

*The Letter
to the*

EPHESIANS

12 Lessons

Prepared by:
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2005

The Study of
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"The Study of Ephesians"

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Lesson One

“Introduction to the Study of Ephesians

The church at Ephesus was one of the outstanding churches of this early period of time. Paul, Timothy, and Silas helped to establish or strengthen the church on Paul’s 3rd mission trip into Asia Minor. Paul had spoken in the Synagogue at the end of his 2nd mission trip on his way back to Jerusalem. In between his trips, Aquila and Priscilla, as well as Apollos, had been meeting together for worship somewhere—possible in their home. When the mission team arrived, they set about to begin preaching. The first recorded persons were twelve men who had been baptized with John’s baptism. Paul taught them more perfectly and after baptizing them in the name of Christ he laid his hands on them to impart a gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). He teaches in the local Jewish Synagogue for three months, but runs into too much opposition. He finds another place where he could teach and have access to more people. He teaches in the School of Tyrannus for two years that made it possible for ***“all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord.”*** (Acts 19:8-10).

During the years at Ephesus Paul and others with him were able to reach a lot of people, evidently many of whom were quite mature spiritually or they matured quickly. Either during his stay or shortly afterwards, the church had appointed elders to oversee the flock of God. Because when Paul came back by Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem from his 3rd mission trip, he called the elders to meet with him and encouraged and warned them of coming dangers (Acts 20:17-38). Many of the people showed great dedication by turning from idols, witchcraft, etc., to the way of God—even burning their books of witchcraft which were worth a lot of money (19:19).

Early writings (uninspired) of Christians mentioned the fact that the Apostle John moved to Ephesus and made it his center of operation for the rest of his life. It may have been possible that Mary, the mother of Jesus, may have still been alive and was with the Apostle at Ephesus. His move would have been possibly a short time before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70.

THE EMPHASIS OF THIS LETTER

One of the primary themes of Ephesians is the church! More mention is made about the church in this letter than any other of the Letters to Christians. The word “church” appears some nine times and the word “body” appears also nine times. Some of the descriptive phrases to be found in the Letter about the church are as follows:

- 1) Christ loved the church (5:23)
- 2) The church is to be presented to Christ (5:27)
- 3) God’s wisdom is demonstrated by the church (3:10)
- 4) God is glorified in the church (3:20-21)
- 5) They is one body, one church (4:4)
- 6) Christ is the head of the church (5:23; 1:22)
- 7) The church is the fullness of Christ (1:22-23)

- 8) Christian is the Savior of the body (5:23)
- 9) The church shall be holy and without blemish (5:27)
- 10) The church is the beloved bride of Christ (5:31-32)

There is also much general and practical teaching on the topics of Salvation and Christian living.

THE CITY OF EPHEBUS

The population of the city of Ephesus was quite mixed—there were Greeks, Asiatics, Jews, and Romans. The city was generally prosperous, but very religious and superstitious. They had their sorcerers and magicians, as well as their idols. One ancient writer stated that it was the “*seat of the most magnificent form of idolatrous worship then existing.*” The Temple of Diana was there—which was one of the seven “wonders of the world.” Once each year thousands would come to Ephesus for feast days that would last a month. All kinds of athletic games, plays, and sacrifices were offered by the people. Thousands of shrines of Diana were sold as souvenirs or objects of worship each year. It is conjectured that the worship of Diana may have helped to contribute to the worship of Mary later on. One of the early churches that was built was in honor to Mary. It was on the site of the famous Temple of Diana. In 431 AD, the council of bishops met at Ephesus and first gave the designation to Mary as the “Mother of God.” The city had a theatre that would seat 50,000 people. They had a library, gymnasium, and public baths. Their market place was surrounded by halls and chambers. The city was about three miles from the coast. As one would enter the city, he would see monumental gateways down a ½ mile long street lined with halls. It seems to have been a city of wealth and power.

TIME AND PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

Paul and company arrived in the city of Ephesus on his 3rd mission trip about AD 53-54. He stayed there almost three years (in round figures) which would have him leaving in AD 56. It would be about four to five years later, which in prison at Rome (AD 60-63), that he wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus (dated AD 63). Indications are that the letter was one of four letters that Paul wrote and evidently sent this one by the hands of Tychicus—and possibly others.

We can usually judge from the contents of the letter what motivated the writing of this letter to the church. At the end of the letter he states that Tychicus would make know his circumstances and how he was holding up under them (6:21-22). But from the topics that Paul discussed, it is possible that the church was having trouble with false teachers. At Paul’s last meeting with the elders he warned them of the coming dangers (Acts 20:28-32). The letter to the church at Colosse certainly indicates that some were already at work there. Paul’s emphasis upon the church and Christ’s headship over the church may have been needed to help clarify their thinking.

Another short letter was sent to this church some 33 years later (c. AD 96). It is found in the Revelation letter, chapter 2:1-7. God offered great praise of the church and its efforts, but rebuked them for “falling from their first love.” He admonished them to repent and do the first works.

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

1:1-14 -- THE ORIGIN & EXTENT OF OUR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

1. Introduction (1:1-2)
2. The origin of our blessings from God in Christ (1:3)
3. Listing of the blessings (4-14)

1:15-23 -- GOD'S POWER REVEALED THROUGH CHRIST

1. Paul prayed for them to know the greatness of God (1:15-17)
2. He prayed for them to know the greatness of their calling (1:18)
3. He wanted them to know the greatness of God's power (1:19-23)

2:1-22 -- SALVATION: WHO, WHAT, AND WHY?

1. Who? (2:1-5, 11-13)
2. What? (2:1, 4-6, 8-9, 13-14, 17-18)
3. Why? (2:6-7, 9-10, 15-16, 18-22)

3:1-13 -- THE GREAT MYSTERY OF GOD UNFOLDED

1. God's mystery hidden for centuries (3:5, 9)
2. Now it has been revealed by the Apostles & Prophets (3:5, 1-4, 7-8)
3. What is it? (3:6, 10-12)
4. Conclusion (3:13)

3:14-21 -- THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL MATURITY

1. Paul's concern for them expressed (3:14-15)
2. His request:
 - a) To be strengthened in the inner man (3:16)
 - b) That Christ may dwell in your hearts (3:17)
 - c) May be rooted and grounded in love (3:17)
 - d) May be able to comprehend the greatness of the love of Christ (3:18-19)
3. His benediction over them (3:20-21)

4:1-16 -- KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

1. How? (4:1-3)
2. The basis of Unity (4:4-6)
3. Gifts of God and their purposes (4:7-16)

4:17-24 -- THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW MAN IN CHRIST

1. You are no longer ignorant and blind (4:17-21)
2. Because the Old Man is corrupt (4:22)
3. Because you have been renewed in mind (4:23)
4. Because you have been recreated (4:24)

4:25-5:20 -- PRECEPTS FOR THE NEW MAN TO FOLLOW

1. Special sins to put away (4:25-5:7)
2. Walk as Children of Light (5:8-14)
3. Walk as Wise men (5:15-20)

5:21-6:9 -- DUTIES IN HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS

1. Husband and Wife (5:21-33)
2. Children and Parents (6:1-4)
3. Servant and Masters (6:5-9)

6:10-24 -- THE FIGHTING CHRISTIAN

1. The need for the fight (6:10-12)
2. The Christian's armor (6:13-18)
3. Personal thoughts in conclusion (6:19-24)

Lesson Two

“Origin & Extent of Our Blessings in Christ”**(Ephesians 1:1-14)**

The writer identifies himself as Paul an Apostle (one sent, ambassador, envoy). He is an Apostle of Jesus Christ (Iesous Christos—The anointed One who Saves). Paul considered it an honor to be an Apostle—not self-appointed, not man-appointed, but God appointed! He addresses his letter to the saints at Ephesus who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Three early manuscripts do not have “at Ephesus,” which has led some to conjecture that it may have been a general letter that would be circulated quickly among the churches in Asia. Ephesus would obviously be the first stop by one traveling from Rome. Saints are those who have been cleansed and set apart for service to God....they are faithful, dependable in that service. He desires that God’s grace and peace be upon them—that is, God’s favor would be freely bestowed upon them and give them peace in their hearts as they serve Him. The Greek word “charis” took on a richer meaning from the cross of Jesus. Men conferred favor freely upon friends, not enemies. But God freely conferred favor upon His enemies (Romans 5:8-10). This was a thing not seen in human affairs—men must do not act this way without great incentive from God.

ORIGIN OF OUR BLESSINGS AS CHRISTIANS (1:1-3)

Paul expresses the desire that God be blessed (Eulogetos—Eulogy)—be well spoken of or eulogized on the lips of men. Why? Because he has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Both physical and spiritual blessings are given to all mankind in a general sense. The Christian receives special blessings that non-Christian do not receive. He states where these blessings are found—“in heavenly places, in Christ.” The expression “in the heavenlies” would seem to have reference to the church or the kingdom of heaven. To be “in Christ” is to be “in His body or church.” Being in His church is a foretaste of being in heaven with God. These blessings come because of our connection with Christ—being in Him.

