

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 15TH - 16TH, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

THE AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE PAUL

- Jewish-born in modern-day Turkey.
- Also a Roman citizen.
- A highly-educated religious leader and Pharisee who persecuted Christians until his dramatic conversion around 35 A.D.
- Ministered mostly to non-Jews.
- Executed by Nero in 68 A.D. in Rome.

Paul wrote this letter in 60–62 A.D. while in prison in Rome to address new philosophies and theology influencing the church.

- He also wanted to further unite Jewish and Gentile believers. He strongly pushes familial love by using *agape* 19 times.

THE AUDIENCE: THE CHURCHES IN EPHESUS

- This letter was sent to the Christians in all churches in Ephesus.
- Capital and trade hub of Asia Minor (Turkey).
- Population: About 300,000 people.
- Beautiful, affluent, intellectual, and very pagan. It was also the center of worship for the goddess Diana.

OVERARCHING THEMES IN EPHESUS

Paul wanted to address false theology by explaining our **redemption, purpose, grace, predestination,** and **reconciliation** to God through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Basically, Paul will teach us that **we are invited by Jesus to be restored and adopted into the family of God.**

THE FATHER'S BLESSINGS (EPHESIANS 1:1-6) "AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST"

An apostle in modern times means one who is called to plant and oversee churches. In Paul's time, it went further by meaning a disciple who had direct contact with Jesus.

- "Saints" are people set apart because they follow Jesus. **This letter applies to us today as much as it did to the Ephesians.**

GRACE, PEACE, AND BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER

Paul makes it clear that we are to honor and praise God because all we have is from Him. This goes deeper than earthly provisions; Paul is referring to spiritual blessings.

- **It is so easy to get wrapped up in temporary material needs that we miss the greater needs of our eternal soul.**

THE BLESSING OF GOD CHOOSING US

V4–5 are the center of much debate and **mystery**. We're told that Christians have been predestined (chosen) before the world was even made.

- **Though we are chosen, we also have a responsibility to follow Jesus through acceptance, repentance, and obedience.**

THE BLESSING OF BECOMING HOLY

When we repent and accept God's grace and salvation, we are made blameless and righteous in God's eyes. This was only possible through the crucifixion and resurrection.

- This doesn't mean we're perfect or have a license to sin. **It means we're recipients of grace and forgiveness if we will live in it.**

THE BLESSINGS OF THE SON AND SPIRIT (EPHESIANS 1:7-14) THE HOLY TRINITY

The Trinity is one God existing in three Persons. This is incomprehensible on this side of Heaven, and that is okay. We receive unique blessings from God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- From Jesus, we are **redeemed, forgiven, enlightened,** and **enriched.**

REDEMPTION AND FORGIVENESS

Redemption means being *bought back or freed from slavery. Forgiveness works in tandem with redemption. Forgiveness is giving up the right to punish someone for evil deeds.*

- **When we give our lives to Jesus, His work on the cross pays for our freedom from sin and reconciles us to God** (Rom. 6).

SALVATION LEADS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Our redemption and forgiveness gives us the ability to understand more about the "myster[ies] of His will." **When we're saved, God starts to open our eyes to His ways.**

- **As we grow in our relationship with Him through prayer and study, more of God's nature and wisdom is revealed to us.**

WE ARE ENRICHED WHEN WE AGREE WITH JESUS

V11 reaffirms that we're chosen by "One Who works out everything," but it's only when we choose to be "in agreement with the purpose of His will" that we inherit all God wants for us.

- Simply put, **when we accept God's desires for us, we inherit (are enriched) the things of God, now and for eternity.**

THE BLESSINGS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we give our lives to Jesus, we're "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." The infilling of God's Spirit is a fulfilled prophecy (Joel 2:28).

- **The Holy Spirit is the "down payment" of our eternal reward from God. He gives us what we need now (gifts, fruit, counsel, comfort) until Jesus returns.**

PRAYING FOR INSIGHT (EPHESIANS 1:15-23)

PRAYING FOR INSIGHT

Paul ends his intro by mentioning that he prays for the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" for the Christians in Ephesus.

- The things of God are beyond our comprehension without God's help. Even with the Word and His Spirit, we will still not comprehend everything until Heaven.

PRAYING FOR WISDOM

Wisdom is a gift from God (1 Corinthians 12:8) we will receive in abundance if we ask for it (James 1:5).

Wisdom not only helps us make good choices and understand Scripture, but it also gives us the ability to act on the truth.

- **With wisdom comes revelation. We should be seeking this every time we pray.**

"THE EYES OF YOUR HEART MAY BE ENLIGHTENED"

Paul also prayed that Christians might comprehend their **hope in Jesus, the spiritual and mental riches** we receive from Him, and the **power** God gives us through the Spirit.

- **To have hope of an eternal reward and the power of God to flourish in this life, we must live in relationship with Him.**

IT IS ALL BECAUSE OF JESUS

V20–23 gives us a snapshot of the magnitude of Jesus and His power. Paul wants the reader to know just how secure they are if they choose to follow Christ.

- **We must reach a place of humility and understand that we are incapable of saving ourselves.**

"THE ONE WHO FILLS ALL THINGS"

When we align ourselves with God, He not only saves us, **He equips us through His Spirit to live in a way that honors Him and sustains us until Jesus' return.**

- **The Spirit can break addiction, insecurity, selfishness, and more and give us the fruit and gifts of the Spirit.**

THIS IS A BIG DEAL!

- It is mind-boggling to know that **God sees us, loves us, and has chosen us to be recipients of an eternal reward.**
- We must **war against complacency, entitlement, and apathy** by remembering how great God is and how amazing it is that we can have a relationship with Him.

THERE IS FREEDOM IN JESUS

- "For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and don't submit again to the yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).
- **We have the choice to live in freedom, but we must choose to walk away from sin and self and toward a gracious Savior.** We must live responsibly.

THERE IS POWER TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY

- The Spirit is the "down payment" until Jesus returns. This means that **He gives us the ability to live out the fruit of the Spirit, display the gifts, have peace and joy, and have the strength to avoid evil and the wisdom to make good choices.**
- **We can live better.**

AN INVENTORY

- Are we praising and thanking God first?
- Are we living in alignment with Jesus and the Word?
- Are we praying for insight, wisdom, and a better understanding of Who God is? Are we praying, reading, and humbly following the commands of Jesus?
- **Do we believe we can step up and live holy or do we make excuses and abuse the grace of God?**
- Do we understand that following Jesus benefits us both now and forever? Do we really know that **God loves us** and wants to sustain us until He comes back for us?