

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 3-23-14 PM NOTES
"AN INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS"
EPHESIANS 1-6
#1 in Series, "The Christian's Wealth, Walk, and Warfare"

"...beware of putting trust in anything save Christ, affirming that He only is sufficient, and that in Him we have all things, and beside Him need nothing."
—William Tyndale (1494-1536)

Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV) "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called."

"Walk" refers to the pattern of our life.

I. Introduction (1:1-3)

Acts 19:9b-10 (NKJV) "...reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

Acts 19:18-20 (NKJV) "¹⁸ And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹ Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed."

Apostle—One who is sent

Saint—One who has been set apart

A. The Source of the Blessing (1:3a)

John 3:16a (NKJV) "For God so loved the world that He gave..."

James 1:17 (NKJV) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

Romans 5:5b (NKJV) "...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

John 14:27a (NKJV) "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you..."

John 15:11 (NKJV) "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full."

B. The Scope of the Blessings (1:3b)

2 Peter 1:3a (NKJV) "as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness..."

C. The Sort of the Blessings (1:3c)

1 Timothy 6:8 (NKJV) "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV) "²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

D. The Sphere of the Blessings (1:3d)

The heavenlies is the realm of invisible reality.

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV) “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

II. Summary

A. The Christian's Wealth (1:1-3:21)

B. The Christian's Walk (4:1-6:9)

C. The Christian's Warfare (6:10-24)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 3-23-14 PM
“AN INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS”
EPHESIANS 1-6

#1 in Series, “The Christian’s Wealth, Walk, and Warfare”

Sometimes before taking a road trip, I like to get an atlas and see where we’re going and the towns we’ll go through. That is what we are going to do in this message. We are going to focus in on the first three verses of Ephesians that introduce the book, and then we will take a whirlwind tour of the truths we are going to delve into as we spend the better part of a year in this glorious book. What we will see is that the book of Ephesians gives us one of the clearest summaries of the Gospel we can find – the Gospel for non-believers and the Gospel for believers. This book tells us how God chose a people for Himself even before He created the world and how everything we are and everything we have can only be explained by His grace. The book of Ephesians can be divided into three distinct sections. We see in chapters 1-3 the **wealth** of the Christian. That wealth is summarized in **Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)** “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ”. William Tyndale (1494-1536) said of Ephesians (especially chapters 1-3), “...beware of putting trust in anything save Christ, affirming that He only is sufficient, and that in Him we have all things, and beside Him need nothing.” [William Tyndale, *The Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Galatians and Ephesians*, page 231]. The second section of Ephesians is chapter 4:1-6:9 which focuses on the **walk** of the Christian. In chapters 1-3 we are told to **do** almost nothing. We are told in chapter’s 1-3 who we are and the resources we have been given – our riches, our wealth in Christ Jesus. Notice how chapter 4 begins: **Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV)** “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk** worthy of the calling with which you were called”. The word “walk” in this context refers to the pattern of our life. There are many exhortations and commands relating to our walk as we live out daily the Christian life in the work place and in the family. The third major division in Ephesians in Ephesians 6:10-20. This section of the book deals with our **warfare** and we are given instructions as to how we daily enforce Christ’s victory over the devil and his demons. We are told that we are to stand against the enemy and recognize his work; we are to put on the armor that God has provided and pray with a warfare mindset.

In Christ, we have indescribable wealth that enables us to have a victorious walk, and as we face the enemy of our souls in real warfare, we see the victory that is in ours in the warfare against the enemy when we stand up, armor up, pray up and refuse to give up. I can’t wait! Try not to miss a single week and if you have to miss, get on line or pick up a CD and listen to the one you missed.

I. Introduction (1:1-3)

God chose the Apostle Paul to be the man He would use to give us these glorious Gospel truths that are so life changing and yet so practical. Paul probably spent more time in Ephesus than in any other location. We are told in Acts that he ministered there for over two years. It was of his time in Ephesus that Paul said in **Acts 19:9b-10 (NKJV)** ⁹“...reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” In this pagan city that rivaled Corinth in its evil sensuality and idol worship, Paul planted a strong church. As the convicting power of the Spirit came upon the new believers in Ephesus, we read of what they did in **Acts 19:18-20 (NKJV)** ¹⁸“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹ Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.” In today’s currency, that would be an estimated six million dollars! [Notes in ESV Study Bible]. My point is that the Christians at Ephesus had a great deal of respect for Paul who was God’s instrument to give them the content that we call the book of Ephesians. When Paul wrote this letter, he was a prisoner in Rome. We know that primarily because three times he refers to himself as a prisoner (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20) and the timeline fits what we know from Acts about his Roman imprisonment.

In Ephesians 1:1, Paul describes himself as an “apostle of Jesus Christ”. The word “apostle” has a very broad meaning and a very narrow meaning. The Greek word simply means “one who is sent” Several people are called apostles in a general sense – much like we use the word “missionary”. In Acts 14:14 Barnabas is called an apostle in this general sense and in Romans 16:7 it is implied that Andronicus and Junia were considered apostles in this general sense. When Paul refers to himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ”, he was using the word in a more formal sense. When this more specific formal sense of the word is used, it is talking about the men God uniquely chose to lay the foundation of the church, and to be the receivers, writers and teachers of His final revelation that we call the New Testament. To authenticate their authority before the canon of the New Testament was completed, God gave them the ability to do many signs and wonders.