LISTING OF BLESSINGS (1:4-14)

1) Chosen us in Christ (1:4). We were the objects of God’s interest. He picked us, not because we were holy, but in order to make us holy. God wanted to set us apart for His Holy use. He wanted us free from any blame, blemish, or sin that we might constantly stand before Him in God’s love. When did God choose us? It was before the foundation of the world—that is, before this universe was brought into existence....before time began! We are the objects of the eternal planning of Deity.

2) Predestinated us unto the adoption of Christian (1:5). He fore-ordained or pre-determine that we would become His children. We didn’t deserve to mop the floors of heaven, but He wants us to be His children....adopted children....to become joint heirs with His Son. This adoption was made possible through His Son and not because of any merit on our part. He decided this simply because of His great heart of love. What determines which ones will be the

“chosen ones?” The answer is easy to find throughout the New Testament—those who will accept His Son are the chosen or predestined ones to be with God.

3) Made us recipients of His grace (1:6). God’s unmerited favor was bestowed upon sinful man. His willingness to accept us as His children richly deserves the praise of all His saints. His grace is glorious, majestic, and beautiful. It should be the continual object of men’s praises here and for all eternity. This grace was made possible because of what Christ did for mankind on the cross. Our salvation was not possible without the atoning death of Christ.

4) We have redemption through Christ’s blood (1:7). To redeem someone is by paying the price for their release. We have been purchased from the slave market of sin by Jesus to be God’s own peculiar possession. The payment was the blood of Christ that satisfied the just demands of God’s holy Law that had decreed that *“the wages of sin is death!”* (Romans 6:23). This redemption is defined as the forgiveness of sins—to put away from—to be released from—our sins are no longer held against us! Again, he emphasizes that such was made possible by the riches of God grace. No other reason can be given for God’s doing this.

5) He has revealed His will to us (1:8-10). God’s grace has abounded towards us; it has been manifested in superabundance. His grace is not only able to save us from past sin, but to keep us saved day by day (1 John 1:7). His grace skillfully adapted His plan to fit man’s great need; and then, he revealed it to mankind in the Gospel message. It needed to be revealed because for centuries it had been a secret—not fully known by men or Angels. He chose to reveal it at a certain time in the affairs of mankind—which was the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4). What was this mystery? It was to gather all things together in Christ. To restore the perfect unity and harmony that all things enjoyed at first, but was broken by sin.

6) He made us heirs in Christ (1:11-12). We have become the heirs, heritage, and possession of God. We were made such because God pre-determined it to be so. Not arbitrarily, but according to his counsel and will—it is an intelligent and reasonable decision that God made. It was not because we deserved it, but because God delighted in it. This inheritance should cause God’s people to praise His glorious acts—and those of us who first trusted in Jesus have a peculiar place in giving Him this praise.

7) He sealed us with the Holy Spirit (1:13-14). Those to whom Paul wrote had come to trust in Christ. They trusted only after they had heard the word of truth—the gospel of our salvation. Upon believing this message, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise. God had promised to give His Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Giving us the Holy Spirit is God’s seal—his stamp of approval on to show ownership. Thus, we are God’s, we have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and the Holy Spirit is our surety that God will give us all He has promised.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God has greatly blessed us by choosing us and predestining us to be His adopted children. We are recipients of His superabundant grace. He has given us a “down payment” to assure us

that we will receive that eternal home after a while. He has freely disclosed all of this by His revelation to man. We have been greatly blessed, highly exalted with Christ, with the promise of greater things yet to come. What a privilege to be a Christian!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Paul became an apostle only after Peter and the other Apostles approved of him.**
- 2. A “saint” is one who has lived a more spiritual life than other men and is labeled this to make him different from other Christians.**
- 3. A “faithful” Christian is one who strives to fully follow the Lord day by day.**
- 4. “Grace” is the unmerited favor of God bestowed upon undeserving men.**
- 5. God’s special blessings are limited to those who are in Christ.**
- 6. God chooses a person to be saved whether he desires it or not.**
- 7. Saved people are the object of Divine planning from before the universe was created.**
- 8. God predestined for certain people to be saved—those who come into Christ!**
- 9. Redemption is something that has to be purchased—it is to set a person free.**
- 10. God has revealed His great mystery (secret) through the Old Testament Prophets.**

Lesson Three

“The Need to Know God & His Great Power”**(Ephesians 1:15-23)**

In the previous lesson (1:1-14) we saw the marvelous list of spiritual blessings given to us by God. The unfortunate thinking of men is that they appreciate material blessings more and do not fully appreciate the spiritual. Spiritual blessings are greater because they have the promise of life now and in the world that is to come (1 Timothy 4:8; 2 Corinthians 4:18). No person who seeks first God’s righteousness and His kingdom will lack the necessities of life. Only those who seek first spiritual things have the promise of life to come.

In this lesson (1:15-23) Paul desires that his readers fully know and appreciate these great blessings. He prayed fervently that this might be so. The reason—there are so many who are lukewarm, unconcerned, and unmindful of spiritual things. As he prayed for them, we should also pray for ourselves.

PAUL’S THANKSGIVING FOR THEM (1:15-16)

He is writing to people who have received the grace of God and have become His adopted children. He is thankful that they were willing to accept God’s grace and mercy. He was also thankful for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—which is what made them a part of the redeemed people of God upon their obedience to the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). There is always a joy to hear about people you have known that they are faithful in the Lord. Paul possibly would have heard this message from Tychicus. He was also thankful for their love that was shown to all the saints. Love is not love unless it is shown (1 John 3:18). The church was made up of Jew and Gentile, probably rich and poor, those that had been immoral or moral. Yet, they showed love to all—no exclusions! Paul said that he did not cease being thankful for them.

PAUL’S PETITIONS FOR THEM (1:17-19)

God is the source from whence all good blessings come (James 1:17). It is believed that in the expression: ***“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** is emphasizing the humanity of Christ. Such similar expressions found elsewhere would seem to indicate the same thing: ***“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”*** or ***“I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and My God and your God.”*** God is the Father of glory—the one who desires the glory—who is glorious in all He does. Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to keep on growing in wisdom and knowledge of the Father and His Son. God’s will was being revealed through inspired men. God Himself was being revealed to them. He wanted them to fully know God and His will. The reason is clearly stated in John 17:3—***“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”*** But their eyes needed to be enlightened—they needed to be able to fully see and understand. They needed to have a heart that was responsive to God and spiritual things. Many are like the blind man that was standing in a lovely park in daylight. All

around him lie great beauty and he is unable to see it. There are great treasures of wisdom and knowledge revealed in Christ. We need to grasp for this great understanding of God.

Paul wanted the Ephesians to fully know about the hope that they have been called to. We are called by God through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:14) to be His children. We are called to have a “living hope” that fades not away (1 Peter 1:3-4). He wants them to fully comprehend what God has called them unto. He wants them to realize the richness, the greatness, the beauty, and the desirability of this inheritance in Christ (Deuteronomy 33:27, 29). He wants us to know how precious God’s saints are in God’s eyes—for He is glorified in His people.

Paul also wanted the Ephesians to know about the exceeding greatness of God’s power is toward those who believe. God’s great power is exceeding or beyond measure. Paul uses various terms to describe this power:

- 1) **Dunamis**—Dynamite, powerful.
- 2) **Energieia**—Energy, working, operating power.
- 3) **Kratos**—Mighty or manifested strength.
- 4) **Ischuos**—Strength or power as an attribute.

The following is a loose rendering of this phrase: ***“and what is the super abounding greatness of His inherit power to us who are believing ones, that is seen by His energetic and manifested strength and might.”*** God’s people often do not act like God can nor will do anything for us. We need to see that the same power that was manifested in Jesus can also be used for us. This thought almost staggers the imagination, but it is true.

GOD’S DEMONSTRATION OF THIS GREAT POWER (1:20-23)

By God’s power Jesus was raised from the dead! His body lay in the tomb lifeless, helpless, and powerless, but God’s power began to operate, energize, work, and brought about a resurrection of a lifeless body. This same power God wants to use with us. By this power He also exalted Christ to His right hand in the heavenlies. Peter said that He is seated on David’s throne (Acts 2:29-36) at God’s right hand. He was not only brought back to life, but he shortly afterwards began ascending to the Father. Because Jesus was willing to fully empty Himself to become a man for mankind’s redemption, He is now gloriously exalted above all principalities, powers, might, and dominion. His name has been made superior and exalted above all others—not only in this age of time, but throughout all eternity. This same power can be operative in us! The Father has also put all things under His feet—subjected all power and authority to Him—heaven, earth, hades, hell, angels, governments, all are made subject to Him. But most of all, He has been made head over all things to the church. He decides it worship, its laws, its plan of salvation, its moral standards, etc. No pope, bishop, church council, convention, synod, prophet, preacher—no one can rob Christ of his authority. The church is Christ’s body over which He is the head. There is only one head attached to one body...not many bodies. As a body is not complete without the head, so the head needs a body. The body of Christ is His glory, his fullness, fully manifested. He takes us as empty vessels and fills us full. Ultimately, the church will be the completeness of Christ.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

One cannot help but see the exalted position of God's people. The glory of the church in God's scheme of things is becoming apparent from such expressions. We need to come to a fully knowledge of God and His ways. We need to see the great power that God wants to turn loose in our lives to bless us.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. There is a difference between being born spiritually into the family of God and being adopted into the family.**
- 2. We become children of God upon our obedience to the Gospel.**
- 3. Love is not love until it is shown.**
- 4. The reason is not stated why we need to grow in our knowledge of God.**
- 5. Men are called by God through the Gospel to become His children.**
- 6. Only those who have become God's children have the promise of eternal life.**
- 7. God's power is unlimited, but he uses it very wisely.**
- 8. The power of God put life again into the body of Jesus.**
- 9. Christ is the only head over His church.**
- 10. God is glorified by the church fulfilling its mission.**

Lesson Four

“Salvation: Who? What? Why?”

