil in the temple keeping us out of the Holy of Holies:

(b) Some have seen this “barrier of the dividing wall” that Christ broke down as the infamous barricade in the Jerusalem temple:

RATHER:

(c) Paul has in mind here something larger, something much longer-standing than any 1st c. physical barrier:

v. 15a –

abolishing – I.e., “rendered inoperative or nullified, made of no effect, no longer binding” for the believer.

Col. 2:13-14: *When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, [God] made you alive together with [Christ], having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

And so here in Eph. 2:15a:

in His flesh = i.e., “By His death” – Cf. v. 13, “by the blood of Christ”; v. 16, “through the cross” – because of His atoning work at Golgotha, as our Substitute....

WHY? – Why has Christ done such a drastic thing as tearing down that Old Covenant wall? – Our next two points about how Christ is our peace also tell us the reasons why Christ destroyed the barrier and nullified the Law as the binding code over believers:

2. v. 15b, By CREATING us into

v. 15c – NB, again, Paul reminds us that God’s great work of salvation never happens in isolation from Christ, but always “in Christ, in Himself”, He who “is our peace” (the intersection and meeting point for all peacemaking efforts).

Look here at what Christ has done:

one new man = Already, back in 2:10a, we saw that God’s saving work in our lives is a magnificent work of re-creation. – But now the focus is specifically on Christ as the Creator and Builder of an amazing new project, a new breed, a new race! – When Jesus promised, “I will build My Church,” here is what He meant.

thus establishing peace = Back to v. 14 where we began. – To know Christ as “our peace” becomes a very practical, very personal, VERY relevant thing to life in 21st c., post-apartheid South Africa or anywhere!

Gal. 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

→ In Christ, all ethnic and national and cultural distinctions *vanish*. – Do you realise that IF the whole world embraced Christ, all wars would cease? – That is the power of His Word and His peace!

Col. 3:9-11...! – ALL human barriers are obliterated in Christ, the Supreme One!

3. v. 16, By RECONCILING us to

v. 16a – From emphasising horizontal reconciliation in the previous vss., Paul now moves to vertical reconciliation: to God through the cross.

The only thing worse than man’s hostility toward man is God’s hostility toward man. – As we saw in 2:3, “by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest”. – See, behind every form of alienation between people lies the deepest alienation all, that between people and God. –

This is true for all humanity, from the most pagan Gentile to the most religious Jew and for everyone else in-between....

v. 16c – One word best describes our relationship to God before salvation: “enmity, hostility, conflict” b/c He is so holy and we are so sinful.

NB, v. 16c, speaking of the cross and death, Paul proclaims this paradox: put to death the enmity. – To think, the same Jesus who was killed was also the Killer, as He “put to death” the hostility between God and sinners. –

What a bold statement: The slain One became the Slayer (the slain Lamb became the roaring Lion)! – This is the sweet irony, the great triumph of the gospel!...

Cf. 2 Cor. 5 tells us exactly what our message is to a lost world. – And my friend, if you are not yet reconciled to God, this is our message to YOU: *God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Cf. 1 Cor. 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

4. vv. 17-18, By PROCLAIMING PEACE

v. 17 – The miracle mission of vv. 14-15, breaking down the wall & uniting Jew & Gentile into “one new man” and “one body”, and the great aim of v. 16, of ‘reconciling’ sinners to God and ending their enmity – these lofty goals could never be accomplished without preaching.

But WHEN did Christ do this “preaching” of peace? – In His incarnation & earthly ministry and teaching? In His crucifixion? In His resurrection and His post-resurrection appearances?

YET in none of those instances did Christ preach to BOTH Jew & Gentile, to both the “near” and the “far”. – All of Jesus’ earthly preaching was basically within the boundaries of Israel, to the Jewish people, not Gentiles. – Plus, the full message of Christ’s peace could only be made *after* His death and resurrection, after the price of peace had been paid. – The announcement follows the achievement.

So *when* did Christ go on this universal peace-preaching tour? It is most likely that Paul refers here to the ascended, exalted Christ speaking by His Spirit through His apostles. – Lit., v. 17a reads, “And after/when he came, he preached peace....”

Isn't this exactly what Christ promised, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28)? – Luke 10, “The one who listens to you listens to Me....” – John 13, “He who receives whomever I send receives Me....”

NB, recall that this theme of “peace” was a crucial part of Jesus’ counsel to His disciples while on earth:

Cf. John 14 & 16 “Peace I leave with you; MY peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. ...These things I have spoke to you, so that in Me you may have peace.” (14:27; 16:33)

Then, 3 days later, when the disciples were locked in that room (same Upper Room?) for fear that Jesus’ fate would soon be theirs too, the risen Christ suddenly “stood in their midst and said to them, ‘PEACE be with you.’” –

Because Christ had suffered and said, “It is finished,” based on that atoning work on the cross, He could now say, “Peace be with you.” – He had accomplished, once and for all, our peace with God.

So now, this peace that Jesus had once preached TO the disciples He now preached THROUGH the disciples by His Spirit. – As Peter preached at Cornelius’ home in Acts 10, “The word which God sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all).” – The whole book of Acts is the story of the Acts of who? – The acts of the risen Christ by His Spirit through His apostles, as the mighty gospel marches to the ends of the earth and King Jesus builds His Church among all nations: Reread: v. 17...!

And even more amazing is that Paul quotes here from a prophecy of Isaiah (chp. 57) that was originally addressed only to Jews, the ones “far away” in exile and those “near” in their land. – BUT NOW, through Christ, those prophecies have a greater fulfilment and wider application to ALL of us. – As the angels exclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward men!”

HOW successful of a preacher is Christ? – What kind of results does He get from His sermons?

v. 18 – Jesus’ preaching has accomplished the most amazing thing imaginable. – In fact, it has come not just through His preaching but through His entire Person and work on sinners’ behalf, nb, v. 18a, “through Him”.

What has He bought us and brought us?:

access –

Cf. Rom. 5:1-2, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction/access by faith into this grace in which we stand.”

And NB again, this privilege is purchased not just for Jews or only for Gentiles, but for “both”, for all who know Christ. – And NOT just individually, i.e., ‘Either Jews or Gentiles can come to him, separately, as they wish,’ kind of like whites & blacks were permitted into the same locations but just not at the same time.

NO, as we saw in vv. 14-16, Christ has made us into “one new humanity,” reconciled us into “one body”, so HOW do we come to Him? – Not in our separate communities (old distinctions have been erased)..., but *together*, “we BOTH have our access in ONE Spirit” as we’ll see next time, in vv. 19ff, as one “household of God”.

Ephesians 2:19-22

This is NOT our outline, but I must mention to you that Paul packs into this brief passage three great pictures of the church. – We will look briefly at the first two in v. 19, and then come to our main outline and Paul's main focus in vv. 20-22.

v. 19a – *What we are NOT:*

strangers = foreigners, allowed to live in a country but with no rights, like a tourist with a 30-day visa.

aliens = resident sojourners, long-term foreigners – like me in SA, with permanent residence but not yet citizenship....

v. 19b – *What we ARE:*

The Church is a NEW KINGDOM/NATION:

fellow citizens with the saints

~ Paul is writing while the Roman Empire is at the zenith of its splendour; no signs had yet appeared of its coming decline, let alone of its fall.

Yet he sees this other kingdom, neither Jewish nor Roman but international and interracial, as something more splendid and more enduring than any earthly empire.
(Stott)

The Church is a NEW FAMILY:

of God's household

* _____ *to rejoice in God's new temple, reasons to celebrate how Christ is building His Church:*

1 Pet. 2 tells us, "You...are being built into a spiritual house..." 1 Cor. 3 says, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" – And so here in Eph. 2...

1. v. 20, Rejoice in the

v. 20a – NB it is not an active verb but a passive one. – How much did we contribute to being built on the right foundation in life? – As much as we contributed to all the other great actions we've seen in Eph. 2:

...To our being raised from the dead, being seated with Christ in the heavenly places, being saved from perishing, being created for good works, being made into one new man, being reconciled to God. – How MUCH did we contribute to each of these? – Nothing, zilch!...

v. 20a – I.e., 'the foundation which consists of the apostles and prophets'...

Cf. Matt. 16, after Peter's great confession..., "You are Petros/Rock, and on this rock I will build My church."

the apostles

and prophets

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word.
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

1 Cor. 3, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

2. vv. 21a, 22a, Rejoice in the

v. 21a – The whole building, i.e., all the parts, the Cornerstone, foundation, and all of us, the “living stones” as Peter calls us....

Being fitted together

Growing into

~ J.M. Boice: *What a great process this is! And how mysterious! We are told in 1 Kgs 6:7 that when the great temple of Solomon was constructed, “only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.” To my knowledge no other building in history was ever built in this way. Its construction was almost silent, so holy was the work. Silently, silently the stones were moved and added and the building rose.*

Thus it is with the church. We do not hear what is going on inside human minds and hearts as God the Holy Spirit creates new life and adds those individuals to the temple he is building. But God is working...adding to His temple.

3. vv. 21b, 22b, Rejoice in the

in the Lord

*A holy nation, royal priests,
Alike the greatest and the least,
We sing His praise, His grace applaud
We are the temple of our God (x2). (D.A. Carson)*

Ephesians 3:1-6

Here in vv. 1-6, Paul lets us gaze from **VARIOUS ANGLES at the mystery of God's grace to us in Christ – that we might marvel at God's great plan for us in the Church and might proclaim this mystery:*

1. v.1, Meet the

v. 1a – For what reason?

v. 1b

2. v. 2, Meet the

v. 2 – I.e., as some transl., "Surely you have heard, assuming you've heard" – since Paul had spent nearly three years with them.

God calls us to be stewards: wise distributors and faithful managers of His grace, in all its various forms.

3. v. 3, Know the

v. 3 – On the Damascus Road, as Paul says in Gal. 1, "God...was pleased to reveal His Son to me". – Paul did nothing to deserve it or discover it; God alone took the initiative.

4. v. 4, READ

5. v. 5a, Know the

- What is the mystery?
- It's not the gospel:
Paul goes out of his way in his writings to show that his gospel is no human invention. – In Rom. 1, he says his gospel was "promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures" (1:2). – In Rom. 3, he says that his gospel was "witnessed to by the Law and the prophets" (3:21). – In Gal. 3, that it was "preached beforehand to Abraham" (3:8). And when we turn to the OT itself, we find plenty of proof of God's heart for saving Gentiles and including them into His plan. – *What then* is this "mystery" that was concealed until now?....