The original recipients of the letter were the saints at Ephesus. Perhaps no word in the New Testament has suffered such a corruption in its meaning as the word “saint”. The Roman Catholic Church has turned it into a special category of “super Christians”. There are all kinds of hoops that have to be jumped through before a person can be acclaimed a saint. These special “saints” are given an unholy veneration and even prayed to. That is not what the word “saint” means in the Bible. The word simply means “one who has been set apart.” It is from the same root as “sanctified”. When Paul writes in verse 1 of the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, he is not talking about two groups of people. A true set apart for Christ person as a pattern of life is a person who is faithful in Christ Jesus.

The greeting in verse two was the common greeting in the New Testament church. “Grace” is God’s amazing kindness to those who are undeserving of that kindness. “Peace” is the sense of well being that is ours because we have experienced God’s grace. Peace is an absolute reliance upon the sovereignty of God and the goodness of God. This grace and peace can be ours only through God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are going to look with some depth into verse 3 and then begin our overview of the book. The Greek word for “blessed” is the word we get eulogy from. It means to commend and to celebrate with praises. Because only God is good, we save the eulogy, the supreme praise for Him alone. Let’s look a little more in depth at this commendation, this eulogy of God.

A. The Source of the Blessings (1:3a)

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Everything that is good and valuable has its source in God. Here, God is called, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Our blessing comes from God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. Our heavenly Father is a giver. **John 3:16 (NKJV)** “For God so loved the world that He gave...” Listen to two of the Hebrew names of God in the Old Testament: He is *El Shaddai*, the gracious giver; He is *Jehovah Jireh*, the God who provides. James tells us in **James 1:17 (NKJV)** that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...” God the Father is the source of every blessing, every good thing. There is no source of goodness other than Him! Notice the tense: “...who has blessed us...” I am afraid that many of us continue to ask God for what He has already given us. We ask Him to give us love when He says in **Romans 5:5b (NKJV)** “...the love of God **has been poured out** in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” We often pray for peace when Jesus said in **John 14:27a (NKJV)** “Peace I leave with you, **My peace I give to you...**” We pray for joy when Jesus said in **John 15:11 (NKJV)** “These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy may remain in you**, and *that* your joy may be full.” Perhaps a more biblical prayer would be to thank Him for what He has given us and ask, believing Him for His enabling grace to make what we already have real in our experience.

B. The Scope of the Blessings (1:3b)

Notice that it is “every spiritual blessing”. **2 Peter 1:3 (NKJV)** as His divine power has given to us **all things** that *pertain* to life and godliness...” **Colossians 2:10 (NKJV)** “and you are complete in Him...” The Christian life is discovering what we got when we were made new creations in Christ and then looking to His grace to enable us to act like who we are.

C. The Sort of the Blessings (1:3c)

“...every **spiritual** blessing...” There are some who say that “spiritual” means immaterial as opposed to material blessings. I don’t think that is what it means at all. “Spiritual” means that which comes by means of the Holy Spirit. It is material blessings and immaterial blessings. The material blessings are not referring to luxury and opulence. It means that the fact that we have food, clothing and shelter (the basics) is a blessing of God. **1 Timothy 6:8 (NKJV)** “And having food and clothing [the Greek word includes shelter from the elements], with these we shall be content.” The immaterial blessings are the greatest and most desired blessings. We are speaking of Christ’s love poured out in us, the peace of God, the joy that only the Holy Spirit can produce in us. Basically the immaterial blessings are summed up in the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)** “²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

D. The Sphere of the Blessings (V3d)

“...in the heavenly *places*...” Notice that the word *places* is in italics. That means that it has been added by the translators. This verse literally says that all of these blessings are in the “heavenlies”. What is meant by “the heavenlies”? The heavenlies include the entire supernatural unseen with physical eyes realm of God; they are the totality of the realms in which God works. I think that the best **definition of “the heavenlies” is that it is the realm of invisible reality**. Those in Christ have knowledge of things that cannot be seen with physical eyes. The whole realm of spiritual warfare is in the heavenlies. **Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)** “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places* [literally “the heavenlies].” Those who are not in Christ cannot comprehend this concept of “the heavenlies”. **1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)** “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” The realm of the heavenlies is real. An illustration that I have used before would be binging someone back from the 1700’s to today and to try to explain to them radio waves, television, the internet, and satellite signals. I can imagine them saying, “Yeah... sure”. That’s not the best illustration, but Christians know that there is a realm that is invisible to the human eye but is nevertheless real. That is where our from the Spirit blessings come from.