(Ephesians 2:1-22)

In the previous lesson we saw the greatness of God’s power manifested through Christ. He raised him up, made Him alive again, exalted him to God’s right hand, and gave him authority over all things. This same power operates on Christians. When we look at our condition before becoming a Christian and then compare that with the new person in Christ....something powerful is at work in our lives. We have chosen to entitle this lesson: “Salvation: Who? What? and Why?”

SALVATION: WHO NEEDS IT?

“Dead in trespasses and sin.” They were at one time spiritually dead, destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God. They had deviated from the right path and sinned! They had missed the mark....falling short of the Will of God for their lives.

“Walked according to the course of this world.” Our walk should be how one conducts or orders their lives by God’s Word. But they had not done so. Their walk was according to the opinions, speculations, impulses, aims and aspirations of mankind in general. They were letting the spirit of the age determine their manner of life.

“According to the prince of the power of the air.” They were allowing Satan to govern and direct their lives. He is prince of the power of the air, but not in heaven. His realm is here on earth. This way of thinking is constantly working in the children of disobedience.

“We all had our manner of life in times past in the lusts of our flesh.” At one time the Ephesian Christians had been like the world about them....satisfying their lust, passions, longings, cravings. They had allowed the passions of the flesh dictate their behavior.

“Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” They had been guilty of habitually performing acts that satisfy the desires of the lower nature and of evil thoughts. Their emotions, feelings, desires had sway, not reason.

“Were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Sin was engaged in so long that it becomes a way of life. By nature, by inclination, habitually they had been engaged in disobedience to God. They were just like all others—people who deserved the wrath of God.

“Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.” The world was divided into two groups: Jews and Gentiles. The Jews looked down on the Gentiles because they had not been chosen by God to be his children. The Gentiles were without God and without hope in the world. That would be our condition as well without God’s mercy.

“Without Hope.” They had no knowledge of the Messiah, nor any promises given to them. The Jews knew that the Messiah was coming and should have rejoiced in Him.

“Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” Israel was God’s chosen people for about nineteen hundred years—from the time of Abraham. He made Himself known to the Jew and entered into a theocratic relationship with them as His people. He made a Covenant with them as given through Moses. But the Gentiles had none of this.

“Strangers from the covenants of promise.” God had made promises to such men as Abraham and David. He sealed it, bound it as an agreement with them and their descendants. God had no such arrangement with the Gentile world. He made no such covenant with them.

“Having no hope.” They had not been told of the Messianic hope as the Jews had. They had no promise given to them. They were ignorant of the salvation that God was providing for mankind. They had nothing sure to hope for beyond this world.

“Without God in the world.” Without the knowledge of the one true and living God. Thus, they were destitute of God.

“Who sometimes were far off.” They were outside of God’s plans for the time being. They were not included under the covenant that He made with Israel.

SALVATION: WHAT HAS GOD’S POWER DONE FOR SINNERS?

“He has quickened.” You were dead, but you have been made alive unto God. The dead spiritually have been given spiritual life. Those separated from God by sin have been brought back into fellowship with God. Both Jew and Gentile alike have been made alive after a similar fashion of Jesus’ resurrection unto life.

“By grace are you saved.” Those who had gone away from God have been brought back to God through his gracious and loving actions in His Son. The message of redemption was made possible by God’s grace and their obedience to that message brought them into a saved condition.

“Has raised us up together.” Just as Christ was put to death, but raised up; so, we too were dead in our trespasses and sins, but made alive unto Christ.

“Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” We have been brought into a fellowship with Christ who is on His throne. We have been made sharers with Him in dignity and dominion. We are even now having a foretaste of our future exaltation. It is a glorious privilege to be in the Lord’s church.

“Now in Christ Jesus....are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Contrast to being afar off with no promises of salvation, but now we are able to enjoy these things. How? Because of the

shed blood of Jesus who took our place. All men have the privilege of this special relationship with deity.

“For he is our peace.” Jesus is our means of peace, not only with our fellowman, but with God as well. He and no other can be our means of peace with God. Without Christ, we would not have this peace.

“Who has made both one.” Not only are we at peace with God, but we are in full accord with what God expects of His people. We have the same mind and judgment. Now, both Jew and Gentile are one in Christ.

“He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” The wall that divided Jew and Gentile was the Law of Moses—the Old Covenant. Now, both have the same Law and Covenant.

“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Where there is division, there is enmity, and they are enemies. The cause of the separation must be removed. Jesus accomplished this while He was in the flesh—by dying on the cross. He nailed the Old Covenant to the cross. The Law had to be abolished in order for them to become one in Christ.

“For to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” Jew and Gentile need no longer be separated, but to become one new man in Christ under the new and better Covenant. There is no longer any reason for enmity between them. They can live in peace, in Christ.

“That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” The message that was preached to both was good news of salvation and the possibility of living in peace with one another. We are not only reconciled to God, but to one another also. This reconciliation was made possible by the death of Christ.

“Came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” This message was for both to hear and rejoice in. It is the same message to both Jews and Gentiles.

SALVATION: WHY DID GOD DO THIS FOR US?

“But God, who is rich in mercy” God’s mercy is inexhaustible, wealthy, abounding, abundantly supplied to both Jew and Gentile.

“For his great love wherewith he loved us.” He did this to satisfy his great love for us. He took pity on us. He loved us in spite of our sinful condition. Love is shown by our actions—God has surely shown His love to all mankind in the sending of His Son.

“By grace are you saved.” “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Salvation is a gift that God has provided. It is not something we can work at and earn or merit. Even when we do

the very best that we can, we are still sinners and under condemnation by the Law of God. This grace and mercy is conditional, however. We must believe in, put our trust in, be submissive to God. This salvation is not given to all, but God wants it offered to all. Only those who respond to God's offer will receive it. Man has enough problems with pride as it is, and if he thought he could earn his salvation, he would certainly boast about it. But because it has to be by grace through faith...man cannot boast in himself, but only in Christ.

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” God is going to take great pleasure throughout eternity in showing us the exhaustlessness of his grace to us, as well as his kindness because of what Christ was willing to do for us.

“For we are his workman ship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” We are God's new creation. Even though our will was involved, God has done it. He created us in Christ Jesus for a purpose...of doing good works. If we do not walk in good works, we defeat God's purpose for saving us. God has determined the moral actions for us to walk in—not us! He wants us to order our lives in the sphere of good works and cause God to be glorified (Matthew 5;16).

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Because of this salvation, reconciliation, being made one in Christ....both Jew and Gentile can have access to God, the Father. It is to secure the privilege of approaching God as Father. Before we could not. Jesus has provided the way into the presence of God.

“Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Gentiles are no long outside the fold of God—the fold of safety and hope. They have been made fellow citizens in the same kingdom. Both Jew and Gentile make up the church of Christ. Concerning this household, family, or church:

- 1) **“It is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.”** The preaching of Christ is the foundation they laid. The family of God was then built firmly upon this cornerstone that unites both Jew and Gentile in one family or church.
- 2) **“In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord.”** By being firmly connected with Christ, the building will hold together. It will become a beautiful building—built to the glory of God. The reason...it will be a holy, righteous building.
- 3) **“In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”** It is not only a holy temple but one in which God can dwell through His Spirit.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What a grand conclusion to draw from what Paul has said thus far. God's great power is operative in our lives. It is accomplishing great things. Our lives are united together with others. Such will form a magnificent temple in which God can dwell. That will bring eternal glory to Him...world with end! What a great privilege to be a part of God's family.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. Spiritual death is when man is separated from God by sin.
2. The word “world” is used to identify those who are in opposition to God.
3. The prince of the power of the air is Christ.
4. Sin is fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.
5. Sin can become a habitual way of living.
6. The peoples of the world were divided into two kinds: Jew and Gentile.
7. No Gentile could be saved until after Christ came to offer them hope.
8. Gentiles were not a part of the Covenant that God made with Israel.
9. Salvation by grace does not require anything on man’s part.
10. God raised us up together as one people when we came forth from the waters of baptism.
11. To be in heavenly places in Christ is an exalted position.
12. The enmity between Jew and Gentile was caused by the Law given to the Jews.
13. That Law had to be abolished in order for them to be one in Christ.
14. If man could earn his justification before God, he could rightfully boast about it.
15. God has redeemed us to walk in good works.

Lesson Five***“God’s Great Mystery has been Revealed”***
(Ephesians 3:1-13)

There is constant competition between the world and the Gospel of Christ. Each has its offers and inducements. It was true in Paul’s day, as well as in ours. Preaching and teaching needs to give emphasis by showing the contrast between the two; thus, showing the superiority of what the Gospel offers. It is very possible that Paul was doing that in the previous verses as well as in these above. Idolatrous religions had their mysteries. They had their priests who were fully informed about these mysteries. But they would only reveal such to certain ones. The Gospel had its mystery too. This mystery had been hidden for centuries, but was now being made known to all mankind. It is a far greater mystery than what idolatry or false religion has to offer.