Here is what was previously unknown:

The MANNER in which God would save Gentiles, the WAY in which God would include the nations in His saving plan by joining them with the Jews into the very body of Christ, one new humanity, one new temple.

6. v. 5b, Meet the

v. 5b – Through God's Almighty, revealing Spirit, God has opened the eyes of "apostles and prophets". – We met these men before, back in 2:20:

+ NB, nowhere in the NT are we given the expectation that there would be a line of apostolic succession or some handing down of the baton of an office or papacy or episcopacy of any kind. –

This doctrine of apostolic succession is held, in some form, by Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and some Anglicans. – Obviously, the fact that more than one group claims to occupy Peter's office already poses a problem, and has caused great conflict in church history.

In contrast, we as evangelicals and children of the Protestant Reformation, we firmly believe that our faith is built, *NOT upon the doctrine of apostolic succession, but upon the succession of apostolic doctrine*. The only link that our leaders and preachers need to prove that they have with the apostles is in their preaching!

7. v. 6, Know the

THREE privileges:

- a. fellow heirs =
- b. fellow members of the body
- c. fellow partakers of the promise

Ephesians 3:7-13

Secular history concentrates its attention on kings, queens, and presidents, on politicians and generals, in fact, on 'VIPs'. The Bible concentrates rather on a group it calls 'the saints,' often little people, insignificant people, unimportant people, who are however at the same time GOD'S people – unknown to the world yet well-known to God.

Secular history concentrates on wars, battles and peace-treaties, followed by yet more wars, battles and peace-treaties. The Bible concentrates rather on the war between good and evil, on the decisive victory won by Jesus Christ over the powers of darkness, on the peace-treaty ratified by his blood, and on the sovereign proclamation of an amnesty for all rebels who will repent and believe.

Again, secular history concentrates on the changing map of the world, as one nation defeats another and annexes its territory, and on the rise and fall of empires. The Bible concentrates rather on a multi-national community called 'the church', which has no territorial frontiers, which claims nothing less than the whole world for Christ, and whose empire will never come to an end. (J. Stott)

***Several _____ that describe Paul's ministry of the mystery – that we might _____ at God's gracious saving plan and _____ in this ministry.**

1. vv. 7-8a, It is a _____ ministry.

v. 8a – 'To ME, of all people!' – The he adds, "the very least". – As if saying "least of all saints" wasn't enough, Paul has to add "very", lit., "least-er, less than the least"

1 Tim. 1:13ff: *I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy... It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience....*

1 Cor. 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am...!"

2. v. 8b, It is a _____ ministry.

"A religion that is small enough for our understanding is not great enough for our need."

3. v. 9, It is an _____ ministry.

→ In order to have this kind of illuminating ministry, a church must be driven by an expository ministry, a ministry where the Word of God is explained verse by verse, line by line: Like Paul, preachers must labour day after day and week after week to help people understand God's mystery. – This will not come overnight, or even in one year or one decade.

4. v. 10, It is a _____ ministry.

v. 10a – God's aim in history was Paul's aim in ministry: that God's character would "be made known"...

NB, never skip over the passive verbs. – Though Paul knew he was called to "preach" (v. 8) and to "bring to light" (v. 9), only God could truly "make known" the mystery! – Behind every human preacher there must be the Divine Revealer; otherwise, all is in vain.

His manifold wisdom = His "many-sided, multi-coloured, ultra-splendored" – Was a Grk word used for intricately embroidered patterns, or the diverse hues of a gorgeous garland of flowers.

WHAT then is the PLATFORM or stage upon which God is revealing His stunning wisdom? – through the church, through US of all people, the "least of the least"!

And WHO is the audience at this show? – the rulers & authorities in the heavenly places – I.e., the entire host of heavenly beings, myriads upon myriads, both in Heaven & in Hell and upon this earth, unseen but ever so real and ever so observant! –

5. v. 11, It is a _____ ministry.

v. 11a – Lit., "the purpose of the ages" – From before Israel, before Adam, before there was light or darkness, in the heart of God there was an everlasting plan to magnify Himself, to put His multi-faceted wisdom on display. – How?

v. 11b – Or NIV, "accomplished" – Has He really? – In this sinful, broken world, is God's plan already "carried out, done"?

6. v. 12, It is a _____ ministry.

7. v. 13, It is a _____ ministry.

Php. 2:17, "I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith...."

Col. 1:24, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions."

2 Cor. 1, "If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation" – 2 Cor. 4, "Death works in us, but life in you...All things are for your sakes...."

2 Tim. 2:10, "I endure all things for the sake of the elect...."

Cf. Eph. 3:1 ("prisoner...for your sake"; from last wk.)...

v. 13b – Instead of gloom, they should be thinking "glory"! – I.e., 'Paul's persecution is for your honour, your reputation and privilege of now being a new creature in Christ.' – I.e., if Paul had not been willing to suffer for bringing them the gospel, they would have no glory, no salvation, no hope – in this life or the life to come!

Ephesians 3:14-19

NB, Paul's done with his 'mystery digression' and now back where he left off in 3:1. (Paul's upcoming prayer here would've been powerful enough coming in 3:1 on the heels of chp. 2. But now, after this 13-verse detour into his 'ministry of the mystery', it will make his prayer all the more forceful.)

Before we get into our outline, let's notice the unique way that Paul introduces his prayer in vv. 14-15:

v. 14a

v. 14b

v. 15

Families "in heaven" = every ranking, grouping and classing of the angels, both the good & rebellious alike, as in 1:21, "all rule and authority and power and dominion" (cf. 6:12)....

Families "on earth" = every natural, human family grouping. – Those families that did exist, those existing today, and those families still yet to begin.

** _____ steps on Paul's ' _____ ' – so that spiritual power will mark more of our lives & our prayers.*

1. v. 16,

v. 16a

Cf. 1:17, we are praying to "the Father of glory," a God of boundless resources – and cf. 1:18b, a God who loves to display His glorious riches in us, His inheritance!

Cf. Php. 4:19...!

2. v. 17a,

John 14:23, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him." – I.e., each believer becomes God's own dwelling place, His new "temple" as we saw in Eph. 2.... (Cf. Col. 1, the mystery is "Christ IN you, the hope of glory"!)

*Make my life a bright outshining
Of Thy life, that all may see
Thine own resurrection power
Mightily put forth in me.
Ever let my heart become
Yet more consciously Thy home.*

Notes Prepared by Tim Cantrell

Now as Paul keeps climbing up his ladder of prayer...

3. v. 17b,

~ MacArthur: "The loveless life is the ungodly life; and the godly life is the serving, caring, tenderhearted, affectionate, self-giving, self-sacrificing life of Christ's love working through the believer."

4. vv. 18-19a,

v. 18a – Lit., "may be made strong, fortified" – for WHAT? – For "comprehending, grasping" something – a Grk. word used for tackling an opponent in wrestling or sacking a city in war

Whichever direction we look, we can see Christ's love.– These limitless dimensions of His love have been called, 'The Four Magnitudes'.

We can see love's BREADTH in God's acceptance of both Jew & Gentile & of every culture equally in Christ.

We can see love's LENGTH in God's choosing us before the foundation of the world for a salvation that will last for all eternity!

We can see love's HEIGHT in God's having "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" and His raising us up and seating us with Him in the heavenly places.

We can see love's DEPTH in God reaching down into our pit of depravity, while we were still dead in our trespasses & sin.

*Could we with ink the oceans fill
And were the sky of parchment made,*

*Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the oceans dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.*

*The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell,
It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell....*

*O love of God, how rich and pure, how measureless and strong,
It shall forevermore endure, the saint's and angel's song!*

~ D.A. Carson

It takes nothing less than the power of God to enable us to grasp the love of Christ. Part of our deep 'me-ism' is manifested in such independence that we do not really want to get so close to God that we feel dependent upon Him, swamped by His love.

...We want to experience power so that we can be in control; Paul prays for power so that we will be controlled by God Himself. Our deep and pathetic self-centredness is precisely why it takes the power of God to transform us, if we are to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge and grow to the maturity the Scriptures hold out before us.

...It is wonderful to revel in the love of God. Truly to experience that love, to live in the warmth of its glow, invests all of life with new meaning and purpose. ...Our speech, our thoughts, our actions, our reactions, our relationships, our goals, our values – all are transformed if only we live in the self-conscious enjoyment of the love of Christ. Our testimony is then no longer dry and merely correct; it is living and vital as well. We are, in short, growing up spiritually.

[~ Jonathan Edwards, Resolution # 25: "Resolved, to examine carefully, and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and to direct all my forces against it."]

5. v. 19b,

[Rom. 8:35ff: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...For I am convinced, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor HEIGHTH, nor DEPTH, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*]

Ephesians 3:20-21

**Paul answers _____ to lift our hearts heavenward in praise & adoration of the great God of our salvation:*

1. v. 20, to glorify God: because of His

All the power comes from Him; all the praise goes TO Him!

Watch as Paul builds his 'power pyramid' – there are EIGHT descending layers that magnify our omnipotent Almighty God:

a. God is to do.

I.e., God is a Worker, unlike the idle, inactive, DEAD gods of the nations.

What message did God give the prophet **Isaiah** when the people were straying from the true God and chasing after idols? – God challenged the idols to a contest, Isa. 41:

Declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless.

– Dead idols can do nothing, not even evil. (Boice) –

"But our God is in the heavens, He DOES whatever He pleases!" (Ps. 115:3) –
As the Psalmist declares, He is "The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!" (Ps. 24:8).

As God says to Abraham, after promising he & Sarah a child in their old age and hearing of Sarah's disbelief, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14) –

As Jeremiah declares to God, "Nothing is too difficult for You!" (Jer. 32:17). –

As the angel Gabriel proclaims to Mary, "With God nothing will be impossible." (Luke 1:37) –

And as Christ Himself taught His disciples on more than one occasion, "With God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26; Mk. 9, etc.)

b. God is able to do what we

c. God is able to do what we ask OR

d. God is able to do ALL that we ask or

~ As John Newton sings:

*Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring,
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.*

But it's even better than that:

e. God is able to do _____ all we ask or think.