We also see that these spiritual blessings are “in Christ”. I think that in the context, Paul is saying that these spiritual blessings are given to those in Christ. That little 2 word phrase (“in Christ”) is so very important. We will spend a lot more time on it in weeks to come, but when we repent of sin and place our trust, our reliance, our faith in Christ alone we are baptized into Christ and identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. We are a part of the body of Christ and with all others who are in Christ, we make up the church that is called “The body of Christ”. We are no longer in Adam, but we are in Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV)** “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” The old us in Adam is crucified with Christ and we now are partakers of Christ’s eternal life and this is the reason that we have access to all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. If that is fuzzy as feathers, stick around and listen to this whole study and it will be made clear by the Holy Spirit because we will go over it time and time again.

II. Summary

A. The Christian’s Wealth (1:1-3:21)

When we miss the truths of this portion of the book of Ephesians and jump right in to the Christian’s walk, we will end up with frustration, failure, and misery. We cannot walk as we are commanded to walk until we understand who we are in Christ and what we have by way of resources to walk the walk we are told to walk. Take a deep breath and allow me to give you a whirlwind tour of the Christian’s wealth that is ours **in Christ**. I am going to do this with a series of statements followed by reading the verse that the statement is drawn from.

* We are chosen by God in Christ before the earth was created. **Ephesians 1:4 (NKJV)** “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...”

- * We have been predestined to be adopted into God’s forever family in Christ. **Ephesians 1:5 (NKJV)** “having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...”
- * We are accepted by God because we are in Christ, God beloved Son. **Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV)** “to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”
- * We are redeemed from slavery to sin in Christ. **Ephesians 1:7a (NKJV)** “In Him we have redemption through His blood...”
- * We have our sins sent away never to return because we are in Christ. **Ephesians 1:7b (NKJV)** In Him... we have ... the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”
- * In Christ, we have been let in on God’s will. **Ephesians 1:9 (NKJV)** “having made known to us the mystery of His will...”
- * In Christ, we have a glorious inheritance. **Ephesians 1:11 (NKJV)** “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance...”
- * In Christ we are sealed by the Holy Spirit which guarantees the security of our salvation. **Ephesians 1:13 (NKJV)** “...in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”.
- * In Christ, we who were spiritually dead have now been made alive. **Ephesians 2:1 (NKJV)** “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins”.
- * In Christ, we are raised up to sit with Him in the heavenlies. **Ephesians 2:6 (NKJV)** “and raised *us up* together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus”.
- * In Christ we have assurance that we are saved. **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)** “⁸ For by grace **you have been saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
- * In Christ, we have good works to perform that He has prepared for us. **Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” No one is saved by good works, but good works characterize everyone who has been saved by grace through faith.
- * In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are brought together in one body. **Ephesians 2:16 (NKJV)** “and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross...”
- * In Christ, we are a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 2:22 (NKJV)** “in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”
- * In Christ, we have boldness and access to God. **Ephesians 3:12 (NKJV)** “in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”
- * In Christ we experience the amazing power of God. **Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)** “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”.

That is a sampling of the wealth that we have in Christ. It is only when we comprehend and reckon on our identity in Christ that we can walk in obedience to Christ.

B. The Christian’s Walk (4:1-6:9)

When we are living out of the wealth we have in Christ, we are able to walk as we read in **Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV)** “worthy of the calling with which you were called”. Follow as we see a few of the descriptions of our walk in Christ.

- * We walk in unity. **Ephesians 4:3 (NKJV)** “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
- * We walk in a different way than the unsaved. **Ephesians 4:17 (NKJV)** “...you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind”.
- * We walk like a new person. **Ephesians 4:24 (NKJV)** “and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”
- * We walk in a way that does not grieve the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 4:30 (NKJV)** “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
- * We walk in love. **Ephesians 5:2 (NKJV)** “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

- * We walk in light. **Ephesians 5:8 (NKJV)** “For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light”.
 - * We walk circumspectly. **Ephesians 5:15 (NKJV)** “See then that you walk circumspectly [carefully], not as fools but as wise”.
 - * We walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 5:18 (NKJV)** “...be filled with the Spirit”.
 - * Wives walk in submission to their husbands. **Ephesians 5:22 (NKJV)** “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”
 - * Husbands walk in sacrificial love toward their wives. **Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)** “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”.
 - * Children walk in obedience to their parents. **Ephesians 6:1 (NKJV)** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”.
- C. The Christian’s Warfare (6:10-6:24)
- * The warfare is against Satan and his demons. **Ephesians 6:11-12 (NKJV)** ¹¹ “...the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”
 - * The warfare is entered with full armor. **Ephesians 6:11 (NKJV)** “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
 - * The warfare is primarily carried on through prayer. **Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV)** “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”.

CONCLUSION

That is a really fast and somewhat sketchy overview of the glorious book of Ephesians. I hope you look forward with great anticipation to an in depth study of these things and more. I personally desire and I long for you to recognize and appropriate by faith the wealth that is ours in Christ. I don’t want to live like a pauper when I am wealthy in all spiritual blessings. I long to appropriate my wealth in Christ to enable me to walk in an obedient and God glorifying way and can soar in victory over the enemy of our souls in the battle that will be ours until Christ returns or God takes us home.