THE REASON FOR PAUL’S IMPRISONMENT (3:1-2)

“For this cause.” Paul reminds them of some things. (1) He was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake of the Gentiles; (2) The stewardship of God’s grace had been committed to Paul for the Gentiles; and (3) When you read my letter you will have the same understanding that I do about the mystery of God. Paul was in prison at Rome because he willingly followed and preached Jesus Christ to the world about him. He felt it a grave responsibility to possess a knowledge of God’s grace to man and not to tell them about it.

REASON FOR THIS LETTER (3:3-4)

What Paul preached was not what he had been taught by others, nor was it his own ideas, but he was preaching what was revealed to him by God. Paul understood what he was preaching because it was no longer a secret or a mystery.....it was clearly revealed. And, when you saints at Ephesus read what I have written to you....then, you too will be able to clearly understand. The idol priests were very selective to whom they revealed the mysteries of their religion. But God wants all men to know that which had been a mystery, but is now clearly revealed for all to hear and understand. It is then no longer a mystery.

THIS REVELATION WAS GIVEN TO BOTH APOSTLES & PROPHETS (3:5-6)

Paul and the rest of the Apostles were not alone in receiving this revelation from God. The “spiritual” gifted persons in the church also proclaimed God’s great mystery—fully revealing it. In past ages, God had given information in prophetic form and a little at a time which made it hard to understand what His intentions were altogether. This promise was made after a fashion to Adam & Eve, Abraham, David, the Old Testament Prophets, etc., for over many years. The great mystery was that both Jew and Gentile would be fellow heirs in this new kingdom of heaven to be established among men. The distinction between them was broken down. The Law that had brought this about was removed. That which had been promised from the very outset of mankind is now being realized in Christ through the preaching of the Gospel.

THIS REVELATION WAS ESPECIALLY GIVEN TO PAUL (3:7-12)

Paul did not choose his ministry, but God did and endowed him for his work. God's power worked in and through Paul that he might make known this mystery. He was made an "apostle to the Gentiles." Paul called it a grace that was given unto him—who is the "least of all saints." After what Paul (Saul) had done to the church, he felt that he was unworthy to be saved in the first place—much less, to have the great privilege to preach the Gospel. God enlightened Paul so that he could make God's great mystery known to all. God's plan of redeeming both Jew and Gentile and bring them into one body was in the mind of God from the very beginning of the world. God has chosen this time to make his plan known to all, even to principalities and powers in heavenly places (possibly the angelic hosts—1 Peter 1:12). The church is the results of God's great plan that shows his wisdom to all. It is called God's eternal purpose or plan to redeem both Jew and Gentile in one body by the death of Jesus on the cross. Understanding this concept, we can come with "boldness" unto the throne of God to make our petitions known....believing He will hear and answer. This is not to say, we can come before God with a reckless and demanding attitude, neither with fear and terror, but with a reverential boldness (assurance). We do not deserve this access, but God freely offers it to all through Christ.

PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO THEM (3:13)

Paul did not want them to lose heart because of his imprisonment at Rome. It wasn't very pleasant what Paul had to endure because of his service to Christ and to people, but he was willing to do so for their benefit and to give them something to glory over. Willingness to suffer for what we believe gives glory and honor to that cause. So, don't falter nor lose your courage as you come face to face with the same things Paul was dealing with. Such a God as this is truly deserving of our worship and service. Such a salvation is worth suffering for and even dying for. We should count it a great privilege to be a part of the Body of Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. Paul said that he was a prisoner at Rome because of his preaching to the Gentiles.
2. Paul wrote this letter to explain how God's great mystery has been revealed.
3. That mystery was that both Jew and Gentile could be redeemed in one body.
4. The revealing of this great mystery was only given to Paul.
5. Paul expected them to read his letter and understand it.
6. Paul's considered preaching Christ to the Gentile as a grace from God in spite of what he had had to endure.
7. This mystery was a plan of God even before the beginning of the world.
8. Even the angelic hosts did not know the mystery of God before it was revealed in the coming of Christ.
9. God receives glory through the church.
10. God's great mystery being revealed gives assurance to approach God.

Lesson Six

“The Need for Spiritual Maturity” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

This last part of Ephesians chapter three is giving a strong emphasis upon maturing spiritually. It is a perfect introduction for what will follow in chapter four. Paul wanted them to be strong so they would be faithful to the end. In Paul’s letters there is constant prayer for God’s people to grow in Christ that helps them to be stable in Christ.

TO WHOM HIS PRAYER WAS ADDRESSED (3:14-15)

Upon the assurance of God’s blessing to both Jew and Gentile that they can compose the new kingdom of heaven, Paul wants to express to God, the Father, some very important request on their behalf. This Fatherhood goes back to the idea of the creation of all people, as Luke suggests in his Gospel (Luke 3:38) that Adam was the “son of God.” Paul stated that he bowed his knees in prayer to the Father. Someone has observed: *“Men do not bend the knees until they have first bent their pride.”* We must approach God humbly, not arrogantly or irreverently. God is not only the Father of the whole human race, but He is the “spiritual Father” of those who have become His children upon obedience to His Gospel. In this sense, all trace their dependency to God. Even angels are referred to as “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 38:7).

PAUL’S PRAYER ON THEIR BEHALF (3:16-19)

“Might be strengthened by God’s Spirit.” The Spirit has the ability to comfort and strengthen those who turn to Him. We have to be open and obedient to what He says if we are to be strengthened. To reject His message is to reject His help! Paul is concerned for the welfare of the inner man, not so much that of the outward man. God’s Spirit is able to reveal God fully to us, to teach us, persuade us, to change us, to challenge us, and eventually perfect us. While both the physical as well as the spiritual need to be strengthened, we can still serve God effectively even though our physical body may not be strengthened because of sickness. Paul was told by God that his strength was made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” The idea of dwelling is a continuous concept. It could be translated as continued condition of the child of God. Paul wanted them to take Christ into their hearts and let Him dwell there permanently—that God may feel completely at home in our hearts. The avenue of God’s dwelling in the Christian is through his faith that is lived out before God and man.

“Be rooted and grounded in love.” Grounded in love for God, as well as our fellow-man. The two greatest commandments require this (Matthew 22:36-40). Roots are the means of survival for plants. The roots must be fed to be strong and able to gather nutrition from the soil. The Apostle John said that if we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we haven’t seen? (1 John 4:20). It is not an either/or, but both are necessary. But God is

love; so, if we love, God abides in us. Paul is talking about an inner spiritual condition of one's heart before God. And we are urged to keep our hearts with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23).

“Be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of God’s love for us.” This knowledge is our motivation, our strength, our stability in Christ. Paul is praying that they will come to a full knowledge of the greatness of God’s love to man—and not them only, but all the saints of God. The idea behind these terms denote the vastness of God’s love for us and the sacrifice that Christ made in our behalf. This knowledge comes by wanting it, by observation, by time and study, by prayer, and by experience.

“Might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Paul desired that they might be recipient of all that God offers to give to mankind. But His giving is generally conditional upon our heart and life being devoted to Him. The things that God fully wants to give us depends upon our willingness to surrender ourselves to him.

BENEDICTION OVER THEM (3:20-21)

Paul here reminds the Ephesians that the God that they have committed themselves to worship and serve is a God able to do exceedingly abundantly above what they ask or think. The power that worked in Christ to raise Him from the dead is the same power at work in our lives. We probably limit God’s power working in our lives because of our “weak” faith! We limit God because we are reluctant to envision and ask. God’s limitation is in our lack of faith and our unwillingness to yield ourselves to him fully. He has saved us from our sins; He has changed our outlook on life; He has changed our view of things; He has changed our disposition; and is willing to even do greater things if we are willing—the extent is up to us!

Paul ends his prayer with the thought of how much glory belongs to God and that the church is man’s way of giving glory to Him. The praises of God will be sung throughout eternity—throughout the ceaseless ages to come! He is worthy of praise, adoration, worship, reverence, and thanksgiving. The church is God’s great creation and in and by it, God is glorified.

Man’s faithfulness and usefulness to God comes through knowledge of His Word. We need to be taught it and filled with it. We need to fully grasp the great truths of God—about God! We need to yield our lives to Him, fully trusting in Him, and learning of Him and His ways.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. We should address our petition to God, the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ.**
- 2. The bowing of knees represents a humility of spirit on man's part.**
- 3. All humanity can trace their lineage back to God.**
- 4. It is God's Spirit that strengthens our inner man.**
- 5. God's strength is made perfect in man's weakness.**
- 6. The sturdiness of a Christian depends upon how rooted and grounded he is.**
- 7. Christ dwells in the Christian even if he is not faithful.**
- 8. The fullness of God is indicating how big God is.**
- 9. God is able to do far less than what we expect of Him.**
- 10. Heavenly beings glorify God because of the church.**

Lesson Seven

“Keeping the Unity of the Faith”**(Ephesians 4:1-6)**

There is a natural, obvious break in the letter at this point (Chapters 1-3) (Chapters 4-6). Paul has explained to them of the great mystery and plan of God. He showed them the superiority of God’s mystery and way over that of the idolatrous religions. He encouraged them to stay fixed and grounded in this belief and profession. He wanted them to understand the great elevation that the child of God enjoys—whose minds have been fully enlightened. He desired that all of this would lead them to the right actions in their lives. He now turns to a major emphasis of Scripture—keeping the unity of the faith—preserving this oneness in Christ. In this lesson we will look at two things: (1) What the individual Christian can do to help preserve this unity; (2) How God brought about this Oneness. In the next lesson, we will see the gifts that God gave to help preserve this Oneness.