Take Eph. 1 for example: If God hadn't told it to us, who would've ever even thought to ask God to give us "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ":

election, adoption, redemption, revelation of the mystery, being made God's own inheritance, and being sealed by His Spirit?!

~ Says Spurgeon:

Fling the bridle on the neck of your imagination, and let it like winged horse, not only scour the plans of earth, but fly through the clouds, and mount above the stars; but in its furthest flight, on the most rapid wing, shall not bring you near the confines of the possibilities of God!

...What language of mine can adequately set forth the divine ability to bless, when both the eagle eye of prayer, and the eagle wing of thought fail to discover a boundary?!

f. God is able to do _____ beyond all we ask or think.

But Paul doesn't just settle for the usual Grk word for "abundant, surpassing". –

No, he adds to that word two prefixes, two more compounds. – Paul coins his own word – a triple-decker, three-word compound in the original:

g. God is able to do _____ abundantly beyond all we ask or think.

The word Paul uses here is the "highest form of comparison imaginable", a "super superlative". – It can be translated, "exceedingly abundantly, infinitely more, very far in excess of". –

h. God is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think according to the

HOW is His power at work within us? – In all the ways shown in Eph. 1-3: 1:19...; 2:1ff.!; 2:13ff....!;

~ Lloyd-Jones: *Surely our greatest trouble in the Christian life is our failure to realize that God is not as man. The greatest sin of every Christian, and of the Christian church in general is to limit the eternal, absolute power of God to the measure of our own minds.*

2. v. 21a, _____ to glorify God:

~ Carson puts it this way in his book, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Surely, [this] is the deepest test: Has God become so central to all our thoughts and pursuits, and thus to our praying, that we cannot easily imagine asking for anything without consciously longing that the answer bring glory to God?*

Glory in the church

~ Lloyd-Jones: *Nothing gives such glory to God as the Christian church. God manifested His power when He created the world out of nothing; when He said, 'Let there be light, and there was light! The mountains, the rivers and the raging sea, lightning and thunder, all proclaim His glory....*

But there is nothing that so proclaims the glory of God as the Christian church, the body of which Christ Himself is the Head.

Nothing is so wonderful as the fact that men and women, such as you and I are, men and women who were steeped and lost and dead in sin, should have become members of the body of Christ. Here we have the mightiest display of the glory of God! So it is not surprising that the apostle would say, 'to Him be glory in the church'.

To Him be the glory...in Christ Jesus

Isaiah prophesied that God's Servant, Messiah, would be "high & lifted up, and greatly exalted" (Isa. 52:13).

Jesus declared, Jn. 3:14, "...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up"

And again, Joh 8:28, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man" – speaking each time of His cross.

Joh 12:32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

"To Him be glory...in Christ Jesus!"

3. v. 21b, _____ to glorify God:

To Him be the glory...to all generations forever and ever

*To Father, Son and Holy Ghost, / The God whom heaven's triumphant host
And saints on earth adore, / Be glory as in ages past,
As now it is, and so shall last / When time shall be no more.*

Cf. 2:7, that it will take all of eternity to "show us the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"?!)

****FIVE KEYS (in vv. 2-3) to a***

1. v. 2a, Walk with

There is no greater threat to spiritual health or church unity than this one foe of pride.

v. 2a –

Cf. (Matt. 18:3-4, 1 Pet. 5:5, Php. 2:3-8)

2. v. 2b, Walk with

~ Piper: "Patience is trusting God at the unplanned pace and the planned pace of obedience."

3. v. 2c, Walk in

4. v. 3, Walk in

v. 3a –

Cf. Eph. 2:14a, 15b-16, *18, *22

Cf. 3:14, "Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."

1 Pet. 3:8, "To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit."

1 Pet. 4:8, "Above ALL, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

5. vv. 4-6, Walk together because of

Here is the doctrinal basis of our unity, the theological foundation for our fellowship with each other

vv. 4-6 –

~ As one writer puts it: *There can only be one Christian family, only one Christian faith, hope and baptism, and only one Christian body, because there is only one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit...The unity of the Church is as indestructible as the unity of God Himself.*

~ G. Thomas: *Here [in Eph. 4] is a picture of a whole united company of Christians as a vibrant and active church. They are a force to reckon with in society because they are not at war with one another. Their energies then can be spent looking to heaven and looking to their neighbours.*

There is a great workbook called, "Living as a Church", by our friends at Capitol Hill Baptist Church/9Marks:

In it, here is how they define Christian unity: *True Christian unity is found in God-glorifying, gospel-revealing love for all brothers and sisters in Christ, fuelled by our forgiveness in Christ that expresses itself most clearly in the assembly of the local church.*

They also provide this insight: *...More than creeds and statements of faith, more than bishops and popes, unified congregations have been the primary means God has used to protect the core teachings of the Christian faith.*

Cf. 1 John 1:3, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

The closer we draw to God, the closer we will be to each other. If our main bond with each other is our stage of life, our gender, our education, our method of schooling our kids, our job or economic status, etc., rather than CHRIST, then our unity will only be superficial, short-lived and unsatisfying.

***SEVEN GRAND UNITIES**

1. v. 4a, ONE

Cf. Eph.1:23, 2:16, 3:5-6...

WHO is it that puts us into this "one body"?

2. v. 4b, ONE

Cf. Eph.1:13-14, 2:18, 2:22, 4:3

1 Cor. 12:12-13, *For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all are members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

~ MacArthur, "If all Christians were walking in obedience to and in the power of the Holy Spirit, first our doctrine and then our relationships would be purified and unified. The spiritual unity that already exists would be practically manifested in complete harmony among the people of God."

Now as further proof & illustration of this spiritual unity:

3. v. 4c, ONE

To be a believer is to be a 'hope-r', a hopeful, hope-filled person who lives with the confident expectation of the future God has promised.

CF. Eph.1:10b,1:14a,1:18,2:7

WHO is it that has called us and given us this hope?

4. v. 5a, ONE

Kurios, which was the title for Yahweh in the OT (LXX), but in the NT, this term is boldly applied to Jesus by the apostles and first Christians.

Paul refers to Jesus as Lord ___ times in Ephesians.

Cf. Acts 4:12, *There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.*

Rom. 10:12, *For the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him.*

The Church is not a democracy but an absolute monarchy, where the Lord Christ rules by His Word.

WHAT is it that attaches & connects us to our one Lord?

5. v. 5b, ONE

~ One writer says, "Lack of faithful and careful study of God's Word, unexamined tradition, worldly influences, carnal inclinations, and many other things fragment doctrine into many varying and even contradictory forms. God's Word contains many truths, but its individual truths are but harmonious facts of His one truth, which is our one faith."

WHEN is it that we most visibly express all of this oneness and submit ourselves under the name of our "one Lord" and testify of our "one faith"?...

6. v. 5c, ONE

7. V. 6, ONE

Cf. Deut. 6:4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is ONE God."

1 Cor. 8:6, "...for us there is but ONE God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

We are one people under one sovereign, omnipotent, and omnipresent God.

Cf. Jer. 23 "Am I God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.

Our unity as a church is but a foretaste of what's coming for the whole universe. Our unity as believers is announcing to the universe what God's final goal is for history.

*One the light of God's own presence
O'er His ransomed people shed,
Chasing far the gloom and terror,
Brightening all the path we tread;*

*One the object of our journey,
One the faith which never tires,
One the earnest looking forward,
One the hope our God inspires;
One the strain that lips of thousands
Lift as from the heart of one;
One the conflict, one the peril,
One the march in God begun.*

*One the gladness of rejoicing
On the far eternal shore,
Where the one almighty Father
Reigns in love for evermore. (Sabine Barine-Gould)*

Ephesians 4:7-11

****FIVE aspects of Christ's great distribution of gifts to His church – so that we might***

1. v. 7a, _____ Christ gives:

v. 7a –

Cf. 1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12:4-5:

"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

Unity is a spiritual fruit, and it can only come by spiritual means and by supernatural power.

WHERE does such profound 'unity in diversity' come from?

v. 7a –

Eph. 3:2, 7, 8...

2. v. 7b, _____ Christ gives:

v. 7b –

Cf. Rom. 12:3, gifts are given "as God has allotted to each a measure of faith".
Cf. 1 Cor. 12:11, the Spirit "apportions to each one individually as He wills".

3. v. 8, HOW Christ

v. 8 –

Cf. Ps 68

4. vv. 9-10, WHAT it means that

v. 9a –

Cf. Jn. 3:13, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man." – chp. 6, "the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven...For I have come down from heaven...this is the bread which comes down from heaven...I am the living bread that came down out of heaven...."

Then, in John 20, after Mary recognizes Jesus, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father....'"

Most other world religions proclaim saviours who only knew glory, not humiliation; champions who only went up, but never had to come down, conquerors who never had to become suffering servants first.

Cf. 2 Cor. 8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

Php. 2:5ff: Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself (i.e., He descended and came down, down, down, to the lowest point imaginable) by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

v. 10a –

v. 10b –

Cf. Heb. 4:14, 7:26

v. 10c –

Cf. 1:23; 4:6...

Cf. Jer. 23:24 "Do I not fill heaven and earth?"

Col. 1:16-18, For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

5. v. 11, WHAT Christ

v. 11 –

Cf. v. 8

Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4:7, 1:16.

Three of Christ's best

a & b.

1 Cor. 15, Paul the "last apostle"

c.

(2 Tim. 4:2).

(Acts 8:26-40)

This is WHY Christ has given His gifts. The 'Great Distribution' is all about MISSION

Ephesians 4:11-13

****In vv. 11-13, THREE aspects in Christ's***

1. v. 11d, The

a.

1 Cor. 12, Gal. 6, Acts 13,

~ Stott, "Nothing is more necessary for the building up of God's church in every age than an ample supply of God-gifted teachers... It is teaching which builds up the church. It is teachers who are needed most."

~ David Wells: *It is precisely because the Christian faith presents itself as objectively true that it has always exalted teaching. A religion based on mere feeling is the vaguest, most unreliable, most unstable of all things. It cannot be declared to others, cannot be taught to others, cannot be required of others. Christianity remains simply a cultural convenience that will be discarded every time its teaching threatens our way of life.*

b.

Acts 20:28, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

1 Peter 5:2, "Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory!"

~ In his new book entitled, *The Courage to be Protestant*, historian & theologian David Wells writes: *Gone is the older [pastoral] model of the scholar-saint, one who was as comfortable with books and learning as with the aches of the soul. This was the shepherd who knew the flock, knew how to tend it, and Sunday by Sunday took that flock into the treasures of God's Word. In its place is the new 'celebrity' style – the leader who works by manipulating the feelings of the audience, enhancing his own image with personal anecdotes, modelling himself after the CEO...magnetic, [and] entertaining.*

2. v. 12, The METHOD:

v. 12a –

THREE PHASES

a.

(cf. Matt. 4:21

b.

c. 2:20-22

3. v. 13, The GOAL:

v. 13a –

THREE aspects of God's goal in all

a. v. 13b,

Cf. vv. 11f

1 Cor. 1:10, "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that you there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment."

b.

Cf. 2:15,

c.

THREE GOALS

1. v. 14,

Geoff Thomas in the UK writes:

The age of giants in leadership in the Western World has long past away; we live in a generation of infants, and so our society (and the professing church which mirrors it with fearful accuracy) is being "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (v.14).

It is not that media people and soccer players are into all kinds of irrational alternative lifestyles - you'd expect that - but members of the royal family and senior politicians reflect the gullibility of the age. ...There is no class in society untouched by superstition. ...We are living in a generation which, having...dismissed the claims of the Scriptures, has not become more rational by abandoning the Bible but has regressed into a nation of children with a burgeoning palette for new spiritualities, everything from various therapies to astrology and the exotic hybrids of eastern religion.

v. 14a

1 Cor. 2:6, "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature,"

1 Cor. 3:1, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ."

1 Cor. 14:20, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature."

Heb. 5:13-14 says, "For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

The more a church is filled with spiritual adults, the more discerning and stable and unified we will be, the more radiant and consistent our witness will be in the community, and the more ABLE we will be to then reach out and reproduce.

v. 14b –

v. 14c –

Col. 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you CAPTIVE through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

Heb. 13:9, same verb as Eph. 4:14, "Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings."

[~ David Wells, *The Courage to be Protestant*:

...Ministers unable to do theology, unable to expound the Word of God and bring its truth in vital relation with the modern world in such a way that moral character and Christian wisdom are formed, are failing the Church and even disabling it.

They are leaving it vulnerable to all of the seductions of modernity precisely because they have not provided the alternative, which is a view of life centered in God and His truth.]

[~ MacArthur: *Despite our unprecedented education, sophistication, freedom, and access to God's Word and sound Christian teaching, it seems that every religious huckster (cf. 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; 11:13-15) can find a ready hearing and financial support from among God's people. The number of foolish, misdirected, corrupt, and even heretical leaders to whom many church members willingly give their money and allegiance is astounding and heartbreaking.*

The cause of this spiritual plight is not hard to find. A great many evangelists have presented an easy-believism gospel and a great many pastors have taught an almost content-less message. In many places the Body of Christ has not been built up in sound doctrine or in faithful obedience. Consequently, there is little doctrinal solidarity ("unity of the faith") and little spiritual maturity ("knowledge of the Son of God...to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.").

Just as many families today are dominated by their children, so are many churches. It is tragic when the church's children – spiritually immature believers who change their views with 'every wind of doctrine' and continually fall prey to men's 'trickery' and Satan's 'craftiness' and 'deceitful scheming' – are found among its most influential teachers and leaders.]

2. v. 15,

v. 15a –

Cf. Eph. 1:13, "after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation".

[~ Geoff Thomas: *One of the most underestimated features of Christian truth is this, that you can speak it. You don't lie in a bath with the lights out or with*

shades over your eyes and feel it. You don't gaze into crystals and see it. You don't snort it like a drug. You don't smell it in special aromas. You speak the truth, Paul says it is possible to state what it is; it is possible to examine it, and defend it. ...the great historic truths of the gospel; the birth, life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the redemption that comes to man in Christ, are not things hidden away that cannot be defined, described, or stated. We can speak these truths.]

2 Cor. 4:2, "We have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Eph. 4:2, 5:1-2a...

~ Says Stott, "Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love; love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth."

Someone once said, "Truth without love is brutality; love without truth is hypocrisy."

Truth & love, what God has joined together, let no man separate.

v. 15b –

v. 15c

Rom. 11:36, all things 'from Him, through Him, to Him'

Col 1, all things 'by Him and for Him'

C f. Eph. 1:22, 4:13c

[~ Mark Dever has a great way of putting it: 'Evangelism makes the gospel *audible* to the world. But it is a healthy local church that makes the gospel *visible* to the world.' – As we mature, we put Christ on display for all to see and be drawn to HIM!...]

Cf. 3:10

3. v. 16, That we grow up

v. 16a –

Cf. Col. 2:19

Cf. Eph. 4:15c

v. 16b –

v. 16c –

Cf. v. 7a

Ephesians 4:17-19

Here in vv. 17-19, Paul gives us SEVEN REASONS why you should

1. v. 17c, Because the old life is

v. 17c –

Cf. Prov., 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.'

~ As Shakespeare expressed in MacBeth, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

2. v. 18a, Because the old life is

v. 18a –

3. v. 18b, Because the old life is

v. 18b

Cf. 2:12

4. v. 18c, Because the old life is

v. 18c –

5. v. 18d, Because the old life is

v. 18d –

6. v. 19a, Because the old life is

v. 19a –

7. v. 19b, Because the old life is

v. 19b –

Proverbs 27:20, "Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied."

Rom. 1:18-32...

Someone has said, 'The history of the world is the judgment of the world'.

- a. Which of the seven points from this passage struck you most and made you most hate the old life?
- b. In what ways are you most tempted to backslide or revert back to worldly living? In what other, more subtle or 'mild' ways are you tempted to mimic the world or conform to the culture, even if not blatantly backsliding? Is this also a real temptation for those who never lived an outwardly worldly, outwardly wicked lifestyle?
- c. How do we know when a backslidden Christian was never truly saved in the first place? *[Answer: Only God knows their heart; all we can do is judge their fruits, and examine ourselves firstly. Anyone who is not continuing in the faith and persevering in obedience calls their salvation into question and forfeits their assurance. For Scriptural support, turn to: Matt. 7:15-23; Matt. 24:13; Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 3:12-14; James 2:14-26; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 John 2:3-6,19 (and that whole epistle!).... Use this time to teach your people about how true, biblical assurance of salvation is based on fruit, not a mere 'decision for Christ'....]*
- d. In studying Paul's description of the unsaved world in Eph. 4:17-19, how should it affect our view of our lost friends and loved ones and neighbours? *[Compassion; urgency to tell them how to find new life!....]*
- WHO are you going to pray for and to speak to this week about their need for Christ?...

Eph. 4:20-24

****Two major sections in today's passage that introduce us to a whole new way of***

v. 20a

1. vv. 20-21, THREE ASPECTS of true

a. v. 20,

Other religions may learn 'about Mohammed' or 'about Buddha' or 'about Confucius' – Other faiths may do in-depth studies of the life & teachings of their founder. – But only in Christianity can you "learn" the Founder Himself and know Him intimately because He is still alive and active amongst us by His Spirit and through His Word!

Cf. Matt.11:29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me."

Cf. Col. 2:6 "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed...."

Cf. Eph. 1-2

b. v. 21a,

v. 21a –

c. v. 21b,

v. 21b –

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." (Jn. 14:6).

2. vv. 22-24, THREE STEPS in true

Here are Paul's THREE 'fashion tips' – Actually, they are

a. v. 22,

v. 22a –

Cf. Jer. 17:9

b. v. 23,

v. 23 –

Rom. 12:2 "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

2 Cor.3-4: 3:18, as we gaze at Christ, we "are being transformed into the same [Christ's] image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." – And 4:16, "though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day".

c. v. 24,

v. 24a –

v. 24b –

v. 24c,

Col. 3:9-10: *Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him....*

- a. In which way was your view of Christian education most challenged? In which way was your view of Christian fashion most challenged? Did you hear Christ Himself speaking straight to you through His Word?
- b. Why is it that we are so easily caught up in 'Christian things' and "lose our first love," lose sight of the living Person of the Lord Jesus at the centre of it all?
- c. What do you think it will do to the warmth of our fellowship and friendship with one another when we each become more Christ-centred and Christ-infatuated?
- d. What is the most vivid visual aid God has given us to remind us of our laying aside of the old life and putting on of the new life? [*Answer: baptism*]
- e. Share one brief but specific example of how God has radically changed you from your old way of life before Christ.
- f. What are some specific ways that you need to work harder at "being renewed" in our minds and "putting on the new self"? (Read Col. 3:5ff for a good cross-reference, or Romans 6, or Rom. 13:11-14....)

Ephesians 4:25-28

****THREE PRIME EXAMPLES of how Christ takes criminals like all of us and***

1. v. 25, Put off _____ and put on _____

v. 25a –

Prov. 6:7, two of the seven things God hates are: a "lying tongue...a false witness who utters lies".

Acts 5, Rev. 21-22,

John 8:44,

Cf. Eph. 4:18:

Eph. 4:14,

v. 25b –

Cf. v. 15, 24,

Jay Adams, A liar is no longer a liar "when he has so changed his life-style that, having put off lying, in those circumstances where he lied before, he automatically, unconsciously, skilfully and comfortably tells the truth."

v. 25c -

~ Stott: *Fellowship is built on trust, and trust is built on truth. So falsehood undermines fellowship, while truth strengthens it.*

"A lie is a stab into the very vitals of the body of Christ." (MacKay)

2. vv. 26-27,

v. 26a –

v. 26b –

v. 27 –

3. v. 28,

v. 28a –

Cf. vv. 14, 17 “No Longer”

v. 28b –

(Cf. 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10-11)

v. 28c –

v. 28d –

Ephesians 4:29-32

**TWO MORE EXAMPLES of how we are*

~ It was George Orwell who said that the degradation of a culture begins with the degradation of its language.

1. vv. 29-30,

v. 29a –

Lit., "Every corrupt word out of your mouth let it not proceed, come out"

v. 29b –

This verse could be translated, "as fits the occasion" (ESV), or, to supply what "is lacking" (Hoehner).

Col. 4:6, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt...."

Proverbs:

10:11, "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life!"

10:21, "The lips of the righteous feed many"

12:18, "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of the sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

16:24, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

15:4, "A soothing tongue is a tree of life"

15:1, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

24:26, "He kisses the lips who gives a right answer!"