THE CHRISTIAN’S PART (4:1-3)

Paul now turns and calls upon the saints at Ephesus to walk worthy of their calling. It certainly is a high calling and their walk should be a high walk! To walk worthy is to let your life measure up to the greatness of your calling, or as the saying goes: “Practice what you preach!” Let your life NOT bring shame and reproach upon the One who has called you. He then spells out the kind of attitudes and actions expected of the Christian:

- 1) **With lowliness**—Truly recognizing your sinfulness and how small we are in the presence of God.
- 2) **With meekness**—A mild and gentle spirit. To show great strength of character in the midst of life’s trials.
- 3) **With longsuffering**—To be patient, to be in control of self, not easily provoked. One who can endure and bear up under trial. A slowness in avenging wrongs. One not easily discouraged.
- 4) **Forbearing one another**—To bear with the shortcomings, imperfections of others. To hold up, sustain, support others in time of need. We do so because we are ruled by love.
- 5) **Endeavor to keep unity of the spirit in the bond of peace**—Work in harmony, love, and doing good to one another! Be patient with each other as (1) misunderstandings arise; (2) as cutting words are angrily spoken; (3) or, when unkind actions are shown. Realize the great need of unity for the benefit of your souls. The church has been bought with a terrible price, don’t undermine it or undercut it. Make every effort to keep the church together in a loving fellowship. We did not bring about this unity, but we are given the responsibility to help to keep or preserve it! The result of unity is peace! Every Christian is urged to do his part to help preserve this oneness in Christ, so that we can live in peace with one another. The world is looking to see how we act before they commit themselves to the walk of the Christian.

HOW GOD BROUGHT ABOUT THIS ONENESS (4:4-6)

This is God's doing, not man's, as far as the plan is concerned for man's redemption. And God not only planned for this oneness in Christ, but has given us insight on what He did to make it possible.

1. He brought "one body" (Church) into existence. The church is God's creation, not man's. He planned that both Jew and Gentile would be saved in the same body of people. Unfortunately, man has failed to preserve this "one body" over the years. They have created multiplicities of churches and thereby rejected the one body of Christ. Unity of the Spirit can only be accomplished in one body.

2. The "one body" was made possible through the teaching and direction of the "one Spirit." The Holy Spirit gave us the Gospel of Christ. We are taught His word, believe and follow His word, and we are then born into the family of God by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave and guided the Apostles in revealing His Word for all mankind. As long as we listen to God's Spirit and Him only, oneness will be preserved and peace will prevail among the saints. When men turn to other "spirits," division is brought about! We are commanded to "try the spirits" to see if they are of God (1 John 4:1).

3. God has given us a "common hope" when we turned to Christ. That hope is to be in heaven with God for all eternity. The danger to unity comes when the Christian begins to set his hopes on things of this world (1 Corinthians 15:19). This world will never be a paradise. If we have been raised with Christ, we need to set our affections on things above (Colossians 3:1). This world will pass away and all things therein, but heaven will be forever.

4. He has given us "one Lord and Master" who directs our lives. Jesus' question is so appropriate: "*Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say!*" (Luke 6:46). It is to listen to and serve the same Lord Jesus Christ that will help oneness to be preserved. Jesus made it clear that a person cannot serve two Masters...he has to make a choice (Matthew 6:24; Joshua 24:14-15). When men allow others to direct their lives, that oneness is broken. Popes, councils of men, creeds of men become the lord and master over men. It is me that allows them to usurp the Lordship of Christ in my life.

5. We have been given the "one faith" in the same Lord Jesus Christ. We trust our salvation to Him and no other. All of us look to Him for that salvation so freely given. It is not only to believe and hold to Christ, but to believe and hold to His teachings (2 John 9; Galatians 1:6-9). A common faith in Christ and His teachings is necessary to have oneness.

6. By a common faith in Christ, we are baptized into Christ by the "one baptism." Those who obey the Lord are not only forgiven, but added to the church or the people of God (Acts 2:38; 2:47). When we obey the same thing, it puts us into the same body. Baptism becomes a re-enactment of our profess of faith in Christ—that he died, was buried, and was raised again for our justification.

7. In contrast to idolatry that had its many gods, we have “one God and Father” whom we worship and serve. God is the Father of all mankind, but he is not the spiritual Father of sinners. He is over all, but sinners do not recognize Him as such. He is through all for there are no barriers to limit His power. He is in all for his power energizes the atoms of all creation. Yet, He dwells spiritually in only those who are His faithful children.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

An interesting observation about the above seven “ones” is that they are all to be taught before one becomes a Christian. Our unity in Christ is brought about by these seven “ones.” We are unified when all of God’s people when we become a Christian, unless we become divisive. It is up to us to maintain these seven “ones” and deepen our roots in them.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Understanding God’s mystery is necessary for unity of the church.**
- 2. A person cannot walk worthy of the high calling of God.**
- 3. Basic attitudes are necessary for maintaining unity of the church.**
- 4. It is expected that individual Christians should work at remaining unified as a church.**
- 5. The “one body” is made up of many congregations throughout the world, but not many different churches.**
- 6. Oneness can exist where there is no enmity or discord.**
- 7. The “one Spirit” is the Holy Spirit that is the 3rd person of the Godhead.**
- 8. The “one hope” is that of Christ coming back to earth to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem.**
- 9. The “one faith” a system of beliefs based on what the Word of God teaches.**
- 10. The “one baptism” when obeyed puts one into a special relationship with God.**

Lesson Eight

“Gifts to Help Preserve Oneness”

(Ephesians 4:7-16)

It must be remembered that the church was in existence for about twenty years without any inspired written documents from God. As long as the Apostles were alive and traveling around, they were a great resource to know and refine the Will of God for the people’s lives. But God did not leave the young churches without any help. Not only did the Apostles have miraculous gifts, but they were able to pass these gifts on to members of these new congregations (Acts 8:14-19). The listing of these gifts can be found in 1st Corinthians 12. Also, the regulation of the use of these gifts can be found in 1st Corinthians 13-14. The earliest possible date for one of the Gospels would be in the late forties or early fifties. Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Thessalonica in about AD 52. The last New Testament book to be written was believed to have been Revelation in AD 96. Then, it was necessary for copies to be made of these letters and passed around to other churches for their use as well. These gifts were given to firmly establish the church in the world.

THROUGH WHOM WERE THESE GIFTS GIVEN (4:7-10)

It was prophesied that the Messiah would give gifts unto men (Psalm 68:18). Paul quotes this passage and applied it to Jesus as the giver of gifts. Men not only have natural gifts or talents but in addition God gave miraculous gifts. Both the natural and miraculous gifts were needed for the church to function well as a body of believers. These gifts were made available when Jesus ascended up on high...after his resurrection. It was also after he had led “captivity captive.” This can be understood in more than one way. Figuratively, it could be saying that Jesus spoiled evil powers and exposed them to contempt and shame (Colossians 2:15). Or, it could be saying that Jesus, as the great conqueror over death, would be like conquering kings—He would give gifts unto His friends. To say that Jesus ascended up to the Father is to infer that he descended into the lower parts of the earth—in other words, he died! He has ascended far above all “heavens.” The Jews had a three-part concept of the heavens: (1) Heaven—where birds fly (sky); (2) Out beyond our atmosphere (universe); and (3) The residence of God and the Holy Angels. His purpose also for ascending was to “fill all things.” The idea seems to be that of completion of God’s scheme of Redemption.

LISTING OF THE SPECIAL GIFTS (4:11)

Apostles. These were special chosen men to serve in a special way in the beginning of the church, but with no intent of their continuation down through the ages. Their written message serve in their place. They were also able to pass on miraculous gifts to those in congregations as they were established for their edification and rooting and grounding in the faith. All Apostles were eye-witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection.

Prophets. They served as spokesmen for God. A message would be given to them by the Holy Spirit that they could relay on to the congregation. They would have the ability to fully explain the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in Jesus. They would have revealed to them part of “the faith” that would be once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Once the full revelation of God’s Word was completed, then the partial revealing was done away—the gifts ceased (1st Corinthians 13:8-13). Logically, the gifts would have had to cease with the death of the Apostles. While we do not have gifted men who have a revelation directly from God to tell us about, we do have gifted men who read and study God’s revelation and speak the Word of God to us.

Evangelists. These men were bearer of glad tidings to all nations. God endowed and qualified them for their work. They needed gift of tongues (languages) so they could speak to people of all nations. They needed gifts of miracles in order to confirm their message as being from God (Hebrews 2:1-4; Mark 16:17-20). They were able to speak without studying if they had the gift of Prophecy (1st Corinthians 14). Evangelists are still needed today, but they have to study the Word of God in order to present the message of God to others.