15:23, "How delightful is a timely word!"

25:11, "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances."

Eph. 4:15-16, 25.

Luke 4:22, "All were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, 'Is this not Joseph's son?'"

v. 30a –

In Isa. 63, the prophet tells of how Israel, "rebelled and grieved God's Holy Spirit"

Matt. 28, Jesus indicates that "the name of the Spirit" is equal to the names of the Father and Son.

2 Cor. 3 reads, "Now the Lord [Christ] is the Spirit"

Acts 5, when Peter accuses Ananias & Sapphira of "lying to the Holy Spirit," in the next breath, he says, "You have lied to God".

Cf. chp. 1:13-14,

Eph. 1:14

4:30b

Cf. 1:17, chp. 4

2. vv. 31-32,

v. 31 –

SIX relational sins and vices that _____

_____ and _____

v. 32a –

THREE healing

_____ Cf. vv. 22-24...

Gal 5

v. 32b –

Col. 3:12-13

- a. v. 29a, What are the specific kinds of unwholesome, unedifying speech that you will be most tempted to fall into this week but must put off? (Don't be vague; drag these sins out into the light and let's help each other slay them!)
- b.v. 29b, What is it that makes helpful speech so powerful in people's lives?
(Answer: *It can build up and give grace.*)
- c.v. 30, Before this sermon, how much had you ever thought about how your unkind words actually grieved the Holy Spirit? – Why is this so important to realise?...
- d.v. 31, Which of these 6 vices are you most tempted by, and why? How will you put it off this week and learn to live differently?...
- e.v. 32, What does a kind person actually look like in real life, in contrast to unkind people?
- f. Read Jesus' parable on forgiveness: Matt. 18:21-35 – Why is forgiveness so important? What happens to those who refuse to forgive and who remain bitter?
- g. How does Christian speech relate to having a Christian mind? How does mind-control related to tongue-control? (See & review v. 23 re: *mind renewal as the HINGE for putting off & putting on.*)

<hr/> Ephesians 5:1-6

****TWO EXHORTATIONS to a life of***

1. vv. 1-2,

First, the command in vv. 1-2; then, the incentives:

a. vv. 1a, 2a, The COMMAND:

v. 1 –

Cf. Eph. 4:24, 5:2

Cf. 1 Cor. 11:1, "Follow me as I follow Christ, imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16; 9:19; Php. 3:17)

1 Pet. 1, citing Lev. 19, "be holy as God is holy".

v. 2a –

Cf. Eph. 3:17; 4:2, 15a, 16c; 32

Someone once said, "The extent of our love is the extent of our ability to forgive."

1 Cor. 13, love is "the more excellent way" and, "the greatest of these is love".

One of the most Satan-like things you can do is to hate others and live for self. – One of the most God-like things you can do is to love others and seek their good above your own.

Matt. 5, "I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous...."

Luke 6, "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

b. The INCENTIVE:

1 John 3:16, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." – 4:8, "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." – 4:11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." – 4:19, "We love, because He first loved us."

v. 2b –

Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

v. 2c –

Isa. 53, "the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief, if He

v. 2d –

2. vv. 3-6,

a. v. 3,

v. 3b –

v. 3c –

b. v. 4,

v. 4a –

v. 4c –

P.T. O'Brien writes that, in Paul's epistles, "Thanksgiving is almost a synonym for the Christian life."

c. vv. 5-6,

v. 5a –

v. 5b –

v. 6a –

v. 6b –

- a. What impacted or struck you most from God's Word in these verses?
- b. vv. 1-2: Give an specific example of a godly person you know who truly "walks in love". In what ways are they known more for "self-giving" than "self-loving"?
- c. What things tend to cause you to doubt the depths of God's love for you? How can you grow in having a more continual delight in our Father's love and feast upon His grace?
- d. v. 3: In what ways are you tempted to toy with or to trivialise these sins which Gods says not even be named among us?
- e. v. 4: How specifically has God further 'gotten into your mouth' and called you to cleaner speech?
- f. vv. 5-6: Why does God have no space in His kingdom for such habitual sinners? But *what* about a Christian who falls into one of these sins but doesn't stay there, i.e., he repents and changes? Does he lose his salvation?

g. v. 6: What are the kinds of "empty words" that tempt or deceive you to minimise sin or to downplay the wrath of God?

Ephesians 5:7-14

****FIVE TRAITS of a***

1. vv. 7-8a,

v. 7a –

TWO REASONS you should avoid worldliness:

a. v. 7, Avoid worldliness because of

b. v.8a, Avoid worldliness because of

v. 8a –

v. 8b –

Matt. 5:14, "You are the light of the world...", so then, 5:16, "Let your light so shine...."

Cf. 1 Jn. 1:5-7

2. v. 9,

v. 9 –

v. 9b –

3. v. 10,

v. 10 –

Cf. Rom. 12:2...

4. v. 11-13,

v. 11a –

Josh Harris: Many Christians treat worldliness as *"half a poison pill"*...

"The greatest danger of the popular media is not a one-time exposure to a particular instance of sin (as serious as that can be). It's how long-term exposure to worldliness – little chunks of poison pill, day after day, week after week – can deaden our hearts to the ugliness of sin."

v. 11b –

v. 12 –

vv. 3-5, Gal. 5, Rom. 1, 2 Tim. 3.

~ Says one preacher: *When we are living in obedience to God, that fact in itself will be a testimony against wrong. When those around us see us helping rather than exploiting, hear us talking with purity instead of profanity, and observe us speaking truthfully rather than deceitfully, our example will itself be a rebuke of selfishness, unwholesome talk, and falsehood. Simply refusing to participate in a dishonest business or social practice will sometimes be such a strong rebuke that it costs us our job or friendship. Dishonesty is terribly uncomfortable in the presence of honesty.*

Unfortunately, many Christians are so barely able to keep their own spiritual and moral houses in order that they do not have the discernment, inclination, or power to confront evil in the church or in society at large. We should be so mature in biblical truth, and in obedience, holiness, and love that part of the natural course of our life is to expose, rebuke, and offer the remedy for every kind of evil.

v. 13a –

v. 13b –

5. v. 14,

v. 14 –

Prov. 4:18, "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day."

Matt. 13:43, "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

- a. What is a "luminous person"? Which one of the five traits/points was most convicting for you?
- b. In what ways are you most tempted by worldliness?
- c. How are we to develop our closest friendships with fellow "children of the light" but still work hard at also befriending unbelievers? How do we balance/reconcile 1 Cor. 5:9-10 with 2 Cor. 6:14-18? (Mark 5:18-20 is a great example of how the Lord gives us a new nature and new desires for fellowship with Christ and His people, yet the same Lord also sends us back to reach our people. You could also do or suggest a topical study in Proverbs on actively choosing and cultivating godly friendships vs. passively just 'letting friendships happen'.... We as believers must give much thought to where to draw the line, biblically & practically, in our friendships with the world....)
- d. In what specific ways (v. 9) do you want to bear more fruit of the light in your life?
- e. How can we grow in discerning & discovering what pleases the Lord?
- f. How should we today be exposing the deeds of darkness (vv. 11-13) – in the world? In the church

***THREE ASPECTS**

1. v. 15, Walk wisely

v. 15a

v. 15b –

+ Paul Tripp captures this 'wise walk' in his book, *Quest for More: Living for Something Bigger than Yourself*,

... people were designed to live within the huge contours of the glory of God. We were not designed to settle for personal survival, temporal happiness, or individual success.

We were created to find our meaning, identity and purpose in the existence, character and plan of God. Our identity was meant to be rooted in His love. Our hope was designed to be tied to His grace. Our potential was meant to be connected to His power. Our purpose was meant to be structured by His will. Our joy was meant to be wed to His glory. In every way our vision of what is necessary, true, worthy and meaningful was meant to be rooted in a functional worship of Him.

... God-contoured living means that God's purposes become our functional life goals, that things God says are valuable become the real-life treasures we seek, and that God's will provides the fences within which we live. The 'more' we live for [the quest for meaning & significance in our lives] is [found only in] His plan for us and for all things.' (p. 90)

2. v. 16, Walk wisely

~ One famous coach in the States, the late Vince Lombardi, used to say: "I never lost a game, I just ran out of time."

v. 16a –

v. 16b –

Gal. 1:4, "Christ gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age...."

Ps. 90:12, "Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom." –

Col. 4:5, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity," same word, "redeeming, purchasing the time"

~ Octavius Winslow,

We may rob God by a misuse of time. Time is a solemn and priceless gift, and involves a responsibility and an account of a most tremendous character. What sin, what madness, then, to abuse a privilege so solemn; to misuse a blessing so precious.

...Oh you, killers of time! ...How will the ghost of your murdered hours haunt and upbraid you through the interminable centuries of eternity! Oh, what would you not then give for one hour of that precious period of your existence which now you waste and fritter and destroy in vain, useless, and sinful trifles...and shadows. Remember, you rob God when your time is not consecrated to His glory.

J. Edwards 70th of his 70 Resolutions: "Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can."

3. v. 17, Walk wisely *by*

v. 17a –

v. 17b –

- a. What impacted or struck you most from God's Word in these verses?
 - b. Describe a wasted life, according to Scripture? Describe a wise life, according to Scripture?
 - c. What are some of the ways you are most tempted to waste time and not redeem it?
 - d. Let's dream a little: What are 2-3 of the top things you could be accomplishing in your spiritual growth or fruitfulness IF you made better use of your time? And what about us corporately – what could we be accomplishing for the Lord as a church if every member made better use of their time?
- d. Are there certain areas of your life where you struggle to know what the Lord's will is for you? How can you find out what will please God most in those areas?

**TWO exhortations for us to*

1. v. 18a,

v. 18a –

Prov. 20:1, "wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise".

Isa. 5:11, "Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink; who stay up late...that wine may inflame them!"

1 Thess. 5:6-8; Rom. 13:12-13

People are worshippers, everyone lives for something or someone. We were made to lose ourselves in something much bigger than ourselves. Self was never made to satisfy us, and self usually becomes a miserable companion sooner or later.

Prov. 23

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly. ...at last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. (vv. 29-33)

1 Cor. 8-10, Rom. 14.

1 Cor. 10:31, "Whether then you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God."

1 Cor. 6, "Such WERE some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God!"...

2. v. 18b,

v. 18c –

1 Cor. 6, 12; Eph. 1:13,

~ Someone once said, 'It is less about how much of the Holy Spirit *you have*, and more about how much the Holy Spirit *has YOU*.' –

Col. 3:16

TWO major results here in vv. 19-20...

a. v. 19, Spirit-filled in our

v. 19 –

Notes Prepared by Tim Cantrell

(i) v. 19a, the _____ aspect of our singing

~ 'Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who writes its history books.'

v. 19a –

(ii) v. 19b, the _____ aspect of our singing

v. 19b –

v. 19c –

~Eva Cassidy
*My life flows in endless song
Above earth's lamentation.
I hear the real, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that rock I'm clinging.
It sounds an echo in my soul,
How can I keep from singing?*

Wesley's rules for singing,
*Sing lustily, and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead,
or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now,
nor more ashamed of it being heard, then when you sang the songs of Satan.*

b. v. 20, Spirit-filled in our

v. 20 –

Col. 3:17

~ Calvin, "The innumerable benefits which we receive from God yield fresh cause of joy and thanksgiving."

1 Thess. 5:16-18, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything, give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

- a. What impacted or struck you most from God's Word in these verses?
- b. Does anyone have a testimony of being delivered from alcohol abuse? Do any of you still struggle in this area and need accountability?
- c. What should the Christians attitude be toward the use of alcohol? What did you learn from the sermon about a biblical approach to this thorny subject?
- d. What are some false notions you used to have about being filled with the Spirit? What does it actually mean; could you explain it to your Charismatic friend?
- e. How has God convicted you about your attitude toward corporate worship, especially your responsibility to sing?
- f. How grateful have you been lately? How can you specifically grow in thankfulness this week? In which areas do you find it hardest to trust and thank God?

Ephesians 5:21-24

***TWO INSTRUCTIONS**

1. v. 21,

v. 21a –

a. What v. 21 does NOT mean:

FIVE observations:

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

1 Cor. 11:33, Gal. 6:2; Matt. 24:10; Lk. 2:15; 12:1; 24:32

b. What v. 21 DOES mean:

c. v. 21c,

v. 21c

2. vv. 22-24,

FOUR aspects of Paul's instructions re: the 'sweet submission' of a Christian wife:

a. v. 22,

v. 22a –

Col. 3:18, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

Titus 2:5, the older women in the church are to teach the younger ones to be "subject to their own husbands".

1 Pet. 3:1, "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands...." -

What biblical submission does *NOT MEAN*:

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

What *DOES* biblical submission mean:

A wife's submission is "the freedom to be creative under divinely appointed authority." – It means to "put all of her talents, abilities, resources, and energy at her husband's disposal" (Mack & Gothard). –

v. 22c –

b. v. 23a,

v. 23a –

1 Cor. 11:3, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

c. vv. 23b,

v. 23b –

d. v. 24b,

v. 24a –

v. 24b –

Acts 5:29 "We must obey God rather than men."

- a. What impacted or struck you most from God's Word in these verses?
- b. Why does v. 21 probably not mean "mutual submission" ('everyone to everyone') but rather "appropriate submission" ('some to others,' as described in the context)? Why is this important?
- c. Name the current spheres of authority in your life, those whom God has placed over you at present (employer, govt., church leaders, teacher, parents, small group leader, etc.)
- d. How are you *specifically* going to live more "in the fear of Christ" this week?
- e. Wives, in what ways this week do you plan to honour Christ and your husband by being more submissive? Wives-in-training, how can you be preparing now to be the kind of wife God wants you to be? Why does all of this matter? What is ultimately at stake in your submission? [*Answer: The Gospel! Your display of how the Church responds to Christ our Head.*]

v. 25a –

***In vv. 25-27, TWO WAYS**

1. v. 25b, Love her with a

~ Chrysostom, the famous 5th c. expositor: *Yea, even if it shall be needful for thee to give thy life for her, yea, and to be cut into pieces ten thousand times, yea, and to endure and undergo any suffering whatever,—refuse it not. Though thou shouldest undergo all this, yet wilt thou not, no, not even then, have done anything like Christ. For thou indeed art doing it for one to whom thou art already knit; but He for one who turned her back on Him and hated Him. In the same way then as He laid at His feet her who turned her back on Him, who hated, and spurned, and disdained Him, not by menaces, nor by violence, nor by terror, nor by anything else of the kind, but by his unwearied affection; so also do thou behave thyself toward thy wife.*

...A servant, indeed, one will be able, perhaps, to bind down by fear; nay not even him, for he will soon start away and be gone. But the partner of one's life, the mother of one's children, the foundation of one's every joy, one ought never to chain down by fear and menaces, but with love and good temper. For what sort of union is that, where the wife trembles at her husband? And what sort of pleasure will the husband himself enjoy, if he dwells with his wife as with a slave, and not as with a free-woman?

v. 25b –

Isa. 54; Jer. 2:1-3; 31:31-32; Ezek. 16, 23; Hos. 1-3, Mk. 2, Jn.

v. 25c –

2. vv. 26-27, Love her with a

TWO PURPOSES of Christ's

a. Christ's love

v. 26a –

v. 26b

v. 26c –

*The Church's one foundation, is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation, by water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her, to be His holy bride,
With His own blood He bought her – and for her life He died.*

Cf. Heb. 9:13-14; 10:22; Titus 2:14, 3:5

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b. Christ's love

v. 27a –

v. 27b –

v. 27c –

2 Cor. 11:2, "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."

Col. 1:28

Rev. 19, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." –

Rev. 21, "Then one of the seven angels...[said], 'Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he...showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper....'"

Ephesians 5:28-33

***FOUR WAYS**

~ As the Puritans used to say, "Choose thy love, and then love thy choice."

1. v. 25b, Love her with

Eph. 5 is a call for husbands to die if they want their marriage to live. – The sooner we learn to die as husbands, the sooner our wives will truly come to life!

2. vv. 26-27, Love her with

Two more ways to become Christlike husbands...

3. vv. 28-31, Love her with

a. vv. 28-29a,

v. 28a –

Cf. Lev. 19: "Love your neighbour," how? "as yourself". –

v. 28b –

v. 29a –

v. 29b –

b. vv. 29b-30,

~ The Puritan Thomas Hooker wrote, "The man whose heart is endeared to the woman he loves...forceth all to confess that the stream of his affection, like a mighty current, runs with full tide and strength."

Doyle Roth, in his book, *Oops, I Forgot My Wife*, illustrates our selfish tendency as husbands:

You arrive home and your lovely wife says, 'Let's have a light supper and then spend the evening hanging curtains!' Immediately your body starts haemorrhaging energy like air escaping from a punctured tire. Your labored response from the recliner is, 'Honey, I would love to help you, but I'm so exhausted.' Your loving wife totally understands, hands you the TV remote, and brings you a snack so you can rest your weary bones.

Then, an amazing thing happens. A guy from work calls you to see if you can take his place in tonight's [soccer match]. Suddenly, as if struck by lightning, you're on your feet and dashing through the house getting ready for the big game. Confused, your wife stares at you in disbelief. Then, with a knowing look, she leaves the room. You know the look. It's the one that says, 'I'll be asleep when you come home, Romeo.' After feeling guilty for about half a second, you're off to the game.

What's going on here? Why is it that guys have superhuman energy for some things, yet are worn to a frazzle just thinking about others? What's going on is [called] self-centeredness, and it's not the pathway to success in marriage. (on flyleaf)

v. 29c –

v. 30 –

c. v. 31,

v. 31 –

Three essential ingredients for marriage

Notes Prepared by Tim Cantrell

(i) v. 7a,

(ii) v. 7b,

(iii) v. 8,

~ Dr. Mack, “Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.”

4. v. 32, Love her with

~ John Bunyan once exhorted husbands to be "such a believing husband to your believing wife that she may say, 'God has not only given me a husband, but such a husband as preaches to me every day [by his love] the way of Christ to His church.'"

v. 32 –

'The most important thing about marriage is not what it says about you, or your spouse, or your family, or culture, or story, or past. The most important thing about the marriage relationship is what it says about another relationship, one that began long before any of our marriages and will outlast every other marriage.'

The story of creation really is a love story, the story of a bridegroom who will stop at nothing, not even the cost of his own life, to win for himself a bride, and to present her to himself radiantly beautiful, spotless, and pure. The story ends with the bridegroom preparing a new home for the new couple—a new heaven and a new earth.

In that place, there will be no more crying or pain, because there will be no more sin and evil. Only love will be there, as Christ and his bride display the glory of God's redeeming grace, and the angels watch in awe. (J. Leeman)]

v. 33 –

(Shakespeare's Sonnet 116):

*Let me not to the marriage of two minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:*

*O, no, it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.*

*If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.*

- a. What impacted or struck you most from God's Word in these verses? – How is God's two-edged sword penetrating and exposing your heart (Heb. 4:12)?
 - b. Is it fair to say there might be a "best page" in the Bible? Are there some biblical truths that should be *more* important and more emphasised and most central in our life together as believers? [Answer: yes!, 1 Cor. 15:3, of "first importance", etc.]
 - c. Which of Paul's six perspectives was most new or helpful in your appreciation of the gospel and of your great salvation?
 - d. Why is it so important for these great doctrinal words to be a part of every Christian's vocabulary ("justification, redemption, imputation, atonement, propitiation")? Why did Paul bother to use such 'big' words with ordinary, working class folks in the church at Rome? Can you define each of these key words *and* say what it means for you personally, your joy and growth and proclaiming of the gospel?
- What happens to Christians and churches who are never taught and grounded in these great gospel truths? Do you see Paul trying to give Christians the minimum (most simple) gospel possible, or is he striving to give a maximum gospel that most glorifies God and builds strong believers?
- e. How does a greater grasp of God's grace and His glorious gospel give us the motivation we need to strive for holiness and obey God's high standard for our lives (e.g., Eph. 5-6, God's requirements for husbands, wives, families)? How does this contrast with a self-empowered, legalistic, works-driven approach to sanctification? [e.g., one breeds pride & frustration; the other breeds humility & patience, etc.]