Pastors (Shepherds). These men tend the flock of God, watching over them and keeping them safe and on the right course of life (Acts 20:28-32). They are referred to as “elders,” “overseers,” “presbyters,” “pastors” or “shepherds,” and the term “bishops.” These men had to meet certain qualities or qualifications in order to be appoint to serve over the congregation. But they also need to be given gifts by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles so that they would know what the Will of God was. One of the gifts to be given was “governing,” which elders would need. The church is also today to appoint qualified men, but they have access to the Word of the Apostles to give them the help and directions they need to do their work.

REASON FOR THE GIFTS (4:12)

“For the perfecting of the saints.” The gifts were for the equipping, preparing, strengthening of God’s people so they can teach, guide and train God’s people in their lives and growth.

“For the work of ministry.” God’s people are to be taught and trained to be servants. They help to serve the physical and spiritual needs of others. They are to become **“addicted to ministering to the saints.”** (1st Corinthians 16:15).

“For the edifying of the body of Christ.” The church needed to be built up numerically as well as spiritually. The church needs to grow in members, in godliness, in good works, and blessedness.

LIMITATION OF THESE GIFTS (4:13-16)

The miraculous gifts were not to remain always—they had a time limit. The church was in its infancy, it needed a lot of special help to get started and grounded in the faith. Through proper teaching and training, the church would become mature, complete in its knowledge and unity of the faith. It would come to the point that it no longer needed miraculous gifts.

The outcome of this completed revelation from God would help to keep God's people from being tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. False teachers are often very cunning and look for an opportunity to turn men away from the Word of God. But once Christianity got its foothold, it could more easily hold its own in the world.

A completed revelation would make it possible for God's truth to always be spoken, but it must be spoken in love if God's people are going to mature in Christ. God's design for His people is for their unity, to supply their part to the work of the body, and to bring about an increase or growth of the body as it edifies itself in love.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Christ gave gifts to the early church for its progress in spiritual things.**
- 2. These gifts in particular were given after He ascended up on high.**
- 3. These gifts were given to the Apostles so they could use them and pass them on to the early church.**
- 4. There were actual prophets in the early church along with the Apostles.**
- 5. An evangelist was one who traveled around with a message of good news.**
- 6. "Pastor" is another word for "shepherd."**
- 7. "Teachers" was a different group of men and women in the church from "elders."**
- 8. God's plan for His people is to become perfect, complete, mature in Christ.**
- 9. His desire is that His people all believe the same things and speak the same things.**
- 10. He also emphasized the need of speaking the truth in love to bring about the desired growth.**

Lesson Nine

“The Necessity of the New Man in Christ”
(Ephesians 4:17-24)

The Jewish people had a Law from God that would have made their lives a blessing to others about them as well as to manifest a strong spiritual influence upon the Gentile world. The only problem was that many of the Jews were guilty of the same sins found among the Gentiles. However, in many instances, early congregations would be made up from devout Jews and even devout Greeks that had been influenced by the Jews. Yet, there would also be the possibilities that many would come from an indulgent and immoral background. Paul's admonition in 4:1 was obviously needed for the many who needed to make some drastic changes in their lives. Paul does not make reference to the Jews here, but to the immoral and ungodly ways of the Gentiles. He states that God's people are urged to no longer walk as they walk. In Ephesus was the great Temple of Diana with its idolatry and immoral practices in the name of religion. Christians were to no longer take part in such. It took courage and conviction to no longer walk as their former friends and associates did. It still takes courage today.

REASONS FOR NOT WALKING AFTER THE WAYS OF GENTILES (4:17-19)

- 1. Because they walk in the vanity of their mind.** Their efforts to justify their walk is vain, futile, without any value. Idolatry, with all its worthless practices and evil activities, is included in this thought. Christians were not to seek after vain, worthless things in this life, but seek those things which are above (Colossians 3:1).
- 2. Because their understanding was darkened.** The result of self-deception is a darkened understanding. They will be permanently blinded with respect to their mind. The world often considers itself to be too wise to accept the teachings of Christ, but their worldly-wisdom is really a blinded mind and is incapable of appreciating truth over error.
- 3. Because they are alienated (cut off) from the life of God.** Through their chosen ignorance and blindness they have been estranged from God. They have shut themselves out from fellowship with God. Their ignorance (lack of knowledge of the truth) is inexcusable. Their hardness of heart has resulted in their separation from God.
- 4. Because they have come to the point of being past feeling.** They cease to feel pain, grief, shame, or guilt for their sinful ways. They have willingly given themselves to practice all kinds of immorality: Adultery, Fornication, Immodesty, Shameless Speech, and Indecent Behavior. They eagerly sought out opportunities to participate in wanton lawless deeds, and in all kinds of moral uncleanness. Their consciences are dead, harden, callous and have willingly turned from God (Romans 1:18-32) so they could participate in the ungodly, immoral practices of idolatry that was all about them.

CHRISTIANS ARE TO WALK DIFFERENTLY (4:20-24)

Christians were not taught to so walk. This wasn't the way we learned from Christ. Everything about Christ is different from these things: (1) His life was sinless, total abstinence; (2) His teachings was that ungodly living is the desire of Satan, not God; and (3) His purpose for coming to earth was to destroy sin and its power over man. You have been taught by Christ through His Word. You were told of the necessity of turning from this kind of life. A failure to do so will result into having to suffer the consequences of sin here and hereafter.

Paul had been there for over two years teaching them the will of God. They had had many others that had taught them the truth found in Christ. That truth says that the former behavior of the "old man" must be put off. It is like putting off a dirty garment. It is a thorough break with such sins! Reasons why the old man must be put off:

1. It will become more corrupt if not stopped.
2. Our conscience will grow duller until it is dead.
3. The habits of evil will be more firmly fixed.
4. It is a deceptive way of walking.
5. It promises thrills and satisfactions.
6. But it really brings disappointment, shame, disgrace, and contention

They were not taught to continue in these sins, but the very opposite. They were taught to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. Change your outlook! Despise sinfulness and love righteousness. Unless our minds are renewed, we will continue in the same old sinful walk in life. Another way to express the same idea is that they were taught to put on the "new man." The old man is no longer here, but a new man is in his place. This new man was made possible by our obedience to the Gospel and being cleansed and made new creatures in Christ (Romans 6:4; 2nd Corinthians 5:17). And, being made clean and new, we should live that way. Our lives should reflect this newness. With God's help, we can change and no longer be the same person we were before becoming a child of God. It is like putting on new, clean, pretty clothes....garments of righteousness and true holiness. We walk according to truth and not error and deceit.

Christians haven't been saved just to escape hell and receive blessings from God, but to live a changed, godly, righteous life. A life of sinful indulgence can only bring ruin, not life!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. To walk worthy of our calling is to walk as a new man in Christ.**
- 2. Paul uses the Gentile world to illustrate the ungodly and unrighteous way of living.**
- 3. People's minds are darkened against their will and are not responsible for their blindness.**
- 4. Sin alienates us from the life of God.**
- 5. The reason for people's ignorance of God is in themselves, not something outside of themselves.**
- 6. People go into the depths of sin because they have hardened their consciences.**
- 7. To give ones' self over to something is to become its slave.**
- 8. Lasciviousness and Uncleaness are general terms indicating the depth of one's sinfulness.**
- 9. A person is taught to turn from sin before he becomes a Christian.**
- 10. The renewing of our minds is a choice that we make as to whether we want to be taught the truth or not.**

Lesson Ten

“Precepts for the New Man to Follow”**(Ephesians 4:25-5:20)**

The previous lesson dealt with the concepts of putting off the old man with all his sins and the necessity of putting on the new man created in Christ Jesus. But the new man has to have an identity. Its identity is righteousness and holiness. So, this lesson will be looking at the seven practical exhortations for the new man to follow; that the new man is to walk as children of light; and we are to walk as wise men.

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS FOR THE NEW MAN TO FOLLOW (4:25-5:2)

“Stop lying and speak only truth.” Put away once for all the desire to deceive, mislead, or hurt others by not speaking the truth. We are family—we don’t need to lie to them.

“Control your anger.” A certain type of anger is needed—an attitude of righteous indignation against sin. We need to have a strong feeling about wickedness and disobedience. We should not be indifferent when we see evil triumph. Both Paul and Jesus are recorded as being angry, but it was a righteous feeling against evil. The normal kind of anger that we must be aware of is the kind that seeks to strike back, hurt, or harm the person that has made me angry. While anger may be justified, yet it must be checked—it must not linger—it needs to be guided by reason, not emotion. Don’t give Satan an opportunity to lead you into sin. Don’t give unbelievers an occasion to speak evil of Christianity. Anger that lingers can bring malice, hatred, resentment, and a desire for revenge.

“Stop stealing.” There are many ways to steal: (1) Embezzlement; (2) Cheating on tax returns; (3) Driving too hard a bargain; (4) Misrepresenting goods; (5) Loafing on the job; (6) Cheating on examinations, etc. We are to work with our own hands—be busy in some kind of work for our self. It is rewarding and it enables you to also help others.

“Put away corrupt (rotten) speech.” This is speech that is offensive to the hearers or speech that tends to corrupt the mind; such as: Obscenity, flattery, calumny, railing, boasting, tattling, and commendation of vice. We must carefully control our tongue at all times (James 1:26). Our words carry with them the personality and thoughts of the one speaking. Corrupt words reflect a corrupt character or heart. We need speech that bestows a blessing on the hearer!

“No longer grieve God’s Holy Spirit.” The Spirit is grieved when we live ungodly as a child of God. Isaiah said that Israel rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:10). How terrible it is to offend Him who is trying to strengthen us and bring us to our day of redemption purified. God’s Spirit is in the Christian as our assurance of God’s promises. If we are not redeemed at that day, it will be our own fault.

“Put away all wrong actions and attitudes.” The following attitude and actions should not be identified with the Christian:

1. **Bitterness**—Sharpness, harshness, spitefulness, resentment.
2. **Wrath**—Anger erupting and boiling over.
3. **Anger**—A settled disposition of indignation, an angry outlook upon everything.
4. **Clamor**—A loud outcry, outward manifestations of anger.
5. **Railing**—Blasphemy, slander, speech injurious to another’s good name.
6. **Malice**—Ill will and the desire to do injury.

These things should have been put away upon becoming a Christian. They are not to become an acceptable way of thinking and acting.

“Be imitators of God.” The new man is to act like God. The following are some of the things listed that we are to imitate:

1. **Kind**—Virtuous, good, mild, pleasant, not harsh or bitter.
2. **Forgiving**—Benevolent, gracious, do a favor, release from guilt.
3. **Tenderhearted**—Pity and compassion.
4. **Walking in love as Christ did**—Jesus’ death was an acceptable and well-pleasing sacrifice to God. Our lives need to be the same. He did it out of love for us. We can also do such out of our love to God and our fellow-man.

WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (5:3-14)

Things that children of light do not walk in (5:3-4):

1. **Fornication**—Immoral sex relations. The heathen tried to justify such by doing it in worship to their gods.
2. **All Uncleanness**—Lustful and unclean living.
3. **Covetousness**—Greedy desire to have more, idolatry (a trust in riches).
4. **Filthiness**—Base and lewd conduct. Shameless and immoral conduct.
5. **Foolish talking**—Buffoonery, making light of, lack of forethought and wisdom.
6. **Jesting**—Polished and witty speech as an instrument of sin. That which can have double meanings, easily turned especially toward a bad meaning. Jokes that can be taken with two meanings. Such does not befit the Christian’s life.

Warning to those who so walk (5:5-8). Such people have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Their deceptive ways lead to death. They also bring the wrath of God. We are not to walk or partake with them. We must remember that we are children of light and not darkness! So, show it by your walk in Christ!

Things that children of light walk in (5:9-14)

1. **Produce the fruit of the Spirit (Light).**
2. **Goodness**—Active beneficence.
3. **Righteousness**—Walking in right relationship with fellowman.
4. **Truth**—Walk according to God’s decrees, His patter.
5. **Proving what is acceptable (well-pleasing) to the Lord.**

Paul now turns and stresses again for them to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness! Such is unfruitful in the good sense of the word. But wickedness does bring its fruit (consequences). We are not only to avoid association with such people, but we need to reprove them for their shameful practices done in secret. However, the light will show up their works for what they are. Paul warns such people to wake up from their sleep unto death and let Christ enlighten them. God's people are to keep away from the dangers of these things.

WALK AS WISE MEN (5:15-20)

Certainly, don't walk as foolish men who allow themselves to be taken in with sin or its deceits. Don't act like these madmen, but make good use of your opportunities to live wisely, coming to a full understanding of the Lord's will, and be filled with the Spirit of God. Let your life be constantly in control of the Spirit of God. We are to be filled with the Spirit, not with wine that leads to loose behavior that is unbecoming of a Christian. This kind of life has something good to sing about. We can make melody in our hearts for what the Lord has done in our lives. Singing is also a way that God's people can encourage each other in public worship. Our singing should include: (1) Psalms; (2) Hymns; and (3) Spiritual songs. These songs come from a heart of thanksgiving to God.

Brethren, we have a worthy calling, a high calling! Let us so walk as to bring honor to this calling rather than dishonor!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. It is stated that Christianity is not a set of rules of "thou shalt and thou shalt not."**
- 2. Attitudes, as well as Actions, are both dealt with in this section.**
- 3. There is a real danger to lingering anger.**
- 4. Man is the one who gives in to what the Devil wants.**
- 5. The Holy Spirit can be grieved by the people of God.**
- 6. Corrupt words reflect corrupt character or a corrupt heart.**
- 7. Tenderheartedness is the same as compassion.**
- 8. Use of our time has nothing to do with walking as a new man.**
- 9. Christians are called children of light in opposition to children of darkness.**
- 10. To be filled with the Spirit is to let Him fully control our lives.**

Lesson Eleven

“Duties in Household Relations”**(Ephesians 5:21-6:9)**

Christ develops and makes His followers into servants of others. He deals with the heart that must be changed to be like His. The command to submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God is a general statement of that which will follow. It deals with the submissive roles of life: (1) The wife to her husband; (2) The child to its parents; and (3) Servants to their masters. But at the same time it stresses how that authority must be exercised over the wife, child, or a servant. Even though some Christians would have unbelieving mates, parents, or masters, we are admonished to show the proper respect for those in authority over us. Christ sets us free from sin so we will not continue in the way of sin. To be in disobedience to our head (Jesus) is sin. We must learn to be submissive to the proper situations in order to show respect for God's arrangement. To use or exercise authority wisely and in kindness is to imitate Christ.

HUSBAND & WIFE RELATIONSHIP (5:22-33)

The wife towards her husband. She is to be subject to her husband as the church is subject to Christ. The ideal is here presented. No wife should resent being in subjection to the right kind of husband. However, even when all reasonable causes for subjection are absent, the wife is still to be subject to him as unto the Lord. In other words, consider it as obedience unto Christ.

The wife's subjection. It does not mean that she has no moral or personal dignity. Her subjection is not servile in the sense of being a slave. She is an heir of eternal life together with the man (1 Peter 3:7). She is also entitled to respect “...*giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel.*” (1 Peter 3:7). She was created to be a helper, not a slave (Genesis 2:18). Her service should not have to be done out of terror, for God warns the husband “*and be not bitter against them.*” (Colossians 3:19). It does not mean that the husband has authority to beat or abuse her at his will. She is not to be treated with indifference (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). She has her rights also

The husband towards his wife. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Christ gave His life for the church, and the husband should love his wife that much also. Christ sanctified and cleansed the church for her to be his bride by the washing of water by the Word. Thus, he desires his bride to be spotless, holy and without blemish at his second coming. Godly love should temper the husband's relations with his wife. He is to love her as he does his own body. In a sense, they become one body (marriage) before God. He is to nourish her and cherish her with his love and affection. He should care tenderly for her as Christ does for his church.

Marriage. The marriage of Adam and Eve is used to illustrate Christ and the church:

1. Eve was taken from the side of Adam, and the church was purchased by the blood shed from Jesus' side. One possible reason for Eve being taken from Adam's side was to help illustrate the church's relationship to Christ.

2. Man is to forsake parents for his bride as Christ forsook heaven to win his bride.
3. Adam loved Eve, and Christ loves the church.
4. Adam had one wife, and Christ has one church.
5. Marriage was to be permanent, and so will the marriage of Christ to his faithful bride.

Marriage is regulated by divine commandments. The husband must love his wife. The wife must be in subjection to her husband. They must cleave together as long as they both shall live. To do otherwise is sin. The wife is to fear or reverence her husband, but it is not a slavish fear or a tyrannical master. Rather there is a demand for mutual respect, love, gratitude, and subjection.

CHILDREN AND PARENTS RELATIONSHIP (6:1-4)

Children are to obey their parents. Too many children are not taught nor require to be obedient. Such have a head start on the road to delinquency, crime, and often-times hell. The child is to be obedient to their parents as long as it does not require of them to go against God. When one considers all that parents do for their children, it is right that they should obey. To obey is to be obedient to Christ.

Children are to honor their parents. To honor is to show respect for and caring for them. Two promises are connected with this command:

1. **That it may be well with you.** Any child that obeys will be spared many troubles and mistakes. The Law of Moses permitted stoning of a rebellious child. It shows God's strong disapproval of children disobeying their parents.
2. **That your days may be long.** This probably had reference primarily to the Jews retaining their land. When they became a disobedient generation—God would let their enemies drive them out. A child will have better health, safer habits, wiser ways, and the likelihood of a longer life.

Parents responsibility to their children.

1. **They are not to provoke them to wrath.** That is, not rouse them to anger or exasperation. To be unreasonably strict can:
 - a) Drive children from home while young;
 - b) Drive them into young and unwise marriages;
 - c) Or, drive them into juvenile gangs.

Parents should not tease or repress them until they are in a rage. Correction is needed because: ***“foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.”*** (Proverbs 22:15). But the wise man says also that the rod of correction will drive such out. A child does not long resent just punishment. But, continuous and unjust abuse leads to exasperation and discouragement.

2. **They are to be nurtured.** Children need to be trained, educated, and taught disciplined living. Our children are not just for our enjoyment, our caressing, and to take on over, but they are to be prepared to take their place in society (and most of all the church). They need to be trained:
 - a) To form good habits;
 - b) To refrain from harmful things;
 - c) To discipline themselves well;
 - d) To respect older people;

- e) To respect the property of others;
- f) To respect the Law of the land;
- g) To be kind and considerate of others;
- h) To make decisions well and wisely;
- i) To be the right person as a friend;
- j) To be the right person as a life's mate;
- k) And to marry a Christian!

SERVANT & MASTER RELATIONSHIP (6:5-9)

Servants. These were probably bond-servants or slaves. The Gospel did not automatically cancel slavery. It did change the estimation of slaves in eyes of Christian masters. To the world, slaves were things to be bought, sold, and used—a possession. To the Christian masters, they were people made in the image of God and often even a brother in the Lord. It also helped to change slave's estimation of masters. Serving their master became an opportunity to serve Christ. It was the opportunity to demonstrate the power of Jesus in his life. He did not want to displease his master, but even more so, the Lord who expected him to be a good slave. Obviously, when slaves became Christians and would served their master more faithfully, cheerfully, dependably, and graciously; their masters would wonder why. It gave opportunity to testify about Christ to them. They would work the same if their master was present or absent with a sincere and undivided heart. Whether he was rewarded by his master or not, he knew that he would be rewarded by God at the Judgment Day.

Masters. They were told to treat slaves as they expected their slaves to treat them. They were to forbear threatening so that the relationship would not be worse, but better. Also remember that you have a master in heaven who is no respecter of persons. Just because you are a master will win you no special favor with God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To the Christian, submissiveness is not a galling thing but a necessity for the good of society, the church, and the individual. It is made easier and possible under even trying circumstances because it is being done *“as unto Christ!”* Authority is not a rule or ruin philosophy, a selfish getting of one's way; but an exercising of a responsibility for the good of society, the church, the home, and the individual. One that is mellowed by love, kindness, concern, and consideration.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Submission is only for the down-trodden people.
- ___ 2. It is not fair that the woman has to be in subjection to her husband.
- ___ 3. The woman can be saved and go to heaven just like the man.
- ___ 4. Sex is degrading to the human race.
- ___ 5. Godly love is a basic factor that tempers the husband's actions toward his wife.
- ___ 6. Eve being made from a rib in Adam's side tells a powerful story.
- ___ 7. Marriage is regulated by divine commandments.
- ___ 8. Obedience and honor are expected from children towards their parents.
- ___ 9. Mutual respect between slave and master is advocated in Scripture.
- ___ 10. One of the benefits of Authority is to get things done your way.

Lesson Twelve

“The Fighting Christian” **(Ephesians 6:10-24)**

To see and come in contact with Roman soldiers was not an unusual thing in the early days of the church. A part of Rome’s effectiveness in battle was their well-equipped soldiers. A person could quickly see the value of each thing that the soldier would wear or use. Paul, by inspiration of God, made use of these well-known facts to illustrate the Christian life. Carnal weapons and armor was for the protection of physical life. The Christian’s weapon and armor was for the protection of the soul. This contrast is emphasized in this section.

THE NEED OF STRENGTH TO FIGHT (6:10-13)

Christians need great strength for their spiritual battles they have to fight. They do not have sufficient strength within themselves, so they depend upon what the Lord provides to build up their strength so they can win the battle. It should be obvious to every Christian that we need to avail ourselves of God’s power and might if we hope to win our warfare. Divinely provided weapons and armor are made available, but we must seek them out, put them on, and use them. We have been provided all the protection and help that we need. But, we must put on ALL of what God provides; otherwise, the devil will destroy us with his treacherous trick. He has so many wiles, cunning arts, deceits, craft, and trickery with which to present sin as a virtue—even as a religious act. He provides us all kinds of excuses with which to use for our unfaithfulness—old age, youth, strong temptation, necessity to keep one’s job, or to provide for one’s family, etc. He even uses the one-sidedness of religion to pacify man’s conscience such as—to stress God’s mercy, while we neglect or ignore his holiness and judgment. He wants us to believe that the majority must be right and the few are the misfits. He makes us think we are strong enough to stand without God’s armor. He lulls us into believing we will be accepted because of our good deeds and offerings, not because of our relationship to God and Christ.

This armor for the Christian is needed because of the enemy we fight. We are not fighting human beings, but we wrestle with the enemy of our soul and with ourselves (inward struggles). We need to oppose those who do Satan’s work because Satan is behind their efforts. We are in a great struggle against wickedness in high places and spiritual beings. It is a struggle for the soul of man. We cannot be pacifists! We either capitulate to the enemy or we put on our armor and go to war! If we lose the battle, we can be lost for all eternity!

Our fight is against beings that have greater power than man. This is the reason why we need the resources that come from God. They presently rule over this sinful world that is in darkness due to sin and rebellion, as well as willing ignorance of God and His ways. We fight against beings that are invisible that are all about us every day. We need God’s strength in order to stand in the “evil day.” We must stand against the assaults of the evil one. We must stand with determination and steadfastness. We must stand and stay put on God’s side even in the heaviest

of the battle.....and be standing when the battle is over. We must be on constant alertness and readiness to fight, resist, and oppose the devil and protect ourselves and others.

DESCRIPTION OF GOD'S ARMOR (6:14-17)

Loins girt about with truth. The girdle or wide belt around the waist, that holds the armor in place, also makes it easy to move about. It served as protection and avoids hindrances. One of the great hindrances to the Christ is error, untruth, false doctrine, insincerity, or lack of conviction. These will eventually lead to eternal death. Our hearts must be sincere in serving God and we must have strong convictions of God's truth.

Breastplate of righteousness. This was a solid piece of metal or woven pieces of metal that protected the heart, lungs, and shoulders—the vital areas of the body. Without this, the person became an easy prey for arrows, spears, or sword. We have bullet-proof vests today to do the same thing. Righteousness is a right relationship with God and our fellow-man. It is right living. It is abstaining from vice, sin, disobedience and wickedness. It is one of our best protections against our enemy.

Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. This was low boots and metal plates over feet and knees. This was less protective, but was more for comfort and the ability to move and march. Footgear posed more of a problem in those days. George Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge had bleeding and shoeless feet that made them nearly helpless. We need purpose for fighting—and something worth dying for. The Gospel of Peace is our purpose for fighting. It causes us to carry the fight to the enemy in order to save souls. Peace is our object, even in fighting.

Shield of faith. Roman shields were 2½ x 4 feet high and could help to protect most of the body when needed in battle. Its primary purpose was to ward off arrows, spears, and other weapons of the enemy. If our faith, trust, and confidence in God weakens, we become an easy prey to the devil. Strong faith protects us from the fiery darts of doubt, despondency, discouragement, dread, disappointment, and even death. We can depart from God with an evil heart of unbelief. ***“Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.”*** This faith is kept strong by a constant study and meditation on the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Helmet of Salvation. This was to cover the head, face, and neck area—depending on what kind was used. It was also, as with other armor, used to beautify the soldier. Salvation is to be freed from the penalty of passed sins. But we are called upon to die to the way of sin in our future. We are greatly encouraged to make our salvation sure so that we will not have a fear or dread of death. It gives us a peace and calm in the midst of a world of fear and terror. It also protects us from the temptation of pleasures, seeking after riches, and being too concerned for this life.

Sword of the Spirit (Word of God). The sword is a defensive as well as an offensive weapon. The more skillful a man was with a sword, the better he could defend himself and defeat his enemy. The Word of God is our source of knowing God, knowing his promises, as well as insights on how to effectively fight the battles of life. Jesus used it effectively at His temptations.

The devil was defeated and left Him for a season. We need a thorough knowledge of the Word of God so we can be more skillful in its use to defend ourselves and to defeat the enemy.

The need of Prayer. We are admonished to pray always, constantly, at all times so that we can stay in contact with headquarters and with our commander-in-chief. We can receive help, strength, and courage to fight. A well-trained soldier must also have courage to fight well. In our prayers, we need to make supplications and requests for ourselves, our families, and for all of God's people. We are to watch with all perseverance—not go to sleep on the job. Even the Apostle Paul felt the need of prayer on his behalf that proper words would come at the time of his defense and as well when he preached to others. He desire to do so with boldness, conviction, urgency, but with kindness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS (6:21-24)

Tychicus would bring personal greetings and words of comfort to them for Paul. He desired that they would receive peace for their hearts and souls, love through their faith in God and Christ, and grace to all who love the Lord sincerely.

The Christian life is not an office to hold, but a life to live and responsibilities that must be shouldered. It is not a vacation on some peaceful quiet island resort, but a bloody, violent, horrible conflict with the powers of darkness. Satan's greatest weapon is to cry peace when there can be no peace while we are here. The command from our captain is to fight or die eternally!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Man cannot win the battle with Satan alone—he needs help.**
- 2. The Christian's armor is altogether for his protection only.**
- 3. When we oppose evil people, we are opposing Satan's powers at work.**
- 4. The Christian cannot make peace with the devil.**
- 5. The vital part of the Christian's spiritual body is his faith in God.**
- 6. Assurance of one's salvation is vital in being effective in the battle against evil.**
- 7. Doubt, discouragement, and disappointment can lead to an evil heart of unbelief.**
- 8. The Christian's sword with which he does battle is the Word of God.**
- 9. Pray without ceasing means more to us when we fully realize we are in a war unto the death.**
- 10. Our Captain's command is to fight or die eternally!**