Ephesians 6:1-4

****TWO MAJOR GROUPS that must display what a Spirit-filled family looks like, a home unlike all the other homes in this world, a home where Christ is Lord:***

1. vv. 1-3, A Call for Christ-centred

Let's look first at the commands, then draw out the reasons/ incentives behind this command:

a. vv. 1a, 2 the

v. 1a – A compound Grk. word, lit. = to hear + under. – I.e., to take your ears and put them under your parents, instead of over them. – Your job is not for them to listen to you, but you to listen to them.

v. 2a –

Prov. 10:1 says, "A wise son makes his father glad, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother." – Prov. 29:15, "...a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."

honour –

NB, "honor" in Hbr. (*kevod*) = to treat as heavy, contra "curse" to treat as light

Lev. 19 declares, "Everyone shall revere/fear his mother and his father."

Prov. 23:22, "Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old." – Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for trying to find ways around this (Matt. 15). – And Paul in 1 Tim. 5 commands Christians to first prove their godliness in the home by caring for aging parents in need (1 Tim. 5:4)

b. vv. 1b, 3, the – *Three of them:*

(i) v. 1a, Because of ! –

(ii) v. 1c, Because it is

Ps. 19:8, "The precepts of the LORD are right." – Ps. 119:128, "I esteem right all Your precepts concerning everything."

(iii) v. 3, Because it is

~ Thomas Watson: "Disobedient children stand in the place where all God's arrows fly." – Who would want to stand there?

Prov. 30:17, "The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it." Yikes! (You don't find that one stitched nicely in the bookstores & Christian artwork.)

2. v. 4, A Call for Christ-centred

~ As the Puritans used to say, 'Fathers are a mirror in which children look to put on their spiritual dress.'

– From William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting*:

Studies show there are two females for every one male attending church. – In the African church, it is often 5-1 or 10-1, which is why these churches so often languish. – There may be lots of singing and shouting, but there is little stability and growth.

Publishers will tell you it is women buying all the books on parenting now, instead of men. – As one writer notes, from the time of the Reformation until the 1830s, most parenting manuals were addressed to fathers. – "Before this time, society assumed that mothers were assistant fathers. Now it is assumed that fathers are *assistant mothers*." (p. 127 in Farley)

The common denominator between success and failure seems to be the spiritual depth and sincerity of the parents, especially the spiritual depth and sincerity of the father. There seems to be a strong correlation between the faith, commitment, and sincerity of the family's head and the spiritual vitality of his adult children.

a. v. 4a, the

~ Luther sounds us a warning to all parents: *For parental power is given to fathers by God, not for the wanton abuse or injury of the children, but in order to further and help them; and he who uses parental power otherwise, or uses it as a hindrance to the children, loses it by so doing and should be considered, not the father but the foe and destroyer of his own children.*

b. v. 4b, the

~ "A child is a temporarily disabled and stunted version of a larger person, whom you will someday know."

Bring them up HOW? – *The Lord's TWO essential tools here for Spirit-filled parenting:*

(a) Discipline = This is more of the external aspect to a child's upbringing – the structures and correction and training required, with the appropriate consequences: the rod or a reward, a hiding or a hi-five, a removal or privileges or an increase of them.

~ Susannah Wesley, mother of John & Charles Wesley, raised 17 children and had this to say about raising children: *The parent who studies to subdue self-will in his child works together with God in the renewing and saving of a soul. [BUT] The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does [everything he can] to damn his child, soul and body forever.* (qtd. in MacArthur, p. 319)

(b) Instruction = This is the more verbal, internal aspect to a child's upbringing. – Lit., *noutheteo*, to admonish, counsel, 'put sense into'. The old high priest, Eli, in the OT was rebuked because he did not "admonish, rebuke" his sons.

+ From W. Farley: *Fathers, you & I are the gardeners. We cannot be replaced. We cannot hire a school or church to replace us. [though obviously we can delegate to a school to assist us]. Our children's minds are the gardens. If we want a rugged faith, nourished by a biblical worldview, we must sweat and labor in that garden. Pull up the weeds with discipline, plant the seed of God's Word, and fertilize it with example.* (p. 180)

~ Flavel: *If you neglect to instruct them in the way of holiness, will the devil neglect to instruct them in the way of wickedness? No; if you will not teach them to pray, he will teach them to curse, swear and lie; if ground be uncultivated, weeds will spring up.*

~ Puritan Cotton Mather imagined unsaved children pointing at their parents on the final Judgment Day and cursing them b/c of their failure to be faithful parents:

[O Father and Mother] *you should have taught us the things of God, but you did not; you should have restrained us from sin and corrected us, but you did not.* – 'B/c of you we were born into this world as sinners, and you never did your part to deliver us from that sin.' ... *Woe unto us that we had such...careless parents.*

Ephesians 6:5-9

Paul is going to walk us through TWO GROUPS in the workplace who are called to live Spirit-filled lives, to display what happens when Christ is Lord over our labour relations:

1. vv. 5-8, A call for Christ-centred

- *to being a Christ-centred (Spirit-filled) employee & worker:*

a. v. 5a, WHAT is of employees

b. vv. 5b-7, HOW to

your masters according to the flesh

with fear & trembling = toward which master – the earthly or heavenly one, or both? – Unclear, but probably the heavenly One ultimately, in light of how this phrase is typically used in the Bible for worship and for the appropriate human response to God's awesome presence (cf. 5:21; *Php. 2:12; 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15?).

in the sincerity of your heart = lit., 'to fold + together', not double, but single. – i.e., "with singleness, simplicity of heart"

as to Christ – NIV, "just as you would obey Christ" – As it was with wives submitting to husbands, "as to the Lord"; as it was with children obeying parents, "in the Lord"; so it is with employees to employers:

WHAT THEN does it mean to be a Christ-fearing person? – vv. 6-7 now give us the 'put off' and the 'put on':

The PUT OFF:

+ Prov. 29:25, "The fear of man proves to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe." – This fear of man, man-pleasing, is a snare that has entrapped and brought down some mighty victims:

Saul lost his kingship and was judged because he spared the Amalakites "for fear of the people" (1 Sam. 15:24). – Twice man-pleasing caused Abraham to lie and betray his wife for fear of pagan kings (Gen. 12, 20). – Three times man-pleasing caused Peter to deny his Lord. – And it was Pilate's fear of the crowd that led to Jesus' crucifixion.

→How can you know if you are a man-pleaser? – Here are some test questions for self-diagnosing, taken mostly from *Pleasing People: How Not to be an Approval-Junkie*, by Lou Priolo:

- Do you try harder to be politically correct than biblically correct?
- Do you like to go 'fishing' for compliments?
- Do you gossip about others because you know you can impress others with such luscious tidbits of info.?

- Do you value the approval of those who can reward/honour you more than the approval of those who seem to offer you nothing in return?
- Are you willing to sin rather than face the rejection of certain individuals?
- Do you avoid conflicts rather than try to resolve them?
- Do you take unnecessary precautions to preserve your reputation?
- Do you get angry if you are ever contradicted by others?
- When you meet new people, do you think more about how to impress them or how to minister to them?
- Do you long to be noticed more than you long to be godly?
- Are you ashamed to witness for Christ because of others' disapproval?
- Do you find it hard to say "No" to people, so you end up over-committed?
- Do you lie to impress others? white lies? exaggerations?!
- Are you often embarrassed in front of people? "shy/bashful", or avoiding people?
- Are you often second-guessing your decisions out of a concern for what others will think?
- Do you do or say inappropriate things because of the company which you are in (e.g. laughing at a foul joke)?
- Does your care for your physical body—whether in exercise or diet, often stem from focus on the opinions of others?
- What about the *many* seemingly good areas—like your motivation for knowing doctrine, attending church, being involved in a certain ministry?...

The PUT ON:

1 Pet. 2:16, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God."

~ Puritan Thomas Watson: "I would rather serve Christ than have kings serve me."

c. v. 8, to obey your employer

– Says John Stott:

Our great need is the clear-sightedness to see Jesus Christ and to set him before us. It is possible for the housewife to cook a meal as if Jesus Christ were going to eat it, or to spring-clean the house as if Jesus Christ were to be the honoured guest. It is possible for teachers to educate children, for doctors to treat patients and nurses to care for them, for solicitors to help clients, shop assistants to serve customers, accountants to audit books and secretaries to type letters as if in each case they were serving Jesus Christ.

Can the same be said in relation to the masses of industrial workers with tedious routine machine-minding to do, and to miners to have to work underground? Surely yes. The presence of Christ in the mine or factor is certainly no excuse for bad conditions. On the contrary, it should be a spur to improving them.

At the same time, their situation is not nearly as bad as slavery in the Roman Empire, so that if the work of Christian slaves could be transformed by doing it "as to the Lord", the same must be true of Christian miners, factory workers, dustmen, road sweepers and public lavatory attendants.

2. v. 9, A Call for Christ-centred

***THREE keys here also:**

a. v. 9a, Have the same

b. v. 9b, Stop

c. v. 9c, Fear

'The gold ring of the master does not attract Christ's eye, nor is He turned away by the iron fetters of the slave.' (Eadie)

Ephesians 6:10-18

~ Lloyd-Jones: *I am certain that one of the main causes of the ill state of the Church today is the fact that the devil is being forgotten. All is attributed to us; we have all become so psychological in our attitude and thinking [i.e., we've become so man-centred]. We are ignorant of this great objective fact, the being, the existence of the devil, the adversary, the accuser, and his 'fiery darts'.*

SIX ESSENTIAL

v. 10a –

1. v. 10,

Eph. 3:16, 20

~ A. Konya: *No matter how great the past victories or how blessed the spiritual experiences they may have enjoyed, believers must realise that they are vulnerable to satanic or demonic shipwreck in their lives if they decide to cope in their own strength and refuse to walk in humble dependence upon God.*

Deut. 31:6 – "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail or forsake you,"

Josh. 1 – "Be strong and courageous...ONLY be strong and courageous...Be strong and courageous."

Notes Prepared by Tim Cantrell

Psalms – 27:14, "Be strong and let your heart take courage." – 31:24, "Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD."

2 Tim. 2:1, "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

1 Cor. 16:13, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."

1 Sam. 30:6, "Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him...But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God."

Isa. 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will STRENGTHEN you, surely I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Cf. Isa. 40:29-31

Zech. 10:12, "I will make them strong in the Lord."

Php. 4:13, "I can do all things through...Christ who strengthens me."

2 Thess. 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

~Martin Luther, A mighty fortress is our God:

Did we in our own strength confide

Our striving would be losing

Were not the right man on our side

The man of God's own choosing.

Dost ask who that may be?

Christ Jesus, it is He;

Lord Sabaoth (of hosts) His name,

From age to age the same,

And he must win the battle.

2. v. 11a,

v. 11a –

v. 11b –

3. vv. 11b-12,

2 Cor. 2:11, "we are not ignorant of Satan's schemes".

v. 11c –

FOUR descriptions here of our arch-enemy:

a. v. 11c,

John 8:44, "there is no truth in him...he is a liar and the father of lies."

*~ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide for Parenting Teens*: I have said to my children many times, 'There is a war out there. It is being fought on the turf of your heart. It is fought for the control of your soul. Each situation you face today is a skirmish in the war. Be careful, be aware of the battle. Don't forget that there is a scheming enemy out there who is out to deceive, divide, and destroy. Go out there knowing that to win you must fight. You must not relax, you must not forget.'*

b. v. 12a,

~ If conventional warfare is the closest thing to hell on earth, spiritual warfare is actually more horrifying still – because it is literally a hostile engagement with the forces of hell in the spiritual realm where the enemy is never even fully visible. (MacArthur, p. 49, Truth War)

v. 12a –

c. v. 12b,

v. 12b –

1:20-22, 3:10

d. v. 12c,

*~Martin Luther, A Mighty Fortress is Our God
For still our ancient foe, doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate;
On earth is not his equal.*

Col. 2:15:

*And though this world with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us
We will not fear for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not at him,
His rage we can endure
For lo, his doom is sure
One little word shall fell him.*

4. v. 13,

v. 13a –

v. 13b –

1 John 5:19, "the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one".

2 Tim. 3:1, "But realise this, that in the last days difficult times will come",

Luke 4:13, "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time."

1 Cor. 15:1, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand." – 16:13, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."

Gal. 5:1, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm...."

Php. 1:27, "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Php. 4:1, "Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved."

Col. 4:12, "Epaphras...[is] always labouring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God."

1 Thess. 3:8, "...for now we really live, IF you stand firm in the Lord." – 2 Thess. 2:15, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught...."

~ It is clear why Christians are not called to go on the offensive against Satan. The first reason is that God has already won the battle. The second is that demons are still a potent force. That is to say, there is no battle to win, and this is fortunate, for if there were, we could not win it.... 'The decisive victory has already been won by God in Christ, and the task of believers is not to win but to stand, that is, to preserve and maintain what has been won.... The major victory has been achieved, but...believers must appropriate what has already been gained for them and do so against continuing assaults, and this is not automatic.'

~ From Konya: Never in Scripture is the believer exhorted to seek out or attack the Devil or his demons. On the contrary, the Devil seeks to attack the believer. – 1 Pet. 5:8, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." – The believer has been given his marching orders by God. He is to glorify God in his living and carry out the Great Commission. As he happily carries out these tasks, he will not need to be looking for Satan; Satan will be looking for him!

This biblical picture is unfortunately often ignored today. Popular books [and TV preachers, DVDs, websites, etc.] often tell the Christian to engage in aggressive spiritual warfare, to attack Satan and to give the Devil his due. Many well-meaning but misled believers have accordingly laid their proper spiritual priorities aside and become preoccupied with demons, Satan, exorcism and engagement of the powers of darkness.

Warfare with Satan is quite real, and it is the experience of every believer.... However, God's plan is for the Christian to resist attack when it comes instead of looking for demonic forces to battle. To lose this perspective is both unwise and dangerous.

5. vv. 14-17,

HOW we are to stand:

a. v. 14a,

Samuel Johnson once gave this advice for raising children: *Accustom your children constantly to this – the telling of the truth; if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end....It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world*

b. v. 14b,

~ The church today is often guilty of supplying believers with the paper armour of good advice, programs, activities, techniques, and methods – when what they need is godly armour of holy living. No program, method, or technique can bring wholeness and happiness to the believer who is unwilling to confront and forsake his sin. (MacArthur)]

~ H. Kent: In all our spiritual battles, we must never descend to carnal methods. [That would only cause us to] lose that personal righteousness that provides an inner bulwark against spiritual collapse. [A righteous life], made possible by the new life created in us by Christ Jesus, protects us from the spiritual defeats that would surely come from an accusing conscience and an impure life.

c. v. 15,

d. v. 16,

1 Jn. 5, "Faith is the victory that overcomes the world." – Cf. Lk. 22:31-32, 1 Pet. 5:9a

~ Konya: *It is ever so tempting for the believer to live his life under an emotional sway. As Satan fires his deadly darts of difficult circumstances, temptation, disappointment, impurity or criticism, believers are apt to react emotionally. They may follow their feelings and be defeated. The counteraction to this is to hold forth the shield of faith; meaning that the believer reacts by taking God at His Word and reckoning it to be true in his life. He reckons that Christ has provided the victory and acts upon His truth. The result is that the darts of Satan do not harm him but fall harmlessly to the earth.*

~ Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*: "In heaven we shall appear not in armour but in robes of glory; but here [the pieces of armour] are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ."

e. v. 17a, The HELMET OF SALVATION:

f. v. 17b, The SWORD OF THE SPIRIT:

Heb. 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Paul Tripp, *“As we use the sword of the Spirit, we actually win back turf from the enemy! [We must learn to identify areas in our] lives where the enemy has taken over and needs to be exposed.”*

Isa. 11:4-5 'with truth bound around his sides'.

Rev 21...

We are not the first, and we will not be the last, to wield this awesome armour.

Isa. 59:15b-20

Rom. 13:14

6. v. 18,

~ “...all our methods, techniques, principles, and ministry will ultimately count for naught unless we recover the importance and urgency of fervent, believing, disciplined prayer.” (C. Lowe, p. 141)

~ K. Hughes: *In ancient times, before a squire was knighted he would spend the night in vigil in the castle chapel, with his armour spread before him as he offered up his soul to God. This is the way to don the armour of God, for He is the one who teaches us the ways of war and fights the battle through our hands and feet. It is in communion with Christ that the armour is set and reset for battle.*

v. 18a –

v. 18b –

Gurnall writes: *The saint's sleeping time is Satan's tempting time; every fly dares venture to creep on a sleeping lion*

FOUR ASPECTS of a comprehensive, all-inclusive prayer life:

- a. v. 18a,
- b. v. 18b,
- c. v. 18c,
- d. v. 18d,

~ In his book, *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare*, David Powlison writes: *Throughout Ephesians Paul himself exemplifies spiritual warfare in action: with loins girded with truth he teaches the way of righteousness, brings the gospel of peace to the nations, lives by faith in the power of God, rejoices in salvation, wields the sword of the Spirit, and prays fervently for God's people to grow in the knowledge of Christ and in His power. Paul destroys deceptive words and dark works; he teaches God's children to walk in the light of Jesus. The entire letter illustrates, by precept and example, how to resist the devil.*

A FAITHFUL FINALE

Ephesians 6:19-24

***TWO** *about faithful messengers – that we might better pray for them, appreciate them, and imitate them.*

1. vv. 19-20, for faithful messengers

vv. 19b, 20b – I.e., that he preach Christ "fearlessly and freely, boldly & clearly". – This Grk. word implies both: freedom to speak as well as clarity in speaking, two sides of the same coin.

Benjamin Franklin, "A man without courage is a knife without an edge."

~ Al Martin in booklet, *What is Wrong with Preaching Today*, says to preachers: "You are never free to be an instrument of blessing to your people unless you are free from the effects of their smiles and their frowns. People know when you can be bought by their smiles and beaten by their frowns."

The power is in the gospel itself, "the power of God unto salvation for any sinner who believes" (Rom. 1:16)!...

Rom. 10, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." – God does not create faith in an unbelieving heart until the word is heard clearly. –

1 Pet. 1 & Jam. 1 tell us, HOW does the new birth happen? – "He brought us forth by the word of truth...you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God." – God does not speak life into a dead soul, He does not regenerate the unregenerate until the word is heard clearly, until the gospel seed is well-planted.

Q: Was Paul & the Ephesian's prayer here answered re: his witness to Caesar? – What Paul later wrote in 2 Tim. 4:17 seems to give the answer:

"At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear...."

2. vv. 21-22, faithful messengers

v. 21a – "you also"?? – Probably suggesting that Tychicus would be carrying other letters as well, such as Colossians, which appears to have been written at the same time.

→NB, Tychicus probably delivered FIVE of Paul's 13 epistles which are central to our NT today. – We have Tychicus to thank for Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, 2 Timothy and Titus. – How much poorer the Christian Church would've been without these five priceless letters! –

All because of the two faithful hands of one little-known, humble messenger named Tychicus, who gladly took his place on the backstage of the NT behind more prominent figures like Paul, Timothy and Titus. (cf. 1 Cor. 12, the less visible parts of the body no less important....)

vv. 23-24, Paul's

Peace = God's "shalom" which brings the tranquillity and harmony and stability that our disturbed hearts long for. – Peace vertically and horizontally and internally: Vertically with a holy God who once viewed us as guilty enemies deserving only His wrath, but now we are adopted and He is to us, v. 23b, "Father".

v. 23b – Here are these two great twin-sisters: love & faith, cf. Paul's prayer in 1:15...

No one can truly trust Christ and not also grow in love for others (cf. 3:17b).

v. 23c – Again we are reminded, WHERE is the only fountainhead from which such mighty virtues as peace, love and faith can flow?...

v. 24a – Ephesians began in chp. 1, "Grace to you and peace", and now in ends, "Peace to you...and grace."

Here again, one last time, is the great pattern of Paul throughout Ephesians (and elsewhere). – The indicative, then the imperative:

Eph. 1-3, our position in Christ, b/c of what God has DONE for us. – Eph. 4-6, our practice in Christ, what we must DO in response: here, v. 24, in light of God's abundant peace, love and grace, we respond in glad love for Christ.

Because of God's saving grace and unbreakable love, He will ensure that our love for Him endures. – "We love, because He first loved us." (1 Jn. 4)

[~ C. Hodge: *Love to Christ includes adoring admiration of His person, desire for His presence, zeal for His glory, and devotion to His service. It need not be ecstatic, but it must be controlling.*]

1 Pet. 1:8, "Though you do not see Him, you love Him."

1 Cor. 16:22, "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed."