

A  
Doctrinal  
and  
Devotional  
Commentary  
on the book of  
Ephesians

by  
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# Info page

A Doctrinal and Devotional Commentary on the book of Ephesians.  
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## **General Introduction of the Epistle to the Ephesians**

### **AUTHORSHIP**

This seems to be self-evident for in the first verse the apostle Paul declares himself to be the author of this epistle. The early church Fathers such as: Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hermas and Polycarp believed that Paul was the author. There is much autobiographic information within this epistle that underlines that Paul wrote the Book of Ephesians:

- 1:1, he claims to be the author
- 3:2-6, he writes about his stewardship
- 3:7-13, he writes about his apostleship
- 3:1; 4:1; 6:20, he writes about his imprisonment
- 6:21,22, he asks for personal prayers

### **DATE AND PLACE**

Paul was in Ephesus for a period of three years (Acts 19:1 - 20:1) from about 52 to 55 AD. He later visited the church leaders (Acts 17:20-38) on his way to Jerusalem. He was arrested first in Caesarea about 57-59 AD, then a second time in Rome under house arrest (Acts 28:16-31) around 60-62 AD. It seems that he died no later than 63-65 AD. Paul wrote this epistle from prison (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20) BUT from which prison - Caesarea or Rome? No one is certain. Most believe it was written from Rome between 62-63 AD.

### **THE RECIPIENTS**

This letter was written to the Ephesians believers and it seemed to be meant as a 'circular letter' to be read by the churches western Asia Minor. It was a custom that letters would be read, copied and sent to other churches for their benefit. Ephesus was founded around 1100 BC and was under the rule of the Persians, Greeks, Macedonians and finally Rome in 69 BC and for the next 200 years. It was known for its temple of Artemis (Diana in Latin) which was made of marble. The dimensions were 220 x 425 and it was 60 feet high. It is considered one of the seven ancient wonders of the world and was the biggest temple in Greece! Ephesus was the chief city for necromancy and exorcism. Several other gods and goddesses were also worshipped in Ephesus such as: Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena, Dionysus, Heracles, Pan, Zeus and many, many more. In its hillside there was a huge theatre that could seat up to 24,000 people!

There was also a Jewish synagogue in Ephesus (Acts 19:8) manifesting that there was a Jewish population in this town. Ephesus was the center of the Emperor cult who came to have three temples in this city! It is believed that the population of Ephesus was about 250,000 making it the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. It was also a very important port and ships from all over the known world came to do commerce.

## PURPOSE AND THEME

Because this city had such a variety of people, religions and philosophies, Paul needed to settle some theological issues. The Christians also needed to be encouraged to live a life worthy of their calling. Ephesus was known for their libertarian life-style, idolatry and various philosophies of life. Here are the themes that Paul writes about:

- The immensity of God
- The Exalted Christ
- Salvation of the soul
- The position of the believers "in Christ"
- The Unity between Jew and Gentile
- The war between Christians and Satanic Powers
- The moral Obligations of the Disciple of Christ
- The Church in general

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the four letters that Paul wrote when he was in prison. The others were Colossians, Philemon and Philippians. Ephesians was John Calvin's favorite book in the Bible.

**Ephesians**  
**02 – Predestined in Christ**  
**1:1-6**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**<sup>3</sup> Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, *that* we should be holy and blameless before him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of his grace that he bestowed on us in the beloved**  
**(LEB)**

In verses 1 and 2 we find the introduction or the greeting of his letter.

**<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus:**

Here we see that Paul is the author of this letter. Paul had established the church in Ephesus and lived there for a period of three years. While teaching, encouraging and admonishing the believers in Christ. His authorship has never been disputed by the Church Fathers. He declares himself to be '*an apostle*', which means someone that is sent in Greek. We understand that he was sent by the Lord himself as we can see in the Book of Acts:

**Acts 9**

**15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

**16 "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."  
(NKJV)**

We also see his Christian status, who he was in the church. Paul was an apostle, a missionary, a teacher, an evangelist and a writer. He was also well known by the other apostles (Acts 9:27; 12:25; 15:2; 16:4; 21:17). Paul was '*an apostle of Christ Jesus*'. Here we are told who he was a messenger of - Jesus Christ. Paul was not an apostle of the church, or a religious movement but of Christ. He preached Jesus and the grace that is found in him. All true believers are called to be the witnesses and heralds of the Good News (Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). Have you been busy at proclaiming the salvation that is found only in Jesus?

*'By the will of God'*, this is a very important phrase, because the will of God is expressed in the life of Paul. The word *'will'* (THELEMA) means: determination, choice, decree, volition. This was the will of God for the life of Paul. He had been a persecutor of the church (Acts 9:13,14) but the Lord God intervened in his life and changed his very being. He became a protector and defender of the Christian faith - the very one he had hated to his utmost! The will of God, for all his children is that they become more Christ-like. Are you also ready to accept what the Lord has for your life? Are you willing, like Paul, to make a complete turn and follow Christ wherever he may lead you? This foundation (that God has his will for your life) **MUST BE ACCEPTED** by the Disciples of Christ! We don't know how and why his will is exercised in our life but we must humbly and simply accept it.

**(v.1) ...to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus:**

This letter was destined to be read by those who belong to the family of God, to those who have been adopted by the Lord God (Rom. 8:15,23; Gal. 4:5). The word *'saints'* (HAGIOS) means: sacred, pure, blameless. That is what they have become in the sight of God. This grace is immeasurable! These born-again believers are called *'faithful'* (PISTOS) meaning: truthful, faithful, sure. They are not playing 'church' or 'make believe' Christians. They are true at heart and very attached to their Savior.

**<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*'Grace to you and peace'* – this is what is given to the children of God. First of all *'grace'* because God actually did not have to give us anything. When God was going to destroy the world because of its wickedness, Noah and his family were saved for the following reason:

**Genesis 6**

**8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.  
(NKJV)**

It is also by grace, that God brings salvation to the believer. God intervened in the history of mankind by keeping the promise he made in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15) and sending forth the Messiah who conquered the evil one.

**Acts 15**

**11 "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."  
(NKJV)**

Grace is ever present in the believer's life. Even our spiritual gifts are given by grace. God equips his children with different spiritual qualities and capacities, so that they are able to produce fruits that will glorify him and build up the Body of Christ.

### **Romans 12**

**6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;  
(NKJV)**

Believers are given grace, for it is also by grace that they are brought into the kingdom of light. Salvation is by grace and grace alone (Eph. 2:8-10). From his spiritual birth to his last breath - the grace of the Lord God is upon his child. If you are a true believer, then happily acknowledge the great gift of grace in your life. Honor the Lord with your very being and glorify him in all things.

The second blessing is '*peace*'. It was God who initiated the reestablishment of peace with his fallen creatures. Mankind is absolutely unable to make peace with God. His very nature pushes him to be rebellious, disobedient and defiant. Each and every single human being is at war with God and they have become his enemies (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21). Because of his grace, God is willing to make peace with all who repent and receive Christ as their Savior.

### **Romans 5**

**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.  
(NKJV)**

What more could a person ask for? We have perfect grace and peace from the very hand of the Lord Almighty. The war is over, our protector has won the battle. The enemy has been defeated and made a spectacle of.

## Colossians 2

**13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,**

**14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.**

**15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.**

(NKJV)

In verse two Paul tells the brethren where this grace and peace comes from.

**(v.2) ...from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**They come** from God our Father **and** from Jesus Christ our Lord. Please notice that God is called '*our Father*' (PATER) meaning: a father or parent. Since the Lord God considers believers in Christ as his children may they, in turn, consider God to be their heavenly father. It would be insulting to refuse to actually believe that to be true. Imagine a child renouncing his good parents and how heart-breaking that must be for them. Imagine the Father giving his only begotten Son and placing his wrath upon him to save you from his judgment and later that beloved child refuses to believe that God has actually become his father! That too must be heart-breaking for God! Grace and peace is never found outside of our heavenly father and our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. Do not be fooled, many have tried and have fallen flat on their face! Because of grace and peace, the apostle Paul rejoices deeply and tells us why we should also rejoice.

**<sup>3</sup> Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ**

Some use this verse to prove that Jesus is not deity because the Father is his God (*God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ*). Therefore they reasoned that he can not be God since there is but one God. These people forget that the Scriptures are speaking of Jesus incarnate. When Emmanuel (God with us) took on flesh and was born of Mary this child, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) as he is also called, was perfectly man and AS A MAN God the Father was his God and he depended on Him in every aspect of his life. Never believe that Jesus was just a man for he was 'God in the flesh'.

### 1 Timothy 3

**16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.  
(NKJV)**

We should rejoice because of what the Father and the Son have done for us and we also should be certain to honor and bless them. All of our being should aim at blessing our Lord God. Paul teaches us what God has done for the believer:

**(v.3) ... who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**

Please notice that believers have been blessed '*with every spiritual blessing*'. The blessing is not partial but total! There are no blessings that have been left out, no blessing that is lost or forgotten. The Father's blessings are upon all of his children! Here we also see that the source of our blessings is not earthly but heavenly - '*in the heavenly places*'. The word '*heavenly places*' (EPOURANIOS) means: above the sky, celestial. This means that true blessings are the ones that come from above and shower God's children. Pure, true and lasting blessings are from God, who is in the heavenly places. Believers must not mistake earthly wealth and possessions as automatically being from God. For true blessings are the spiritual ones and earthly sufferings have no weight compared to the inheritance waiting for God's children (Rom. 8:17,18).

Paul also teaches us that these blessings are '*in Christ*' – whatever they may be! Now Paul will speak of these spiritual blessings that are from above and reside 'in Christ'. Remember that I said in v.1 that Paul speaks of the '*will of God*' being often not understood and must simply be accepted. Well, the three spiritual blessings we are about to see come under that category. The first spiritual blessing found in verse four:

**<sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love,**

Paul teaches us that God chose certain people to receive a very special privilege. The word '*chose*' (EKLEGOMAI) means: to select, make a choice, choose. Many Christians get offended as soon as we speak of 'God choosing some people' and not others. Actually God does this all the time!

- He has chosen Enoch and just took him to heaven (Gen. 5:24)
- He chose Noah and his family to save them from the flood (Gen.6)
- He chose Abram (Gen.12) to be the spiritual head of a great multitude
- He chose Israel out of all the families of the earth to become his people
- He chose David apart from his seven other brothers to become king
- He chose the city of Jerusalem to have his temple reside in
- He chose Mary to bear his son
- Jesus chose his twelve disciples
- God chose Paul to be the apostle to the gentiles

I could go on and on but for some it is offensive that God would choose for himself people to be with him for all times and to receive his favors, while he lets others continue on their natural paths. I am not offended. I do not understand the how's and why's but I'm just grateful to have received salvation! We need to come to peace with this, never forgetting the following:

#### **Isaiah 55**

**8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.**

**9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

**(NKJV)**

This choosing is *'in him'* or in Jesus Christ if you prefer. This means that the possibility of being chosen, is based on the works of Jesus Christ in our favor. If it were not for Christ then none of us could ever have been chosen since we are all sinners and enemies of God. That is why true believers should always be grateful to Christ for his substitution for us on the cross. Christ died in our stead (Rom. 5:8; 1 Thes. 5:10). Now when did this choosing happen?

**<sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...**

Here we see that people were chosen or elected if you prefer BEFORE the foundation of the universe! The word *'before'* (PRO) means: in front of, above, before. So as a true believer, I was chosen before:

- I was born
- I could do any actions or works
- I ever knew God

This proves that what I did in life, did not help in any way in God choosing me – as Paul writes in Romans:

**Romans 9**

**10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac**

*11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),*

**12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."**

**13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."**

**14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!**

*15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."*

**16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.**

(NKJV) (emphasis added)

What does this choosing procure to the blessed believer?

**(v.4) *...that we should be holy and blameless before him in love,***

The first blessing is divided in two. First, is that they have become '*holy*' (HAGIOS) meaning: sacred, pure blameless. This means that believers have become a separate people for God, as Peter teaches us (1 Peter 2:9,10). They are declared holy by the Lord God, because they have been purified of all their sins (Heb. 8:12; 10:17). Second, they have become '*blameless before him*'. This means that they (and today's believers) no longer can be blamed for anything! The word '*blameless*' (AMOMOS) means: unblemished, without blame.

The second spiritual blessing is:

**<sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will**

Notice that it was God's LOVE (v.4) that causes him to shower his children with such great blessings.

*'having predestined us'* – God manifests his love in his predestination of the elected ones. The word '*predestined*' (PROORIZO) means: to limit in advance, to predetermine.

Predestination gives the idea of having a unique plan for those he has chosen, a plan that is different than with all the others. Here we see that God has a perfect and wonderful plan for the lives of each and every one of his chosen people. His predestined plan for the elect is *'adoption through Jesus Christ'*. The word *'adoption'* (HUIOTHESIA) meaning: the placing as a son, adoption. God's special plan is to make us become part of his family. He 'adopts' people to make them his own. The true believers have become his sons and daughters and he has become their Father. Because of this, they now receive the benefits of having God as their Father, and even greater benefits will come when we are in his kingdom. Notice that this is possible only *'through Jesus Christ'* and ONLY through Jesus Christ. A church, a denomination, a religious organization, a person, a ritual and nothing else for that matter can ever grant you to become a child of God (John 1:12,13). All of this (the predestination and election as sons and daughters) is done:

**(5) ... according to the good pleasure of his will**

The idea of *'good pleasure'* (EUDOKIA) means: delight, kindness, desire. In other words this means that:

- It pleased God to do this
- He was not forced to do so
- It was his will, his desire to make his plan come forth

So God's plan for us is filled with God's pleasure and will. Since his will is perfect, then his plan for us is also perfect – we can't ask for more. This should come to mind when we believe that things should not go the way that they are. Believers often think that circumstances should always go the way they desire them to go. In other words, we believe that we are smarter and wiser than the Lord God. What a tragic mistake this is. What comfort it is to know and accept that the will for God's children is perfect like this verse reminds us:

**Romans 8**

**28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

**(NKJV)**

Now all of this: the election, predestination and adoption is for one thing.

**<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of his grace that he bestowed on us in the beloved**

It is for us to understand, that what has been given to us through Jesus Christ, is for the '*praise of the glory of his grace*' – not for our own praise or even benefit! True believers live to give glory and praise unto his grace that he has given in the beloved Son. This gives meaning to our life! May all children of God live in remembrance of what God the Father has done for them through Jesus Christ.

**03 – Our redemption in Christ  
Ephesians 1:7-10**

**<sup>7</sup> in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> that he caused to abound to us in all wisdom and insight, <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in him, <sup>10</sup> for the administration of the fullness of times, to bring together all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in him  
(LEB)**

After speaking of God's:

- Electing (the choosing of a people who will belong to Him)
- Predestination (that is the arranging of events in the lives of the elect to bring them to the cross)
- And the adoption (the making of the elect his own children)

Paul will now continue with how all of this was made possible by the redemption which is found in Jesus Christ. Let's look at what the word redemption means. In the Greek, the words AGORADZO and EXAGORADZO are used for our word 'redemption'. The root meaning for these words is: to buy or purchase. Another word often used is LOUTROUMAI which means: a ransom. These word-pictures gives us the main portrait of what our English word REDEMPTION means.

Jesus purchased us by giving himself as a ransom for us! The Biblical idea of redemption involves a **deliverer** and what he does to **bring deliverance**. As the Bible clearly teaches, Jesus Christ is the **deliverer** and his sacrifice on the cross was the means to bring **deliverance**. True believers in Christ Jesus and his perfect sacrifice have been redeemed from the bondage of sin, set free and no longer are facing judgment.

**John 3**

**36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."  
(NKJV)**

This is redemption in a nutshell! So, let's come back to our text.  
Paul writes:

**<sup>7</sup> in whom we have redemption**

Redemption is found ONLY in him (Jesus Christ) and Paul will explain who this person is.

**Acts 4:12**

**"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."  
(NKJV)**

Now in verses 3 to 6 we have seen that it is Jesus Christ who has brought us:

- Election
- Predestination
- And adoption

Paul continues to write about what Jesus has done for the redeemed. Paul speaks of there being only ONE Redeemer – there is no other! This is the main difference between true Christianity and all the other major religions of the world. Religions point to what man must do to be ‘redeemed’ (good works, offerings, rules, etc.), while the Good News tells us of what Christ has done in our place, what he has done for the believer. Paul reminds the Ephesians that redemption is:

**(v.7) ...through his blood**

Redemption was through his blood – a reference to the sacrifice on the cross where his blood was shed. It always has been through the blood of the sacrifice that brought forgiveness.

**Heb. 9**

- 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."  
21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.  
22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.  
23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.  
24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;**

**25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another--**

**26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

**27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, (NKJV)**

When Adam & Eve sinned – God covered their nude bodies with animal skins. This was the first-time blood was shed to ‘cover the sinful person’. Later when Cain and Able brought sacrifices to God, only Abel’s was accepted – it was a lamb from his flock that was slain. Throughout the Bible, it is the blood of an innocent victim that brings forgiveness of sins.

This is what is written in the book of Hebrews:

#### **Hebrews 10**

**11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**

**12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,**

**13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.**

**14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. (NKJV)**

It is the blood of Christ that cleanses us – takes away our sins.

**<sup>7</sup> in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,**

Redemption is the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12,10:17). This forgiveness has a cost – not for the redeemed but for the Redeemer. When we say that salvation is a gift of God (John 3:16) it is the truth, but like all other gifts (even the ones we offer), a price is paid by the giver. Forgiveness is given only because a price was paid to allow this forgiveness to be offered. This gift of forgiveness is the ABSOLUTE gift anyone can ever receive – let us never forget this! May each true believer manifest his attachment, love and gratitude towards God Almighty who made all this possible.

**(v.7) ... according to the riches of his grace,**

Paul tells us where this forgiveness comes from. It originates from God's grace. The word 'grace' (CHARIS) means: graciousness, favor, gift. This redemption is offered as a gift NOT as something that is due (Rom. 11:6). The grace of God poured out through his desire to bring salvation by the cross of Christ, his only begotten son. This grace is 'according' (KATA) meaning: about, as to. It is according to his 'riches'. God is filled with grace and he pours his grace upon his children. He does not sprinkle them with grace but literally floods them as when someone jumps into the sea! God is rich in grace and it exceeds all our needs for forgiveness. Paul writes the following about God's grace:

**<sup>8</sup> that he caused to abound to us in all wisdom and insight,**

It is the word abound which describes how his grace is given towards us. 'Abound' (PERISSEUO) means to: super-abound in quality or quantity, to be in excess, over and above. That is how God provides his grace for us. It is excessively above all that his children will ever need. We can never run out of God's grace – Amen! May we rejoice in his riches given unto us. Now all this grace giving is done:

**(v.8) ... in all wisdom and insight**

We can see that the redemption that God gave us through Jesus Christ was not done in a frivolous manner. Redemption was conceived by God's wisdom and insight. It was done in 'wisdom' (SOPHIA) meaning: worldly or spiritual wisdom. Here Paul speaks of God's wisdom which is above any human understanding. It was also given with 'insight' (PRONESIS) meaning: a mental action or activity. God thought deeply in his concept of what salvation is. It was a process that was deeply, deeply thought of by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit since all three took part in the redemptive process. When we challenge the redemption of God, whether who receives it or how it is received – we challenge God's wisdom and understanding.

Paul continues with the following phrase:

**<sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in him,**

In verse one, Paul speaks of the 'will of God' and we said that we cannot fully understand and appreciate his will. Job had a serious encounter with the Lord. In chapters 38-42 God asks Job a series of questions just to manifest to him, that it was foolish to believe that one can completely understand God or challenge his ways. At one-point God said this to Job. Please notice his reply to the Lord:

**Job 40**

**1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:**

**2 "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it."**

**3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:**

**4 "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth.**

**5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further." (NKJV)**

Like Job, believers must simply accept God's will knowing that he is perfect in all things. Paul says that his will is a '*mystery*' – so no wonder we do not understand all the ways of the Lord God! He also says that God has made known part of this mystery. I say part, simply because we will never ever fully know God!

**(v.9) ... according to his good pleasure that he purposed in him,**

It is by his good pleasure that he made known to us the mystery of his will. We see that it is only because God wanted us to know certain things that he makes us able to know them! There is not a single human being who can understand anything of God UNLESS God reveals himself to him.

**John 17:25,26**

**(25)"O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.**

**(26)"And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."**

**(NKJV)**

**1 Corinthians 2:11**

**For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.**

**(NKJV)**

If it pleases God - he will make things known to you. If not, you will never understand. It is the Lord God's privilege to do so and it is uncontestable!

**(9) And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,**

We now see that the mystery of his will is **purposed** in Christ. Christ is the living mystery of the Father, he is the unfolding mystery of the Father's will. His purpose for us is Christ and that is why it is through Christ that we receive all our blessings. If you set Christ out of your life, if you put him in a closet and take him out only on Sundays – then you are losing the true purpose of your life.

**(10) to be put in effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven, and on earth together under one head, even Christ.**

What we see here is that there is a time for everything in the plan of God. When time came – Christ arrived! It's as simple as that. We cannot rush God's time-table, we cannot change God's schedule! God is never early or late – he is always on time – his time! If our watches would be set on his time our lives would be in harmony with his. What is God's final time-line aim?

**(10) ...to bring all things in heaven, and on earth together**

The aim of the fulfillment of times is to repair what has been broken, to restore what has been shattered by sin. The aim is for all things, once more, to be UNITED together, in heaven and on earth, all things to be ONE, in perfect harmony.

**(10) ...under one head, even Christ.**

All things together is the aim – all under one rule, one government and one king. Jesus Christ, because at the cross he has redeemed (purchased and ransomed) us and will be the ONE HEAD over all things united in him. Jesus will one day come back to rule over his creation.

#### **Revelation 19:15**

**(15) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

**(16) And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (NKJV)**

Ephesians  
04 - Our inheritance in Christ  
1:11-14

**<sup>11</sup> in whom also we were chosen, having been predestined according to the purpose of the One who works all *things* according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> *that* we who hoped beforehand in Christ should be for the praise of his glory, <sup>13</sup> in whom also you, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also when you believed you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.**  
**(LEB)**

Once again, the apostle Paul will speak about what we receive “in Him” – in Jesus Christ.

**<sup>11</sup> in whom also we were chosen...**

All that we receive, all that we are, all that we can do, all that we will be, is ALWAYS because of Jesus Christ. Only fools believe that what they have become or what they possess is the fruit of their own doing.

**Luke 12**

**19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'"**

**20 "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'**

**(NKJV)**

As Paul will later argue: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions.” (2:1), we were all dead, spiritually dead, but because of Jesus those who would repent unto salvation, have become alive in Him! The word “Chosen” in v.11 is not the same Greek word “Chosen” used in v. 4 ‘we were *chosen*’. In verse 4 the word chose (EKLEGOMAI) means to make a choice, to choose. In v.11 the word chose (KLEROO) means: to a lot, to assign, to obtain an inheritance. In this case the *English Standard Version, The New King James Version and the New American Standard Bible* have a more precise rendering of the Greek Text.

A good Bible translation is essential because if it is not as precise as it can be, it will give you a different teaching and sometimes a wrong teaching! Just for the pleasure of understanding what I mean, let’s look at different Bible versions of the same Greek phrase.

**GREEK WORD FOR WORD:**

“In whom also we were made an inheritance”

**KING JAMES VERSION**

- “In whom we have also obtained an inheritance”

**NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION**

- “In Him we were also chosen”

**NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION**

- “also we have obtained an inheritance”

**NEW BERKELEY VERSION**

- “In him, we too were made his heritage”

**THE LIVING BIBLE**

- “We have become gifts to God”

**THE AMPLIFIED BIBLE**

- “In Him we also were made God’s heritage”

**ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION**

- “In Him we have obtained an inheritance”

**LEXHAM ENGLISH BIBLE**

- “in whom also we were chosen”

So, the closest version to the Greek text seems to be either the New Berkeley Version or (surprisingly) the Amplified Bible.

**The worst would seem to be the Living Bible and the New International Version.**

A Bible should not be read, because it is easier for us to read, but for it’s accuracy. Believers not only have received an inheritance (Col. 1:12; 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4) but actually have become an inheritance! Since believers are the Father’s gift to the Son in some way, yes difficult to understand, they have become Christ’s inheritance (John 6:39; 17:6,9,11,24)!

**(v.11) ... having been predestined according to the purpose**

God has a purpose, a plan and in his plan, there is an inheritance to be given unto his children. The believer's destination or '*predestination*' (PROORIZO) meaning: to limit in advance, predetermine, is already accounted for. No need to worry or fret for the final destination (heaven) is set in stone and is immovable! We have seen that his plan is mysterious, unknown and not really understandable unless it is personally revealed by God to his adopted child. But what we do know is that this plan carries an inheritance.

**(v.11) ...of the One who works all *things* according to the counsel of his will,**

We see that it is God who does the work (ENERGEO) meaning: to be active, efficient. What we see is that the Lord God was not passive and just letting time pass by to see what will happen. He was *active*, as Paul writes in '*all things*'. The idea behind the words '*all things*' (PAS) means: all, any, every, giving us to understand that God worked and is working in everything that is in the universe! Paul reminds believers of this truth:

### **Romans 8**

**28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

**29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

**30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

**31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?  
(NKJV)**

God actually does all things for us for we have seen that God does the work of:

- Electing
- Predestinating
- Adopting
- Planning
- and now working out everything

Imagine, God works out everything. That is pretty strong! Does God only work out the pleasant things, the easy things, the surprising things, the healthy things, the wealthy things, the good things in my life? – No, he works out EVERYTHING, which includes all the other things that happen to his child! That is part of the mystery which Paul speaks about. There are things that we just don't understand and we question.

Why God would allow such a thing to happen. As a disciple of Christ, I am called to trust, God not to question God's plan.

**(v.11) ...according to the counsel of his will,**

Everything is conformed to his plan – so his plan never fails. He will execute it perfectly. His plan is aligned with the '*counsel of his will*'. The word '*counsel*' (BOULE) means: volition, purpose, counsel, will. Nothing out of his will ever comes to being. We know that there are two sides of God's will. There is the *permissive* will – God allows things to happen. There is also his *absolute* will – what God determines will happen. Here we see that all his plans for his child is done according to the counsel of his will. If his purpose for you is to be able to learn how to trust him more, then he may place you in a position that will force you to trust him more! – and so forth. That is why it is so much better for us to be humble in our walk with the Lord. Paul will now explain why his plan of inheritance exists in us.

**<sup>12</sup> *that we who hoped beforehand in Christ should be for the praise of his glory***

All of his plan, to become an inheritance, is only for those who "*hoped beforehand in Christ*". The Greek word for our '*hoped beforehand*' (PROELPIZO) means: to hope in advance, to trust first. It is for those who place their trust in Christ for salvation even before they receive any proof of it, like the writer of Hebrews writes:

### **Hebrews 11**

**1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.  
(NKJV)**

Its as though God's attention, God's focus, God's vision is upon those who hope in his Son (have true faith) and for no one else. The redeemed have become a very unique people – God's children!

1 Peter says that they have become a: chosen people (1:2), a holy people (1:16), a spiritual house (2:5), a holy priesthood (2:5), a Royal priesthood (2:9), a people belonging to God (2:9). The attention of God is upon all who are born-again, not because of personal worth but because of what they have become "in Jesus Christ". Believers are made an inheritance:

**(v.12) ...for the praise of his glory**

God made believers (in Christ Jesus) for the praise of his glory! We are now new creatures that bring him praise and glory! For me this is another mystery – how can I bring praise and glory to the Lord God! I am so wretched. Paul confessed, that he also was such a man:

### **Romans 7**

**22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.**

**23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

**24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**

**25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.**

**(NKJV)**

In verse thirteen, Paul explains the steps taken that brought us to become an inheritance.

**<sup>13</sup> in whom also you, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also when you believed you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,**

The first is ‘*when you heard*’ – it all begins when someone brings you the good news. Without this first step one cannot be saved. This goes to show how important it is to talk about Jesus to those around us. Remember what Paul wrote about carrying the ‘Good News’ to others:

### **Romans 10**

**15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"**

**(NKJV)**

In verse thirteen, the word of God is called ‘*the gospel of your salvation*’. What a beautiful phrase “the gospel of your salvation”! There is no other gospel, no other ‘good news’ apart from the gospel of Christ. Do you remember what Paul wrote to the Galatians in reference to the turning away from the gospel they had been taught?

### **Galatians 1**

**6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,**

**7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.**

**8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.**

**9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**

**(NKJV)**

The first step was the hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the second step was the following:

**(v.13) ...in whom also when you believed**

Hearing the gospel does not save us, reading the gospel does not save us, protecting the gospel does not save us, even dying for the gospel does not save us, – **only believing the gospel** saves us.

The word '*believed*' (PISTEUO) means: to have faith, to believe, to trust. We hear and then believe and after that God once more does an incredible work in us.

**(v.13) ...believed you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,**

We are now introduced to the third person of the trinity – the Holy Spirit. Once we believe – the Holy Spirit takes over. The Father planned, the Son executed the plan and now the Holy Spirit completes the plan. Believers are '*sealed*' (SPHRAGIZO) meaning: to stamp for security or preservation. Believers are '*sealed*', they are given a mark - the Holy Spirit. It is a mark of ownership that God places on or in his children. Our human eyes can not see the Holy Spirit in a person but I believe that somehow, in the 'spiritual world' this seal of the Holy Spirit can be seen by angels and fallen angels. If this was not so, how then could Satan specifically attack certain people to disrupt the expansion of God's kingdom on earth! We all know that the enemy loves to imitate by falsification the works of the Lord and that is why he also will 'mark' his people in the end-times (Rev. 14:11; 16:2; 19:20).

**<sup>14</sup> who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.**

It is the Holy Spirit in us that guarantees our inheritance. In the believer he becomes '*the down payment*' (ARRHABON) meaning: a pledge, part of the purchase money. In the believer the Holy Spirit, is the pledge that the Father will bring forth a total and final redemption. This is the believer's security! The price at the cross has been paid in full and a down payment has been given in our stead and we now wait for the Lord to come back and 'get us'.

It is never what we are doing, could be doing, or should be doing that guarantees our salvation, for believers have already been sealed, by the Holy Spirit, the moment of their salvation. The guarantor of our inheritance is God - the Spirit! How could we ever lose our inheritance? I am so glad that I do not guarantee my own salvation by any works of mine!

### **Galatians 2**

**21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."**

**(NKJV)**

This guarantee seems to be "time-limited"!

**(v.14) ...until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.**

The Holy Spirit guarantees our inheritance until the time of redemption arrives! The word '*possession*' (PERIPOIESIS) means: acquisition, purchase, possession. We understand by this that this guarantee is for all of this life on earth and when we come into the next life this guarantee will no longer be needed because we will be with the Lord himself!

**(v.14) ...to the praise of his glory.**

Once more we see that all of this, all that God does for his children is for the praise of his own glory.

**05 – Our resources in Christ**  
**Ephesians 1:15-23**

**<sup>15</sup> Because of this I also, hearing of *your faith* in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the glorious Father*, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him <sup>18</sup> (the eyes of your hearts having been enlightened), so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what *are* the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what *is* the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty strength <sup>20</sup> which he has worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating *him* at his right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name named, not only in this age but also in the coming one, <sup>22</sup> and he subjected all *things* under his feet and gave him *as* head over all *things* to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all *things* in every way.**

(LEB)

In this section, we will look at the resources that come with our election, predestination and adoption and also the glories of Christ. This text is so rich that it is unfortunate that our minds are not fully able to comprehend the depths of what is placed before us.

**<sup>15</sup> Because of this I also, hearing of *your faith* in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers**

Please notice that Paul speaks of '*hearing of your faith*'. It seems that the faith of the Ephesian brothers and sisters was well-known. It was not a hidden or a sectarian faith. It was a faith that could be seen. In other words, their faith was ACTIVE and the non-believers around them could see the fruits of their belief in Christ Jesus. May I ask if it is the same with you? Is your faith known to others and does it do good to others? Can your neighbors say: 'I know him/her they are really God-fearing people'? Their faith was '*in the Lord Jesus*'. This is what stood out. Jesus was alive in their hearts. A true Christian will have faith IN Jesus and not in some sort of religious group or affiliation. They have been born-again and the Holy Spirit lives in them. He represents Jesus to those around him.

**(v.15) ...and your love for all the saints,**

Their love for the other Christians was also evident for all to witness. They really cared and were concerned for the welfare of each other. In other words, they were one loving family. They all had the same Savior, all had the same Spirit and all had the same Father. They followed what the Lord Jesus had commanded his disciples:

### **John 13**

**35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."  
(NKJV)**

We also see the calling of Jesus to his disciples, concerning loving each other, in other verses (John 13:34; 15:12,17). Believers are commanded not only to love the ones they easily get along with *'for all the saints'*. Our hearts must be open to all the Redeemed! This reminds me of the overwhelming love Moses had for God's people in the desert and how he interceded for them time after time. He loved them even after being blamed over and over again for their situation in the desert and some wanting to get rid of him (Num. 16). He still kept on loving them. This is what all true believers should practice. Remember the words of Christ:

### **John 15**

**13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.  
(NKJV)**

Paul continues to write in verse sixteen what he personally does for the Ephesians. Notice that he is not presently with them. We know that he was in prison when he wrote this letter (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Even though he was away from them and living in prison, this did not stop Paul from being active in their lives. What a wonderful testimony for all of us. We often feel helpless to 'do something' for the brethren so let's see what Paul actually did.

**<sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers,**

What we first see is that Paul did *'not cease giving thanks for you'*. By this we understand that they were on his heart and automatically on his mind. He thought of them for he had fond memories of being with them in the past. What he did was to thank God for them. He did this not "once in a while" but the words *'not ceasing'* teach us that there was no limit to his thankfulness unto the Lord for them. What we also see deals with his prayer life: *'making mention in my prayers'*. It's one thing to often think about your brothers and sisters in the faith but it is quite another to take time to pray for them. So, these are the two things that Paul actively did for the Ephesians, even though he was far away from them and imprisoned. Could you do the same? Are the brethren in your mind and in your prayers?

Are you wondering what you could do for those who are far away? If so, Paul is the model you should follow.

So far, we have seen the effects of the Holy Spirit in the life of a person:

- He brings Faith in Jesus Christ (v.15)
- He brings a love for all the brothers & sisters (v.15)
- He brings a thankful attitude for the brethren (v.16)
- He brings a heart that desires to pray for them (v.16)

These four things should be seen in all who say they are true believers. Why should it be so? – Simply because the Holy Spirit in us brings us to be Christ-like. Are they in you? Is the Holy Spirit leading you to do these things? If this is not the case, I would question if I truly have saving faith in Christ Jesus.

Let's now look at the **resources** that are given to the Ephesian believers. Speaking about resources, have you ever had a head ache or upset stomach and did nothing about it because you had to get up and go the washroom to get the medicine and didn't feel like it? Finally, after suffering for a while, you do get up and take what is needed and in a short time you start to feel better. The resources of God that we will be looking, at are a bit like the example I just gave. We need them to get better, but we often do not get up to receive them. We often choose to stay unhealthy spiritually rather than make the efforts needed to get well.

**<sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the glorious Father*, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him**

In verse 17, **the first resource** given is a *spirit of wisdom*. The word '*wisdom*' (SOPHIA) means: worldly or spiritual wisdom. The world, the influence of the world, the desires of the flesh and the devil all offer us ANOTHER wisdom. It is filled with lies and deceit, which bring us torment and a constant state of falling from the grace of God. That is why Paul warns the Colossian believers of the following:

## **Colossians 2**

**8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**

**(NKJV)**

Since the beginning, with Adam & Eve, the wisdom offered by the enemy has only brought us separation and judgment from God. But the Lord offers his children HIS wisdom.

### **Jeremiah 9**

**23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;  
24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.  
(NKJV)**

### **2 Corinthians 10**

**17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD."  
(NKJV)**

The wisdom of God is necessary not only for our daily life, but also in our relationship with the Father.

### **Psalms 90**

**12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.  
(NKJV)**

If I stood today before God could I present Him my heart filled with His wisdom? We need to be taught, we need to learn, we need to be docile and open. We need to desire not to stand before the Lord **empty-hearted** and be shameful but rather with confidence because we have acquired his wisdom. A spirit of wisdom can be yours and mine but it takes determination, humility and continuity. There is no greater way of receiving the wisdom of God than by daily reading his Word and practicing it.

**2) The second resource** that is given is also in v.17. It is a spirit of revelation.

### **(v.17) ...and revelation**

A spirit of revelation is simply the opening of our understanding so that we can grasp what is written in the Scriptures. The word '*revelation*' (APOKALUPSIS) means: disclosure, appearing, manifestation. The Lord God desires to reveal to you his person, as your Father and your creator. Once we were blinded by the evil one and not able to grasp the truths given unto us, but now this has changed:

### **2 Corinthians 3**

**14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.  
(NKJV)**

### **2 Corinthians 4**

**3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,  
4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.  
(NKJV)**

For the believer, Christ has removed the veil and now the Father can reveal Himself and the plan he has for us. Once more we need to have a desire to receive these revelations. We need to be thirsty for spiritual things. This does not happen all the time in one's life. The Corinthians were still infants instead of being mature Christians and Paul reveals to them why this is so:

### **1 Corinthians 3**

**1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.  
2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;  
3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?  
(NKJV)**

Instead of growing in the Lord's wisdom, the Corinthian believers remained carnal in their ways and refused to depart from the ways of the flesh that they had known before becoming Christians. May this also be a warning for all of us. The flesh will always lead us away from the Lord and his ways. The author of the book of Hebrews also came face to face with the same problem:

### **Hebrews 5**

**12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.  
13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.  
14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (NKJV)**

Notice that the spirit of wisdom and revelation is directly linked *'in the knowledge of him'*. There is no way we can become wise in God or receive revelations from God UNLESS we are grounded in the **knowledge** of God. The word *'knowledge'* (EPIGNOSIS) means: full discernment, acknowledgement. In some so called 'Christian circles', *'knowledge'* is set aside and replaced by *'experience or emotion'*. If ANY experience or emotion does not line-up with the Holy Scriptures and its teachings, then it is not from the Lord God. One can not *experience* one thing while the Bible says differently. This would make God a liar and he is not!

### Numbers 23

**19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"**  
(NKJV)

We desperately need wisdom and revelation in our lives, yet so little time is given to knowing God. It is a resource that is often left untouched!

**<sup>18</sup> (the eyes of your hearts having been enlightened), so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what *are* the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints,**

The third **resource** given is found in verse 18: *'the eyes of your hearts having been enlightened'*.

Paul speaks about wisdom, knowledge and now of VISION.

- A new way of seeing things
- A new way of living
- A new vision of how to be and how to act

An enlightenment of our heart – that is what God gives! The word *'enlightened'* (PHOTIZO) means: to shed rays, to lighten up. This resource pushes away the darkness that is in us and fills us with heavenly light. Actually, Jesus rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of the saints in Light (Col. 1:13). When this happens, we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness and victoriously brought into God's kingdom. Our whole being is transformed and we become new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) with a new heart and a new vision in life.

### **Ephesians 5**

**8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light  
(NKJV)**

### **1 Peter 2**

**9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;  
(NKJV)**

Being enlightened is our calling. God does not desire to let his child live in the dark and be blinded by darkness. So, all the resources we have seen so far: wisdom, revelation and enlightenment are for the true believers. We only need to be humble and read His word.

4) The fourth **resource** is the “Hope of His calling”

**(v.18) ...so that you may know what is the hope of his calling,**

Wisdom, revelation and enlightenment are so that we may understand the **hope** that lies in the calling we have received. Some people believe that there is no calling, that it is a personal choice on our part to become a child of God or to reject it. May we understand that if there is **no calling** then there is **no hope**! This is simply because hope rests in the calling of God! A hope is something that we look in *anticipation* of. In Greek, the word ‘*hope*’ (ELPIS) means to anticipate, usually with pleasure and it also means confidence. So, all that we anticipate in God, rests upon His calling. All that we have confidence in God also rests upon His calling. If ever we crash upon the reefs of life and our boat is in danger, let us go back to the confidence that our calling is meant to give us.

5) The fifth **resource** is the riches of His glory of His inheritance.

**(v.18) ...what *are* the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints**

The riches of God, the unlimited bounties of God, the unceasing waters of God, the immeasurable glory of God, is yet another resource given to the child of God. When WE are out of resources, when WE are dried up, when WE have nothing left – the riches of God’s glory is there for us. When we can not provide, God’s providence never fails. All of this world, all that makes it, all that is in it, all that we see, all that is unseen – belongs to OUR Father. They are for the believer **IF** his heart is true unto his Lord.

**Matthew 6**

**33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

**34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**

**(NKJV)**

Life and all it can bring can never **outsource** the riches of God's glories.

**<sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty strength**

**6)** The sixth and final **resource** that is for our taking is: *'and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe'*

What worth would the desire to give: wisdom, revelation, knowledge, enlightenment and riches have **IF** there was no power to deliver them? All of God's resources would have no meaning, no bearing, no effect, no worth if he did not have the **power** to deliver all of that to us. Here Paul speaks of the *'surpassing'*, which means it surpasses all else. The surpassing *'greatness'* (MEGATHOS) means exceedingly great – beyond greatness. (This is where we get our English word MEGA). What is exceeding great, above all else in the universe? It is *'his power toward us'* - the power of God is so far beyond and surpasses all that one can imagine. This means that in all circumstances, his power can reach you and touch you and deliver you and empower you. Paul reminds us that the **resources** in Christ are the following:

- A spirit of wisdom
- A spirit of revelation (understanding)
- The enlightenment of our eyes
- A hope in His calling
- The abounding riches of His glory
- His power that is beyond all that is imaginable

All these resources are for His children! Come and get your share. They are there for *'us who believe'*. In the following verses, Paul switches from the immense resources that believers have in Jesus to the person of Christ. Paul teaches the Ephesians what God – the Father has done towards Christ – the Messiah.

**<sup>20</sup> which he has worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating *him* at his right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name named, not only in this age but also in the coming one, <sup>22</sup> and he subjected all *things* under his feet and gave him *as* head over all *things* to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all *things* in every way.**

The '*he*' in verse twenty is God – the Father. The context given is what the Father has done to glorify God – the Son. The works of the Messiah were finished, he had accomplished all the Law and the prophecies written about him. Now the Father greets him back to his rightful place in the heavens.

The first thing we see is his resurrection: '*raising him from the dead*'. Death could not get a grasp upon him, for the Messiah had never sinned. He was the perfect and eternal sacrifice for the propitiation of man's sins (Heb. 9 & 10). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance for the following reason:

#### **Acts 17**

**30 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,**

**31 "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."**

**(NKJV)**

The resurrection of Jesus is the proof that there will be a judgment day and that it is God through Christ who will do the judging. His resurrection is not only important for the plan of God but it is tremendously important for the believer:

#### **Colossians 2**

**11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,**

**12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.**

**13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,**

**(NKJV)**

Since Jesus resurrected from the grave, the effect of his perfect sacrifice ‘spills’ unto the believer and he receives:

- the ‘*circumcision of Christ*’
- the resurrection of Christ (*you also were raised with Him*)
- the life of Christ (*He made you alive together with Him*)
- the forgiveness of sins (*having forgiven you all trespasses*)

The second thing we see in verse twenty is the following:

**(v.20) ...and seating *him* at his right hand in the heavenly *places*,**

The word ‘*seating*’ (KATHIZO) means: to set down, appoint, to settle over. The Father gave the Son his rightful place next to him in the heavenlies (Acts 7:55,56; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 12:2).

### **Acts 5**

**30 “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.**

**31 “Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.**

**(NKJV)**

There is no more glorious place to be offered than the right hand of God – the Father and that is where our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is. To help believers understand what being at the ‘*right hand*’ of the Father meant, the apostle Paul wrote the following:

**<sup>21</sup> above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name named, not only in this age but also in the coming one,**

He is giving a clear picture of the authority that has been given to the risen Son. In verse twenty-one, Paul gives a series of four names (rule, authority, power and lordship). Many believe that these are ranks given to certain evil spirits. The word ‘*rule*’ (ARCHE) means: chief, magistrate. The word ‘*authority*’ (EXOUSIA) means: jurisdiction, force, capacity. The word ‘*power*’ (DUNAMIS) means: miraculous power, mighty. The word ‘*lordship*’ (KURIOTES) means: mastery, ruler, dominion. In Col. 2:10, Paul writes that Jesus is the head of all principality and power, meaning that he has dominion over them. One day every creature will have to confess that Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. Paul writes that Jesus is ‘*above*’ (HUPERANO) meaning: upward, higher in rank ‘*not only in this age but also in the coming one*’. There will be no end to his rule. It is written four times in the book of Revelations that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:8;11; 21:6; 22:13). The disciple of Christ can rest assured that he is in safe hands, right now and in the after-life.

**<sup>22</sup> and he subjected all *things* under his feet and gave him *as* head over all *things* to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all *things* in every way.**

The Father also ‘*subjected all things under his feet*’ meaning that Christ has the absolute authority over all created things. He is the Monarch who presides over all affairs of this universe. Our Lord is truly ‘*head over all things*’. Adam lost his ‘*headship*’ over all the world when he sinned in the garden of Eden. Now Christ is victorious and regains not only what Adam had lost but also his place within the godhead.

But Christ is the head of something new, something that did not exist when Adam sinned in the garden – the Church. If Christ is the head of all spiritual beings, good and bad, if he is the absolute authority in this universe, he has also become the head of the Church ‘*which is his body*’. Each and every born-again believer is truly a representative of the Lord Jesus here on earth. They are his ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20).

Christ is *'the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way'*. The word *'fullness'* (PLEROMA) means: repletion, completion, what is filled. The presence of Christ is in his body the church. He is completely in it; his presence fills his body to the brim.

### **Colossians 1**

**27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

**28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**

**29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.**

**(NKJV)**

## 06 – Our new birth in Christ

### Eph. 2:1-10

In this section we will look at what we were, what we have become and what we will be. Once more all because of Jesus Christ.

**And you, *although you were dead* in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all formerly lived in the desires of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the mind, and we were children of wrath by nature, as also the rest of *them* were.**

**<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love *with* which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> and we being dead in trespasses, he made *us* alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised *us* together and seated *us* together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that he might show in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you are saved through faith, and this *is* not from yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> *it is* not from works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we may walk in them.**

(LEB)

1. Lets first of all look at what *we were*. (2:1-3)

*'Although you were dead'* is what Paul says we were. Not physically dead but spiritually dead. Do you remember in the garden of Eden when, after telling Adam not to eat the fruit, God said the following:

Genesis 2

**17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."**

(NKJV)

Adam and Eve did not listen to the Lord-God and ate the fruit, and they did die. They died not physically, but spiritually, because they were now separated from the presence of God. They were driven out of his presence and even from the garden itself. God made certain that they could not come back by placing cherubim to prevent them from doing so (Gen.3:24). As Isaiah later described, their sin had created a wall between God and them.

### **Isaiah 59**

**1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.**

**2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**

**(NKJV)**

So, from Adam and Even all the way to the present time, every child who is born is spiritually dead and alienated from God. There are no exceptions to this rule. There is not a SINGLE man, woman or child who is not tainted with sin and separated from God (Rom. 3:23). Because spiritual death is in us, we have all become His enemies (Rom. 5:8). This spiritual death not only has made us enemies of God but it has also brought spiritual blindness to our minds.

### **2 Corinthians 3**

**14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.**

**15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**

**16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**

**(NKJV)**

So, when we enter this world, we are spiritually DEAD which resulted in:

- Our souls ceased to live spiritually (Eph. 2:1)
- Our minds hardened (2 Cor. 3:14)
- Our hearts were veiled (or in the dark) (2 Cor. 3:16)

In other words, my soul, mind and heart are DEAD. How then can I say that I made a choice for God? If my soul, my mind and my heart is DEAD, how is it possible that I made the spiritual decision to come to Christ? If I am blind, how can I see? If my ears can not hear, how can I hear? As Paul writes, there is a veil that covers my heart.

**(1) And you, *although you were dead in your trespasses and sins***

Here we see the source of our spiritual death: '*trespasses and sins*'. This is the spiritual cancer that brings spiritual death to all the children of Eve. The word '*trespasses*' (PARAPTOMA) means: side-slip, lapse, deviation, error. This seems to give the idea of something that is not necessarily a direct decision or intention to sin but something that simply occurs in life. While the word '*sins*' (HARMATIA) means: a sin, an offense. Whether we sin knowingly or unknowingly the result is the same – spiritual death.

**<sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience**

Before we continue, I would like you to notice that Paul writes '*in which you formerly walked*'. This gives the idea that the way they walked had changed and that now they were walking in a different manner. This happens at our new birth. The Holy Spirit enters and seals the believer, giving him a brand-new way of seeing things. He comes out of darkness and comes to the light. His mind is renewed as we see in Romans (12:1,2). May I ask if there is a '*before*' and an '*after*' in your life?

The apostle Paul tells the Ephesians where *'trespasses and sins'* live.

The first place where sin lives is *'the course of this world'*. Sin and trespasses thrive because of the way this world functions. The *'course of this world'* loves darkness and hates light. Listen to the testimony of the apostle John.

**John 1**

**5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**

**(NKJV)**

**John 1**

**10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.**

**11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**

**(NKJV)**

Sin abounds on earth because it does not comprehend the light of Christ (v.5). Then we see that *'the course of this world'* does not know him (Jesus) (v.10). Finally, sin thrives because *'it did not receive him'* (v.11). Light and darkness are like the two poles of a magnet. They repel each other. So, sin lives in this world and every inch of earth is tainted with sin. This entire planet is soaked in sin.

**(v.2) ...according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience**

The second place where sin lives is in the '*ruler of the authority of the air*'. Some do not understand how Satan came to have authority over this planet. The answer is found in Satan's attack on Jesus in the desert after 40 days of fasting. Remember what he said to Jesus:

#### **Luke 4**

**5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.**

**6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."**

**7 "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."**

**(NKJV)**

When Adam sinned in the garden of Eden it seems that a 'transfer' of authority over the dominion which God had given Adam (Gen. 1:26-28) was made. Adam lost his headship and was no longer to rule over God's earthly creation. Please note that Satan is at work right now (v.2) and has a family of followers called '*sons of disobedience*'. This race will forever be at war with the '*children of God*': from the very beginning, when Cain slayed Abel, to the very end, when Satan will gather up a people to try to battle against the Lord Jesus and his people at the last great battle (Rev. 20:7-10).

**<sup>3</sup> among whom also we all formerly lived in the desires of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the mind, and we were children of wrath by nature, as also the rest of them were.**

Again, the apostle Paul states that: '*we all formerly lived*'. It is a thing of the past. True believers no longer live in sin. We do not habitually live in sin, it is not a constant in our lives. Believers may fall into sin but they get up, repent and once more walk in the light. The Holy Spirit, who is in the believer, lets him know when his life does not concur with the desires of the Lord. That is why we are asked not to quench (1 Thes. 5:19) or grieve (Eph. 4:30) the Holy Spirit.

The third place where sin lives is in our '*desires*' (v.3). In verse three, Paul speaks of two sorts of desires. Both of them bring '*spiritual death*'. The first are the '*desires of our flesh*'. This is a MAJOR battle in the life of the believer. Although he has been redeemed, his body has not and never will be. That is why we will receive a celestial body once we have passed into the afterlife.

### 1 Corinthians 15

**42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.**

**43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.**

**44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**

(NKJV)

The '*flesh*' has desires that are contrary to the desires of the spirit and it battles within us. The apostle Paul describes the battle he has in his own life in Romans 7:14-25. To win this battle, the believer, needs to constantly offer his members as a living sacrifice unto the Lord (Rom. 12:1).

The fourth place where sin lives is in *'the mind'*. The battle is also in our minds. Our thoughts pollute us just as much as our flesh, if not more! Some believe that what we think does not really matter, as long as we do not act upon it. But that is not what the Lord Jesus says In Mat. 5: 27,28.

### Matthew 5

**27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'**

**28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NKJV)**

This is the domain of sin:

- The course of this world
- The ruler of the authority of the air
- The desires of our flesh
- The desires of the mind

**(v.3) ...and we were children of wrath by nature, as also the rest of *them* were.**

For the third time Paul remind his readers that all of this was in the past *'we were children...'*. They were no longer, it is done, it is finished. The gift of life had been given to them by the accomplishment of Christ on the cross. Please note the family name given to those who are spiritually dead – "*children of wrath*". The wrath of God rested and still rests on all those who are spiritually dead and willingly live and love to sin. That is what each and every one of us were before the day of redemption fell upon us. I was also a *'son of disobedience'* (v.2) and a child *'of wrath'* (v.3) until I was born-again by the grace of God.

**2. Let's now look at what *we are*. (2:4-6)**

**<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love *with* which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> and we being dead in trespasses, he made *us* alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised *us* together and seated *us* together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,**

'*But God*' - isn't it wonderful that it is God who intervened, who stepped into our life and brought salvation!

Paul does not say:

- But we understood.
- But we opened our eyes
- But we changed our ways
- But we became religious

Rather he writes '*but God*'. Once more we see that it is the Lord who does the work – he has to, because we were dead in our sins and trespasses! Here, Paul will talk about what God did in his saving intervention:

**(v.4) ...But God, being rich in mercy**

This speaks about what “pushed Him”, what “brought Him” to act favorably towards his chosen. God is '*rich in mercy*'. The word '*rich*' (PLOUSIOS) means: wealthy, abounding with. Here we see that God is overflowing with something and that something is '*mercy*'. Now the word '*mercy*' (ELEOS) means: compassion, tender mercy. God is rich in mercy and he shares his mercy with his beloved children. His mercy brought him to manifest '*his great love*' for us.

The word '*great*' (POLLUS) means: many, largely, much. God is fantastically rich in mercy and he abounds in love. This is the "working agent" through which God provided for our salvation. If you are a true child of God and if you ever feel that no one loves you, just remember that the Lord God loves you more than you can imagine. The love of God is not a question of '*feeling*' but rather of '*fact*'.

**<sup>5</sup> and we being dead in trespasses, he made *us* alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised *us* together and seated *us* together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,**

*'We being dead in 'trespasses',* once more Paul emphasizes the fact that we were stone cold dead. Salvation is actually, the rising up of spiritually dead people into a new God given life. So, what did the mercy and the great love of God do for these who were dead in their transgressions?

The **first thing** is that God '*made us alive together with Christ*'. The words '*made us*' (SUZOOPOIEO) means: reanimated conjointly, quicken together. This is like a dead person being reanimated with an electrical shock to his heart. So, it is that the Father has reanimated those who call upon his Son for salvation. This is called being born-again. We were once born of the flesh, now we are born-again but this time by the Spirit. God made us into something that we were not. He took us dead and He made us alive. It's as though He breathed once more into us the breath of life that he had given Adam. For when God breathed into Adam it is written:

**Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils *the breath of life*; and the man became a living being.**

**Gen. 2:7  
(NKJV)**

The **second thing** that the Lord's mercy and love has done for the redeemed is that he '*raised us together*'. As the Father raised Jesus from the grave and gave life back to his body, so did the Father raise us up in Christ. Because we are his "body", because we are "in Him, in some way what the Father has done to the Son, He has also done to his children.

Paul teaches the same thing in his letter to the Romans.

### **Romans 6**

**5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,  
(NKJV)**

So, the Father has made us alive in Christ and raised us up in Him, but that's not all. There is a **third thing** that the Father has done.

**(v.6) ...together and seated *us together in the heavenly places* in Christ Jesus,**

Paul says that presently (because we are in Christ) the Father has '*seated us together in the heavenly places*'. Can you imagine! We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places! The words '*seated us together*' (SUGKATHIZO) means: to give a seat in company with. God gave each and every believer a seat in company with his beloved Son, just like when you invite someone to be seated at your table for a meal. The Father has invited the redeemed to be seated '*in Christ Jesus*'. Some things are just too difficult to imagine!

Our salvation has brought us:

- to be alive in Christ
- to be resurrected in Christ
- to be sitting with Christ in the heavenly places

Should we not all be eternally grateful and humble before God!

### 3. What we will be.

**<sup>7</sup> in order that he might show in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you are saved through faith, and this *is* not from yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> *it is* not from works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we may walk in them.**

In our last section, we see what the future will manifest. In the future, God the Father will show His surpassing riches of His grace and kindness – through us.

**<sup>7</sup> in order that he might show in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus.**

All that we have seen so far, all that God had done boils down to this verse. *'In order that he might show'*. One day the Father will unveil to the entire universe 'why' all of human history has happened. He will mainly manifest two things. The first is *'the surpassing riches of his grace'*. His grace is made up of *'surpassing riches'*. This term (HUPERBALLO) means: to throw beyond the usual mark. God goes much further than necessary. He goes beyond what would be expected. Being rich in grace would certainly suffice but not so with God! He goes above and beyond and his grace becomes unfathomable! It is his *'grace'* (CHARIS) meaning: the divine influence upon the heart that is so profound. Here we have a picture of a loving father who exceeds in his *'kindness'* (CHRESTOTES) meaning: moral excellence, gentleness or kindness. Paul certainly points to this fact when he wrote:

#### **Romans 5**

**8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**(NKJV)**

In other words, believers will be living testimonies, for all times, of the grace and kindness of God.

God the Father will honor Himself in us and through us before all the heavenly hosts. If John 3:16 is known to be the verse that is the most well-known in the bible, the following do not come far behind.

**<sup>8</sup>For by grace you are saved through faith, and this *is* not from yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>*it is* not from works, so that no one can boast.**

The wording could not be any clearer. There are three statements that are made concerning *'the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus'* (v.7)

The first is: *'For by grace you were saved through faith'*. This last section (2:7-10) is all about the grace of God that is poured upon the believer. It is the grace of God that saves – that comes and rescues the sinner from the coming judgment that is to come. This rescuing is activated *'through faith'*.

## **Hebrews 11**

**1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

**(NKJV)**

One of the greatest examples of a person coming to faith is that of the apostle Thomas. He doubted the resurrection of Christ since he had not been there when Jesus first appeared in the upper room. When Christ came to his disciples a second time, he spoke to Thomas and this is what is written:

## John 20

**27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."**

**28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"**

**(NKJV)**

When the heart bends its knee before the majesty of Christ and understands that he is the Lord and Savior – that is true faith. May I ask if that moment has occurred in your life? Have you come to understand who Christ really is and have you asked him to become your Lord and Savior? If not, there is no better time than right now!

The second statement is: *'and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God;'*. In other words, the grace that is necessary in salvation flows forth from the Lord God. Its origin is only in God. Paul mentions that *'it is a gift of God'*. It is a gift – something that is freely given to another person. Salvation originates from God and is given to the believer. This *'gift'* does not come from a Church, a denomination, through sacraments, following rules and regulations, sacrifices or money given. This gift is from God to you. Paul desires it to be very clear *'this is not from yourself'*. This gift is not something that emanates from our inner-self but it is completely given by God himself.

The third statement is: *'it is not from works, so that no one can boast'*. No amount of works, good deeds or religious duties will amount to anything! In other words, there is nothing that your hands can produce that will grant you the gift of eternal life. This simple statement destroys the aim of ALL RELIGIONS. Religions, all of them, are a set of rules, regulations, dogmas and institutions that tell what you must do to attain God. By contrast, true Christianity tells people what God has done to reach people and bring them his mercy and grace.

Because salvation is grace-given NO ONE can ever claim that he or she had anything to do with becoming a child of God. Remember, God resists those who are boastful (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Let us never forget that we are the work of God.

**<sup>10</sup> For we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we may walk in them.**

Once more we see that God is at work, God is making something beautiful out of us. Paul writes '*For we are his creation*'. We are his creation in both ways: first because he is the creator and we are the creatures and second because to all his children he has given a second life – a spiritual awakening to become a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

As we have seen, to be able to do so, God had to:

- make us *alive* – in Christ
- *raise us* – with Christ
- then make us to be *seated* in the heavenly places – in Christ

And none of that has anything to do with anything that we have or could have done, for we were dead in our sins and trespasses (2:1). Salvation is:

- by His **grace** (v.8)
- through **faith** in Christ (v.8)
- a **gift** from God (v.8)
- and not the result of works (v.9)

So, in reaction to what God has done for the believers, what are they to do? The answer to this is found in the following verse:

**(v.10) ...created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we may walk in them.**

This is what believers are to do – ‘*good works*’. Notice that ‘*good works*’ are expected AFTER SALVATION and not BEFORE! Since they are expected AFTER, this means that they were not and never were expected BEFORE. Now that the person has been born anew, now that he has the Spirit of God living in him, now that his heart was changed – he can now begin to work for the kingdom of God! What is beautiful is that ‘*which God prepared beforehand*’. God has already prepared multiple things for his child to do. All that he needs to do is to have open ears and an open heart and the Lord will speak to him.

## 07 – The blood of Christ

### Ephesians 2:11-13

We could also call this section “Remember”. The apostle Paul wants the Ephesian Christians to ‘remember’ their life and relationship with God. It seems that with time, the Ephesian believers forgot one of the most important aspects of their life – their bond with God. As with an older couple where things have become ‘same old’ day in and day out, Christians can also fall into this trap! This same tendency still exists today. We can often ‘forget’ what should be kept in mind.

**<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in *the* flesh, the so-called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision in *the* flesh, made by hands, <sup>12</sup> that you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, not having hope, and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you, the ones who once were far away, have become near by the blood of Christ.**

(LEB)

What are the things that Paul desires the believers to ‘keep in mind?’ Plainly said, it is to remember where you come from. The word ‘remember’ (MNEMONEUO) means: to exercise memory, giving the idea that all children of God need to take personal time and think about the past. In this context, believers need to remember who they once were ‘*that formerly you*’. If we were ‘*formerly*’ something then it means that we are no longer what we were formerly. It seems that Paul desires the Ephesians to think about what happened to them, to think about where they were and where they presently are, or better still, who they were and who they have become. The first thing is found is in v.11, what we were formerly called.

**(v.11) ...the Gentiles in *the* flesh**

“Gentiles in the flesh” speaks about lineage, who our ancestors were. In this case they were *‘gentiles in the flesh’*. This means that they were not of Jewish descent. The Bible divides the human population in two: those who are children of God and those who are not. Up to the works of Christ on the cross there were gentiles and Jewish people. But now in Christ, God has made himself a new people which include both Gentiles and Jews (Gal. 6:15). Because of their lineage, gentiles did not “automatically” belong to the people of God. Paul will explain the depth of this in v. 12. Like I said, for the Jews there were only two kinds of people: the Jews and all the others. In the New Covenant there are still only two types of people: people who are saved by the blood of Christ and people who are not. By saying that they were *‘Gentiles in the flesh’* this meant that they were not, in any way, shape or form in any covenant with God. This is exactly the same for us today. We are not God’s people until we become children of God through the new birth.

A second thing that was to be kept in mind was that they were also:

**(v.11) so-called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision in *the flesh*, made by hands,**

Circumcision was the physical sign that people belonged to God, by the Covenant he had made with Abraham.

### **Genesis 17**

**10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;**

**(NKJV)**

Every male child at the age of eight days had to be circumcised. All who were not circumcised were not considered a Jew even though both of his parents were! When Jews called Gentiles “uncircumcised” it was to insult them. They saw the Gentiles as being “lower” than they were. They thought that God did not consider them, since they were outside of the covenant of Abraham. Paul reminds the gentile Christians of Ephesus that they also were not of the covenant of Abraham. Paul calls these Jews *‘co-called circumcision in the flesh, made by hands’*. They were not of the real-circumcision (made by hands) because they had not been circumcised in their hearts by the Spirit.

## **Romans 2**

**28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;**

**29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.  
(NKJV)**

In verse twelve, Paul will explain what it really means to be '*Gentiles in the flesh*'.

**<sup>12</sup> that you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, not having hope, and without God in the world.**

There are five things that Paul wants to explain to them and also to us – all of them are in verse twelve.

### **1. Apart from Christ.**

The word '*apart*' (CHORIS) means: by itself, without. This meant that there was no relationship with Jesus Christ. That there was a clear division between Christ and them. They were without Christ. They had no Messiah, no High-Priest and no King. They were totally alienated from God for Christ being holy – they were not. It also meant that everything that is found in Christ (election, predestination, adoption, etc...) was not for them. In other words, they were not children of God and were not favored by him. This reminds me of these words from Christ:

## Matthew 7

**21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**

**22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'**

**23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'**

(NKJV)

### **2. Alienated from the citizenship of Israel.**

The word *'alienated'* (APALLOTRIOO) means: to estrange away, a non-participant. The word *'citizenship'* (POLITEIA) means: citizenship, a community. God had a commonwealth. He made himself a distinct people. With time it became the twelve tribes that formed the nation of Israel. This commonwealth was owned by God, governed by God and led by God – it was a theocracy. God protected his commonwealth, he made it to be like a 'Garden of Eden'. People in the commonwealth of Israel enjoyed the fruits of being in that country. But this was not so for the Gentiles, those who were from the 'outside'. Gentiles were not citizens of Israel just as non-believers are not part of God's new family which is formed of all those who repent unto Christ for salvation. Just as people living outside Canada (my country) do not have the benefits of Canadian citizenship, so the non-believers were alienated from being citizens of heaven (Eph. 2:19)

### **3. Strangers to the covenants of promise.**

The word *'strangers'* (XENOS) means: foreign, alien. Not only were they alienated from citizenship but also from *'the covenants of promise'*. The word *'covenants'* (DIATHEKE) means: a disposition, a contract. Once more we see that they were "strangers" which gives

the idea that this was not for them. They were excluded from the Covenant of promise. All the promises of God for his people were not for them – since they were not his people. The promises of: guidance, protection, help, victory, knowledge, wisdom, dominance, and all that is found in the O-T was not for them. It is like a child that is outside a candy store, sees all the candies by the front window, but knows that only the “rich kids” can go in and have them. Heaven, the wonderful afterlife, was not a covenant with the Gentiles but with the Jews. So, the Gentiles did not have a lot to look forward to, unless they became partakers of the Covenant of God.

#### **4. Not having hope.**

The situation that they lived was hopeless. Being outside the Covenant, separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth – where was the hope for their future? The word ‘*hope*’ (ELPIS) means: to anticipate, good expectation, hope. This was a bit like being very sick and knowing that there is no help that can be provided, no cure for you. Can you imagine a life where there is absolutely no hope for a better future? Hope is the flame that keeps men and women determined to move forward. Paul states that their future was bleak. They had no one to truly turn to, no one to come to their side. No one to listen to their cries. Having no hope must be a terrible thing. What Paul is writing still stands for today. Men and women have no hope for the after-life. They do not know where they are going. They do not know what is going to happen to them. They do not know how to get ‘right’ with God. Their conscience often bothers them but there is no solution for them since they have rejected Christ as Lord and Savior. They are, we were, hopeless! Paul speaks of the hopeless in another letter of his:

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

**13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.**

**(NKJV)**

## 5. Without God in the world.

This seems to sum up all that was said before, when you are:

- separated from Christ
- excluded from the commonwealth of Israel
- strangers to the covenants of promise
- having no hope

It really means that you are without God in the world, which is a terrifying thing. If God is not in your world, then there is absolutely no one there to help you out, which you can hope in. That is what Paul wants the Ephesians to *remember* – what they were before. If you are a child of God you also need to remember who you were BEFORE coming to the cross. We all need to remain humble before our Lord God.

**<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you, the ones who once were far away, have become near by the blood of Christ.**

Believers can thank the Lord that verse thirteen begins with the word “BUT”. What a wonderful word, and it is also found in verse four. This little three letter word has its weight in gold. Without this word we would not have access to God’s redemption plan!

This is the turning point of this section. Yes, you were: apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, strangers to the covenants, having no hope and without God in the world – BUT!

In verse thirteen, Christ suddenly appears in the story of their life. We that '*were far away*' (before Christ) - have '*have become near*' (after Christ). What Christ did is that he took the Ephesians who were so far away from God the Father and He brought them into His Father's kingdom. For the Ephesians and all who would believe after them, they are:

- No longer Gentiles – we are now descendents of Abraham.
- No longer uncircumcised – now being circumcised in our hearts by the Spirit.
- No longer separated – we became part of the body of Christ.
- No more excluded from the commonwealth of Israel – we have become a Holy Nation a people of God.
- No longer being strangers – we have become children of God.
- No longer being hopeless – Christ has risen from the dead
- No longer being in the world without God – for God lives in us!

All of this is '*by the blood of Christ*'. Once more we see that God does what we can not do. May we remember who we once were and who we have become, because of the blood of Christ shed on the cross. May God's people become forever grateful for our calling to partake at the Supper of the Lamb.

### **Revelation 19**

**9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."**

**(NKJV)**

## 08 – The peace of Christ

### Ephesians 2:14-18

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of the partition, the enmity, in his flesh, <sup>15</sup> invalidating the law of commandments in ordinances, in order that he might create the two in himself into one new man, *thus* making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in himself. <sup>17</sup> And coming, he proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to the ones who were near, <sup>18</sup> because through him *we* both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

(LEB)

In this section the apostle Paul will speak about the peace that we now have with God – the Father and how this came about. Once again this is fundamental because it separates which churches are true and which are false. All religions say they can bring their followers to have peace with God but the Bible is very clear about this. Only Christ has the power to do this. All that religion teaches is that you can satisfy the justice of God by your flesh, the things that you do or abstain from or by the deprivation of the desires of the flesh. This has nothing to do with true spirituality but rather it satisfies the religious desires of the flesh.

### Colossians 2

21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"

22 which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

(NKJV)

Paul starts out with a bold affirmation “*For He Himself is our peace*”, not the synagogues, not the spiritual leaders of his day, not the religious establishment, not even following the Law of God! Nothing can bring true peace between God and the lost sinner but the intervention of Jesus Christ. So, our peace is a person – Jesus Christ! Remember the words spoken by Jesus to the spiritual leaders of his day:

## John 5

**39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.**

**40 "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**

**(NKJV)**

Now Christ, as the person of peace, did two things in verse 14, that were needed to bring this everlasting peace.

### **1) He made both one.**

These two groups were mentioned in verses 11 to 13 – the circumcised and the uncircumcised – the Jews and the Gentiles. We have seen that they were two very different and separate groups that had nothing in common. To make peace, Jesus had to take these two groups and make something new out of them so that they could become ONE. He accomplished this at the cross and the two groups who would believe in him, became “his body” also called “his bride”.

## 1 Corinthians 12

**12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.**

**13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**

**(NKJV)**

Believers can no longer speak of ‘they’ or ‘them’ but rather of ‘us’. For whoever we are, wherever we might live, whatever our social standing might be, the color of our skin, our age group or our gender – ALL true believers are ONE in Christ. We are all brothers and sisters. We all have the same Savior and spiritual Father – the Holy One of Israel!

## **2. He broke down the dividing wall of the partition.**

This could represent the *'dividing wall'* between the holies and the holy of holies. This is where the High priest came once a year with the blood of the slain lamb at the Festival of Passover. He sprinkled the blood on the cover of the arc of the covenant. This *'dividing wall'* was not to be entered by anyone and death would ensue if one dared to do so! It was only permitted to do so, once a year, by a designated representative of God's people. He would enter, sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat and the people would be forgiven. The apostle Paul writes that it is Christ's blood which brings atonement (Rom. 3:23-25). There are several things that happened when Christ died on the cross. One of the least remembered has to do with *'the wall of the partition'*.

### **Mark 15**

**37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.**

**38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**

**(NKJV)**

Because of the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross, God declared that there was no further need to be separated from his people. His justice had now been satisfied and all could come to him through the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29,36).

The *'dividing wall'* could also represent the wall that made a barrier between God and man (because of sin), as mentioned in Isaiah.

### **Isaiah 59**

**1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.**

**2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**

**(NKJV)**

Whichever way we view it, Christ destroyed that wall (spiritual or material) by paying for man's redemption on the cross. Whatever the case is – Christ has torn down the barrier that existed. The curtain that blocked the way to the Father has been torn down. The perfect sacrifice has been offered by the Messiah. All the barriers have been broken! Christ now has become the door that opens the way to the Father. If you have not already entered through this door what is stopping you? Do not wait another moment! Come to Christ for your salvation.

### **John 10**

**7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.**

**8 "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.**

**9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

**(NKJV)**

Now that Paul wrote that the dividing wall has been taken down, he will explain how it was done.

#### **1. the enmity, in his flesh (v.14)**

To break down the barrier, Christ first of all had to *abolish* something – the enmity between God and mankind. Enmity (ECHTHRA) means *hostility*, opposition to. The enmity or hostility of man towards God had to be settled. Mankind was at open war with the Lord God ever since he sinned in the Garden of Eden.

So, the opposition of man towards God had to be taken care of. Peace needed to be made, justice had to be satisfied and forgiveness offered by God. This hostility needed to be abolished and man could do nothing by himself because of his sinfulness. Sin had to be atoned for through a perfect victim and only one existed in the entire universe – the Son of God. It was *'in his flesh'* that sin needed to be atoned for and that is why Christ became man – lived in the flesh and offered himself to make eternal peace. It is written that Christ bore our reconciliation in his flesh.

### **Colossians 1**

**21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,  
yet now He has reconciled**

**22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and  
above reproach in His sight--**

**(NKJV)**

First, the *enmity* or hostility was taken away by the cross. Paul says that this was done by:

**<sup>15</sup> invalidating the law of commandments in ordinances,**

In one way, it is the Law of God that made us become His enemies because we were unable to follow them. The Law is holy and perfect – but we are not. So, we kept on hitting “a wall” unable to go through it, beneath it or above it. That is why Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law!

**Mat. 5:17**

**Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to  
destroy but to *fulfill*.**

**(NKJV)**

The Law was fulfilled by Christ and by doing so it lost its power of condemnation over all who would truly believe. The Disciple of Christ now has perfect peace with God. What beautiful and encouraging words we find in the book of Romans:

### **Romans 8**

**1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

**2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**

**3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,**

**(NKJV)**

**2. By making two become one.**

The second thing that Christ had to do to bring peace between God and man was to make “Oneness” with two distinct groups: Jews & Gentiles.

**(v.15) ...in order that he might create the two in himself into one new man, *thus* making peace,**

We spoke about this earlier so I will just move ahead.

### 3. By bringing reconciliation (v.16)

Christ had to reconcile the two different groups of people. There was friction, hatred, jealousy, anger between Jews and Gentiles. Christ brought *reconciliation* by taking the two groups and making one new group out of them.

**<sup>16</sup> and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in himself.**

Again, we see the words “*through the cross*”. So, it is through his sacrifice on the cross that *reconciliation* happened. Outside of Christ there IS NO reconciliation. Think of the countless millions of people who through religion, philosophy or any other means are trying to reconcile themselves with God. All their efforts are in vain because they reject Christ as the ONLY sacrifice to atone for their sins. One must beware of false religions and even false Christian denominations who say that Christ is their only Redeemer but in practice also teach that salvation is through good works, or sacrifices made, or money given, or pilgrimages, or praying for the dead or to the ‘saints’ in heaven. They appear to be Christian but deny the power of Christ (Titus 1:16).

How can you tell that *reconciliation* is a completed act? How do you know that this *reconciliation* will last forever? We see the answer in verse sixteen where Paul writes: ‘*killing the enmity in himself*’. The word ‘*killing*’ (APOKTEINO) means: to slay, to kill, to destroy. The word ‘*enmity*’ (ECHTHROS) means: hateful, odious, hostile act. Jesus has absolutely wiped out all the sins that made us enemies of God. There is not a single trace of sin that can hinder our salvation! The enmity has been killed – it no longer exists. Twice in the book of Hebrews proof of this is confirmed by God – the Father:

#### Hebrews 8

**12 "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."**

(NKJV)

## Hebrews 10

**16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"**

**17 then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."**

**(NKJV)**

Since his death was going to benefit Jews and Gentiles, Jesus:

**<sup>17</sup> And coming, he proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to the ones who were near**

Jesus proclaimed the '*good news of peace*' to those who were far away - the (Gentiles). And also, to those who were near - (Jews). Now that the dividing wall has been taken down, we now have *access* (v.18) to the Father.

**<sup>18</sup> because through him *we both* have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

The author of Hebrews had the same thing in mind when he wrote:

**Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,**

**That we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. – Heb. 4:16  
(NKJV)**

Paul ends with the theme of unification or being ONE '*we both have access*'. This is not in the flesh, because we will always be what we are, either Jews or Gentiles but this is in the Spirit. We can be eternally grateful to Christ that he has abolished the enmity between the Father and sinners and made us ONE in the Spirit.

## 09 – Christ our cornerstone

### Ephesians 2:19-22

In this section the apostle Paul will use metaphors to continue to explain to the Ephesians who they have become in Jesus. These metaphors will be divided into two separate sections: one will speak about the *individual* Christian while the other will speak about the Christians as a group.

**<sup>19</sup> Consequently, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are built up together into a dwelling place of God in *the* Spirit.**

**(LEB)**

As I said before Paul will use two kinds of metaphors to explain who and also what these men and women in Ephesus have become. As individuals you will notice words such as: no longer strangers and aliens rather fellow citizens, saints, God's household. As a group words such as: building, holy temple, dwelling of God are used. So, let's look at this.

First of all, the apostle Paul brings this section to a conclusion.

He had introduced many theological and spiritual truths, many that are still difficult for us to understand. Paul spoke about:

- Blessings in Christ
- Election
- Predestination
- Adoption
- The pleasure and good will of the Father
- Redemption in Christ
- Forgiveness of sin

- God's wisdom and understanding
- God's mystery towards us
- His purpose for us
- Our inheritance
- Our hope in Christ
- The sealing of the Holy Spirit
- The spirit of wisdom
- The calling of God
- The riches of His glory
- The surpassing greatness of His power
- Christ resurrected
- Christ's full authority and ruling
- Being dead in sin
- God's mercy
- Our resurrection in Christ
- Being seated with Christ
- Being part of God's commonwealth
- Christ our peace
- The breaking down of the wall of enmity
- The establishment of everlasting peace

This is what is found in chapters one and two. All of this is brought to a conclusion, by using the term 'So then'. All of what was said comes to a conclusion which is:

**<sup>19</sup> Consequently, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners,**

They were *strangers* (XENOS) meaning: foreign and alien. But what were they '*strangers*' from? Remember what Paul wrote in 2:12:

**<sup>12</sup> that you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, not having hope, and without God in the world.**

- No citizenship
- No covenant promises
- No hope
- No God

That's what Paul means by being strangers. These men and women were like wandering souls in a barren world, without any place to rest. They were also '*aliens*' which in Greek it gives the idea of being a by-dweller. This is like having a home not where you presently are – but elsewhere.

It's quite a miserable picture when you think of it. Not being saved caused them to live elsewhere but not in the house of God. We also were like passers-by, foreigners. Our home was elsewhere, certainly not in the kingdom of God. We were some sort of spiritual "hobo" if you like, just wandering outside the gates of heaven, walking towards our final destination – hell!

**(v.19) ...but you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God**

Again, we see one of the most beautiful words in this epistle 'BUT'! Paul recalls to the Ephesian believers who they were. He draws attention to their state before salvation. In the book of Deuteronomy, just before the people entered the Promise Land, Moses calls to memory who the people were and what the Lord God had done for them. On fourteen occasions the word '*remember*' is brought up. This is an example:

### **Deuteronomy 15**

**15 "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore, I command you this thing today.**

**(NKJV)**

Take time to also remember who you were, before the Lord God intervened in your life. Remember the great things he has done and how he has carried you through thick and thin. Once Paul finishes telling the Ephesians who they were, he begins the other side, the good side of his conclusion. Yes, they were strangers and aliens but the story doesn't stop there! From *strangers* they have become *fellow citizens*: From

- No covenants
- No promises
- No hope
- No God

they (and all true believers) have become citizens '*of the saints*'. They now had a new nationality. Their 'heavenly passport' had been stamped by the blood of Christ and their names written in the Book of life. This was just like the ones of the companions of Paul and also Clement, his beloved co-worker.

#### **Philippians 4**

**3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.**

(NKJV)

As Paul will later explain in his letter, with all true believers we also have been sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption.

#### **Ephesians 4**

**30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

(NKJV)

As for myself, humanly speaking, I am a Canadian citizen and spiritually speaking, my citizenship is in God's kingdom. Before I was an *alien* – a spiritual drifter, a wanderer, having a home but elsewhere certainly not with God. Now, because of Christ, I am a '*member of the household*' (OIKEIOS) which means a relative, of the house.

**(v.19) ...and members of the household of God,**

I am now a member of God's house, I am his relative - his son or daughter by adoption (Rom. 8:15; Gal, 4:5; Eph. 1:5). I am finally home, I have stopped wandering about – I can rest. Remember the words of Christ:

### **Matthew 11**

**28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

**30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."**

**(NKJV)**

All of us, who have placed their confidence in Christ, to suffice for our salvation – have arrived home and when time comes, he will bring us to our heavenly home (John 14:1-4). Until then let us rest in the hands of Jesus.

Paul will now speak about this household.

**<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**

This household (all of us) has been built (EPOIKODOMEO) meaning: to build upon. All structures are built upon something. Actually, what a structure is built upon is probably one of the most important aspects of the entire piece. The word '*foundation*' (THEMELIOS) means: something put down, foundation. If this '*foundation*' is flawed, then one day the structure will collapse like Jesus tells us in his parable of the two houses and the storm (Mat. 7:24-27).

The foundation that Paul writes about is the teachings of the apostles and the prophets. That is what you are doing today. You are looking at the instructions left by the apostles. This reminds me of what the early Christians did:

## **Acts 2**

**42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

**(NKJV)**

Our "building up" has to come from what is taught in the Bible. Everything else has no eternal worth. Only the word of God will pass from this side unto all eternity (Ps. 119:89). One may say "How can Paul teach that we must be founded on the teachings of the apostles and the prophets?" The answer lies in the following line:

**(v.20) ...Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**

We can rely on these teachings because Christ is the 'cornerstone' of it all. He is what it all rests upon. All the teachings from our Lord were transmitted by the Holy Spirit unto the apostles and prophets.

### John 16

**13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.**

**14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.**

**15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.**

**(NKJV)**

Notice that the Trinity is at work in the transmission of doctrine. The Holy Spirit guides believers in *'all truth'*. Then we see that the Spirit takes from Jesus *'what is mine and declare it to you'*. Finally, we see the Father also takes from the Son and *'declares it to you'*. Because of this we can rest assured and build our lives on the foundation of the Scriptures. Remember, all that is taught to you has to be grounded on the Scriptures (in its context) and on nothing else.

Now, what is happening to God's household?

**<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**

The Lord is busy right now working in us and through us. As of his household, we are all (*the whole building*) presently *'joined together'*. Now the term *'joined together'* (SUNARMOLOGEO) means: to render closely joined together, organize. The Lord makes certain that, as with a physical body, all the different parts of his spiritual body are all closely linked together. Because believers are closely *'joined together'* they are able to grow *'into a holy temple'*. How important this is to understand, for when we are not *'joined together'* we can not grow! Far too many do not see the importance of the church yet it is the fertile ground where each believer is capable of growing in the Lord. In God's household, in God's building there is a specific place and function for each of his children. And only when we grow in knowledge and in service will we find where we truly belong in God's kingdom. God has given unto us many natural talents and spiritual giftings. When we use them and all work together, advance together and grow together, that's when we will truly be *'joined together'*.

This building or household '*grows into a holy temple*. Here we see the two sides of a healthy household:

- It is growing
- It is holy

I believe that I can check my spiritual health just by these two items. Am I growing in Christ, becoming more mature? And am I becoming more and more holy and Christ-like? Is darkness being set aside in my life? As though Paul understands that believers sometimes have difficulty (*including ourselves*) to grasp what is written, he goes on to say:

**<sup>22</sup> in whom you also are built up together into a dwelling place of God in *the Spirit*.**

This is for all of us: we are also '*built up into a dwelling of God*'. God has not finished with us, he will not abandon us, he will keep on working in us. And the will sometimes even oppose us when we get in his way. All of this is just to make us more and more like his Son. All of this is '*in the Spirit*' – not in the flesh – but by the Spirit of God.

### **Philippians 1**

**6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

**(NKJV)**

## 10 – The mystery revealed Ephesians 3:1-6

The apostle Paul will now write about the mystery that God has given him.

**On account of this I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles <sup>2</sup>—if indeed you have heard *about* the stewardship of God’s grace given to me for you. <sup>3</sup> According to revelation the mystery was made known to me, just as I wrote beforehand in brief, <sup>4</sup> so that you may be able when you read to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ <sup>5</sup> (which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit): <sup>6</sup> *that* the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel  
(LEB)**

The apostle Paul begins with a very bold and solemn statement, one that should make us think of ourselves in relationship with our brothers and sisters.

On account of this I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles

He calls himself the ‘*prisoner of Christ Jesus*’. The word ‘*prisoner*’ (DESMIOS) means: a captive, to be in bonds, a prisoner. A prisoner is someone who does not own himself any longer. A prisoner is told what to do and when to do it. A prisoner is bound by the warden’s directions. A prisoner no longer has personal liberties. Paul considered himself a prisoner of Christ – it was this vision of himself that dictated his entire life. How do I see myself? Am I still in charge? Do I make the decisions? Is my life dictated by my desires? The way you see yourself will determine how you live life.

The reason he was a prisoner of Christ was also with regards to people around him. He was a prisoner of Jesus, not because of past sins (and therefore being a prisoner was a due punishment.) Rather, Paul became a prisoner of Christ for the sake of the Gentiles!

### (v.1) ...the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles

He was a prisoner – his privileges were taken away from him as a ‘freeman’ – for the sake of others! What a remarkable attitude – to be willing to let go of all just to be able to be of some kind of spiritual help in the lives of others. The words ‘*the sake*’ (HUPER) means: for the sake of, instead of.

If we would only abandon our right to have rights – so that others could be edified and encouraged by our lives – that would make all the difference in the world. Remember the word of Christ:

**John 15**

**12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**

**13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.  
(NKJV)**

And also:

**Mark 9**

**35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."**

**(NKJV)**

Then Paul goes on to write:

(v.2) if indeed you have heard *about* the stewardship of God's grace given to me for you.

His being a prisoner of Christ seemed to be well known within the churches. This means that his work and devotion were apparent to all who wanted to see. He did not boast in what he did – but never the less he was well known. You need to remember that Paul is not free to do as he please. He is house bound and probably chained to a Roman soldier. Yet this did not deter him from doing God's work. I wonder what events in life stop us from being active for the Lord? It seems that it takes very little, in these modern times, to hinder believers from fully giving themselves. I wonder if OUR works are also well known to those in our church and even overflowing unto others, not for our glory – of course – but to the praise of Christ who has redeemed us from the coming judgment. We should, like Paul, work in such a way as to be prisoners of Christ and live for our brethren.

Notice that Paul mentions '*God's grace given to me for you*'. In other words, Paul had received God's grace to do what he was doing. We can see this in two ways. The first thought is that the grace of God was sufficient for his work for the Gentiles (which is true). The second thought is that Paul received God's grace by becoming a servant of the Gentiles in prison (which is also true). I wonder if we see this the same way in our life? Do we see it as '*God's grace*' to serve others? I believe we often can grumble and complain instead of thanking the Lord for the opportunity to serve.

Now the first mention of the mystery is the following:

**<sup>3</sup> According to revelation the mystery was made known to me, just as I wrote beforehand in brief**

God himself revealed this mystery to Paul. The word *'revelation'* (APOKALUPSIS) means: manifestation, disclosure. Here we see that there was a personal revelation from God to Paul. There was a *'mystery'* (MUSTERION) meaning: to shut the mouth, a secret that was revealed. God does reveal himself to his children, and I hope he has revealed himself to you as he did to me. Was it not God's revelation of himself at the cross that brought you to your knees in repentance? Was it not this revelation that made you cry out for forgiveness and that changed your life around?

For Paul, this was a very special revelation! It was a whole new way of seeing who God is. The revelation of God to Paul brought something into his life. It touched his heart and his mind and made his life turn around. When God reveals himself, it can not be otherwise for he is so majestic, so pure and so holy that it has to impact us. Why is it then that we are not ALWAYS impacted when we approach the Lord? Why do we pray and read out Bible and it seems that we are not touched? Sometimes I close my Bible and don't even remember what I have just read! It is God's majesty, purity and holiness that causes this or rather my lack of response to him? It is the hardness of my heart, the sins I keep, my unforgiving spirit, my pettiness and so forth that causes me to harden my heart towards God.

Now the *'mystery'* that Paul is speaking about, has been revealed to the Ephesian believers for he writes *'just as I wrote beforehand in brief'*. Paul received a revelation but he did not keep it for himself. He also revealed it to the brethren. In other words, he shared what he had been taught by the Lord God. This is called edification and all true believers are called to do the same – to edify those in the faith with what they have learned from the Lord God.

Paul then writes:

**<sup>4</sup> so that you may be able when you read to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ**

Here we see the aim of his desire to reveal what he had received from the Lord – *'you may be able when you read to understand'*. He wrote in hope of deepening the understanding of the brethren *'into the mystery of Christ'*. He expected the believers in Ephesus to read what he had written. If Paul were with us today, he would also expect us to read what has become the canon of the Holy Scriptures. How much time do I spend in reading and

studying the Word of God? I wonder how deep is our well of insight of the mystery of Christ? How much do we know of Christ, what he desires or his plans for us? How deep is our well of the knowledge of Christ or has it dried up with time? Is our well of the knowledge of Christ a few feet deep or does it plunge hundreds of feet into the earth? So, how profound is our relationship with the Lord – does it have an impact on our life?

It certainly had an impact on the life of Paul – listen to what he says:

## **2 Corinthians 11**

**23 Are they ministers of Christ? --I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.**

**24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.**

**25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;**

**26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;**

**27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness--**

**28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**

**29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?**

**30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.**

**31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.**

**32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;**

**33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.**

**(NKJV)**

Now in verse five Paul speaks of the grace that God has given unto mankind – a grace others did not have before.

<sup>5</sup> (which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit)

The mystery had not been revealed before, for it was hidden from us. Generations that passed before Paul were kept in the dark. They knew a little, just a little about what Paul

was now writing about. But now the time had come – the mystery was revealed! There is a time for everything under the sun (Eccles. 3:1-8) and the time had come for *'his holy apostles and prophets'* to receive this hidden knowledge. This new revelation given unto the apostles and prophets did not emerge from themselves! They did not suddenly 'figure it out'.

**(v.5) ...revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit**

God – the Holy Spirit brought this to their minds and once more we see the grace of God. Mankind could have stayed 'in the dark' for generations and generations. The secret could have remained until the end of time – but that was not God's plan. This mystery is revealed in three parts – look at verse six:

<sup>6</sup> *that* the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel

The unveiled mystery is the following:

- Gentiles are fellow heirs
- They are fellow members of the body
- They are fellow sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus

Can you see the word that links these three statements? – FELLOW! This speaks of a new togetherness between believing Jews and Gentiles. I wonder if we also have understood this mystery in the sense of the word – FELLOW or togetherness? There are different 'types' of true believers and we should welcome all of them just like the Lord God has welcomed us into in family.

The mystery is that we, the Gentiles, are:

- Heirs
- Members
- And receivers

of the promise of the coming Messiah TOGETHER with the Jews – and all of this because of what Christ has done for us. Let us be ever thankful!

## 11 – The purpose of the mystery Eph. 3:7-13

<sup>7</sup> of which I became a servant, according to the gift of God's grace given to me, according to the working of his power.<sup>8</sup> To me, the least of all the saints, was given this grace: to proclaim the good news of the fathomless riches of Christ to the Gentiles,<sup>9</sup> and to enlighten everyone *as to* what *is* the administration of the mystery hidden from the ages by God, who created all *things*,<sup>10</sup> in order that the many-sided wisdom of God might be made known now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places* through the church,<sup>11</sup> according to the purpose of the ages which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through faith in him.  
<sup>13</sup> Therefore I ask *you* not to be discouraged at my afflictions on behalf of you, which are your glory.

(LEB)

Every story has a beginning and so it is with the new life of Paul.

**<sup>7</sup> of which I became a servant, according to the gift of God's grace given to me, according to the working of his power.**

The word '*servant*' (DIAKONOS) means: to run at tables. Paul considered himself a servant boy at the service of God. He was willing to do errands, the work and all that the Lord asked him to do. This is the same Greek word from which we get our English word 'deacon'. Unfortunately, many 'deacons' have forgotten what they were really meant to do and be in their local church. Paul was delighted to be at the Lord's service and so should all believers. Many Christians don't understand that serving the Lord is not a burden given unto us. Quite the contrary!

Paul says that it is '*according to the gift of God's grace given me*'. We have already seen in our last section, that Paul considered it a grace from God to be in prison and serve the brethren through his writings. Here we see that Paul also considers it a grace from God to have become a simple servant. He says that it is a '*gift of God's grace*'. The word '*gift*' (DOREA) means: a gratuity, a gift. How many of us would consider it a gift from God to serve others? Would we not prefer to do other things for God than serve others! Serving the Lord is a gift given unto us – it is a great privilege. Have you ever thought that only a fraction of the entire human race has this privilege? Serving is a gift and this gift is offered through God's grace.

The grace that true believers receive, is not only to be *saved* from the judgment to come (John 3:36) but to be at the *service* of the Lord Almighty. By refusing to serve God, we are actually rejecting the grace he is giving!

**(v.7) ...according to the working of his power.**

Now this grace-gift is through the '*working of his power*'. The word '*working*' (ENERGIA) means: strong effectual working. This is very encouraging, because the Bible states that whatever God is doing in you, to allow you to serve him and the brethren, he is doing it with effectual power. There is nothing that can hinder God's work in you. God's power in you will never fail. Imagine God's power is actually working in you or through you. Sometimes we feel powerless, unable to achieve the work set before us – but we shouldn't.

#### **Philippians 4**

**13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.  
(NKJV)**

How is it possible that I can do all things? Simply because God's power enables his children to serve him through his grace. This is not MY power but God's power! Not MY grace but God's grace; Not MY working but God working - in me! I believe that verse eight is the perfect recipe that enables us to do what we think is impossible.

**<sup>8</sup> To me, the least of all the saints, was given this grace: to proclaim the good news of the fathomless riches of Christ to the Gentiles,**

It is the way we see ourselves that will determine how far God will bring us in his service. Paul saw himself as '*the least of all the saints*'. The word '*least*' (ELACHRISTOTEROS) means: less than the least. This reminds me of what he would later write to Timothy:

#### **1 Timothy 1**

**15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.  
(NKJV)**

In other words, he saw everybody else greater than himself. Others were more important, more valuable and more precious.

When we have this vision of ourselves, we are willing to serve others, before we serve or think of ourselves! Notice that once again he sees his status as '*the least of all saints*', as a grace from God for he writes '*was given this grace*'. It seems that the more you humble

yourself, the more God's grace is upon you (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5)! When we have this vision, the power and grace of God rests in us. But when we do not see ourselves as the least of all, our hearts inflate and we come to believe that the attention of others should be on us and that WE should be served! Paul will now explain what the grace of God had in store for him.

**(v.8) ...to proclaim the good news of the fathomless riches of Christ to the Gentiles,**

Paul was pushed by the grace and power of the Almighty, to represent him to those who did not know him. The means of representing God was through speaking '*to proclaim the good news*'. The word '*proclaim*' (EUAGGELIZO) means: to announce good news. Things haven't changed! In our own way and at our own level we also are called to represent God by speaking about him.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

**19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

**20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.**

**21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul was called to preach '*the fathomless riches of Christ to the Gentiles*'. The subject that Paul was to preach was Christ. I wonder if Paul wasted his time with ongoing small talk or chitchat about the weather? How much time do we waste with frivolous talk? Paul told Timothy not to waste time speaking on certain subjects.

### **1 Timothy 1**

**3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,**

**4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.**

**(NKJV)**

He also told Titus the following:

### **Titus 3**

**9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.**

**(NKJV)**

It was *'the fathomless riches of Christ'* – that was his subject matter. The word *'fathomless'* (ANEXICHNIASTOS) means: not tracked out, untraceable. One can never cease to find excellence in the person of Christ, Christ – the magnificent, Christ – the King, Christ – the redeemer and so forth. Paul speaks of the *'riches of Christ'*. The word *'riches'* (PLETHUNO) means: to increase, abound, multiply. Glory, honor, magnificence, splendor and grandeur all of these and much more are the fathomless riches of Christ. That's what Paul was called to speak of. Did Paul do this by speaking in a mysterious way? Was he speaking some mystic language? Were only an elite or an initiated group of people capable of understanding him?

**<sup>9</sup> and to enlighten everyone as to what is the administration of the mystery hidden from the ages by God, who created all things,**

No, Paul spoke in a plain way, an understandable way, and a way that people in general could comprehend. Actually, the word *'enlighten'* (PHOTIZO) means: to shed rays, to brighten up. Paul's desire was to *'enlighten everyone'*, - Greeks, Jews, foreigners or those close by. There was no one who he neglected, no one too poor or too noble. No sinner, nor pious person was neglected. Everyone deserved to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. I believe that we should also speak in a way that can be clearly understood by our listeners.

**(v.9) ... the administration of this mystery**

The idea behind *'the administration of this mystery'* is the daily impact that this mystery that is now revealed, has on our lives. The word *'administration'* (KOINONIA) means: partnership, participation. This revelation is not aimed at our intellect as a thing to know. Rather it is a thing to know that will bring the person to participate in the mystery. True Christianity is a changed life by the new birth through the Holy Spirit. Christian life ought to be like a river which continuously flows and not a lake which is stagnant! This great truth (the good news) should change every aspect of our being. God should be in the very center of our everyday life and in the various aspects of our interactions.

Why would Paul insert *'who created all things'* at the end of his sentence? It may simply be placed there to remind his readers WHO this God is. He is the creator and the sustainer of all things and our hearts should turn to him. This is especially true since he has such 'Good News' for humanity. Paul will now speak of the intent of God in relationship with the preaching of the gospel and the impact that it should have.

**<sup>10</sup> in order that the many-sided wisdom of God might be made known now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places through the church,**

This has to do with the mystery of the church which we will come back shortly. Paul begins speaking of the *'many-sided wisdom of God'*.

- Ps. 104:24 says that it was in wisdom that God created all that is in the earth.
- Ps. 136:5 states that the heavens were made by his wisdom.
- Pr. 3:19 says that the Lord founded the earth by his wisdom
- Pr. 16:16 says that God's wisdom is better than gold

God's wisdom and power can be seen by the naked eye (Rom. 1:20). All that surrounds us is the manifestation of God's wisdom. But the Church is something that is apart from all else. Believing men, women and children form the mystical body of the Living Son of God which truly manifests the *'many-sided wisdom of God'*. God has a special role for the church. He has something in mind that touches each and every one of us who form the church. God has designed the church in such a way that it will manifest his wisdom. The church (all true believers) is called to manifest the wisdom of God. What is unbelievable is that the Lord uses the Church to manifest his wisdom *'to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places'*! In some way that is difficult for us to understand THE CHURCH is presented to *'the rulers'* (ARCHE) meaning: chief, magistrate and to *'the authorities'* (EXOUSIA) meaning: jurisdiction, force, capacity who are in *'the heavenly places'*. The word *'heavenly'* (EPOURANIOS) means: above the sky, celestial. In other words, the CHURCH is the manifestation of God's unbelievable wisdom, to celestial beings! In a way that is beyond our comprehension we (the church) manifest before angels, archangels, cherubim and all the other angelic hosts, either good or evil – God's wisdom! Now how that is done is a mystery to me. Some things can not be truly explained. How God could take wretched sinners, blasphemers and enemies and transform them into something (the body of Christ), that he manifests as his glorious wisdom is pure grace! Look at what Paul wrote about God's wisdom:

### **1 Corinthians 1**

**25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**

**26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.**

**27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;**

**28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,**

**29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.**

**30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--  
31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."  
(NKJV)**

How can we participate in this? How can believers make the Lord proud that he has called us to manifest his wisdom not only to the celestial beings but also to all people? I believe that if we see ourselves like Paul (less than the least of all (v.8) and do God's work (through his power and grace (v.7), then God will be glorified and honoured – through his servants! God's wisdom was to use the weak to bring him glory! How God the Father can be pleased with the church and to use it instruct the heavenly beings is beyond me!

And all of this is:

**<sup>11</sup> according to the purpose of the ages which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord**

The purpose of the church is not only to bring souls into the kingdom of God. It is mainly to manifest the great wisdom of God before the angels! I believe that the more we resemble our heavenly Father: his character, his wisdom, and his vision, the more we will manifest the manifold wisdom of our Creator. This is exactly what Christ has done.

#### **John 14**

**8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."**

**9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**

**10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.**

**(NKJV)**

Can people say the same of us? Do they see God alive through us? This is the eternal purpose for the church that we manifest God's manifold wisdom. Now all of this could only be accomplished through one way:

**<sup>11</sup> ...which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord**

We are not capable of accomplishing anything for God! We personally can not bring him glory. God can not manifest his wisdom through us UNLESS we are first of all IN Jesus Christ. This is his eternal purpose: US in CHRIST manifesting the wisdom and glory of

God. I also would like you to notice that God's *'purpose of the ages'* HAS ALREADY been accomplished! It is written *'which he carried out'*. God's work has already been accomplished, it is done, it is finished. He is presently glorified through the Body of Jesus Christ, his Church. May we all do our small part to bring glory to God through our daily living.

**<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through faith in him.**

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore I ask *you* not to be discouraged at my afflictions on behalf of you, which are your glory.**

Paul ends this section with a word of encouragement. He speaks of the relationship of the believer with God – the Father. It is new and different, it is something that has never been lived before except for a very few in the Old Testament. Paul speaks of something that the believers now have because of Christ. The first is *'boldness'* (PARRHESIA) meaning: all out spokenness, frankness, assurance. In the Mosaic alliance people were terrified of the Lord God. They did not want to come before him because they were afraid to die. It must be noted that the Lord God DID manifest himself with unspeakable force (as he did when he gave the Law to Moses). This was to manifest his holiness and uniqueness. But now by the new alliance through Christ, we can approach him with boldness just like the writer of Hebrews states we can:

#### **Hebrews 4**

**14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.**

**15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

**16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

**(NKJV)**

Believers now have *'access'* to God. The word *'access'* (PROSAGOGÉ) means: admission, access. The way to God has now been opened up because of the perfect and eternal sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. One can now approach the Father anytime, in any place, through simple prayer. He has become their Father and they have become his children by adoption.

Second, believers can now approach God with *'confidence'* (PEPOITHEISIS) which means: reliance, confidence, trust. Believers no longer need to wonder if God has heard their prayer. We know that the good Lord has willing ears to listen to his child crying out to him just as Jesus tells us:

**Matthew 7**

**9 "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?**

**10 "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?**

**11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

**(NKJV)**

Because true believers now have access to God with boldness and confidence, the apostle Paul arrives at this conclusion:

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore I ask *you* not to be discouraged at my afflictions on behalf of you, which are your glory.**

Don't be *'discouraged'* (EKKAKEO) means: to be bad or weak or to fail in the heart. He's telling the Ephesian believers to be strong and stand up-right. They should not be afraid or anxious in their life because of Paul's personal *'afflictions'* (THLIPSIS) meaning: pressure, afflicted, anguish. They may have been upset with the turn in Paul's life. Don't forget that he had spent a few years among them teaching and preaching as a free man. But now he was a prisoner because of his faith in Christ. Paul wanted to calm their hearts. It's as if he was saying: 'Don't worry about what is happening to me – keep your eyes on Christ. For what was happening to Paul *'are your glory'*'. This is difficult to understand, nevertheless what Paul was going through brought *'glory'* (DOXA) meaning: glory, dignity, honor or praise to them.

**12 – Paul's prayer  
Ephesian 3:14-21**

**<sup>14</sup> On account of this, I bend my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that he may grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, <sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (you having been firmly rooted and established in love), <sup>18</sup> in order that you may be strong enough to grasp together with all the saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

**<sup>20</sup> Now to the one who is able to do beyond all measure more than all that we ask or think, according to the power that is at work in us, <sup>21</sup> to him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.**

**(LEB)**

In this section, which I entitled 'Paul's prayer', we see two natural divisions:

- The first is 'the request of his prayer' (14-19)
- The second is 'the victory of prayer' (20,21)

**1. The request of his prayer (14-19)**

Paul writes:

**<sup>14</sup> On account of this, I bend my knees before the Father**

Why is Paul speaking about prayer? I believe it is because of their discouragement (v.13) because of Paul's imprisonment. It may just be that they were wondering if it was worth it or what would happen to them. If this great man of God could be overpowered and thrown into prison, what will happen to us! Often life can bring very difficult situations and our spirit can fail, or melt away in us. Paul knew of this, for he often faced desperate situations (2 Cor. 11:23-33) but, in every situation, Paul knew what to do:

## **2 Corinthians 4**

**16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.**

**17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,**

**18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

**(NKJV)**

Back to our text. We see that Paul's prayers are addressed to the Father and so should ours be! We are taught by our Savior that our prayers should be addressed to our heavenly Father. When the disciples asked Christ to teach them to pray, this was his response:

## **Luke 11**

**1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."**

**2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven...."**

**(NKJV)**

I do not believe that there is a single prayer made to Jesus or the Holy Spirit. All believers should follow the teachings of Christ and it is very clear that our prayers are to be made to our heavenly Father. In his prayers this is what Paul says he does: *'I bend my knees'*. This was a sign of humiliating oneself before the Lord God. Bending the knee before someone is like 'surrendering arms' before a conqueror. Many who met Christ, bent their knee before him (Mat. 17:14; Mark 1:40; 10:17; Luke 5:8). One day, all the living beings in the entire universe, will actually 'bend their knees' before Christ Jesus:

## **Philippians 2**

**9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**

**10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,**

**(NKJV)**

Do you find it something that is easy and even comforting to bend your knees before the Lord God? Have you laid all of yourself before Him and abandoned your life into his hands? Praying on your knees is certainly one of the better ways to do it.

Paul encourages the Ephesians by saying that:

**<sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,**

Here we see who is the source of *'every family'* under the sun, not only his family but all the families through out the world. God is the creator of each and every nation, tribe and family that one can find. Paul is giving a glimpse of the living God to whom he prays. I believe that the Lord God is pleased to have given his name unto his adopted children. Did you know that one day, when the true believers in Jesus are received in the heavens, Christ will give them a new name!

### **Revelation 2**

**17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."**

**(NKJV)**

Paul will now speak about the prayer requests that he has for them.

**16) I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being,**

This is the fifth time that Paul writes about the *'riches'* of God! The word *'riches'* (PLETHUNO) means: to increase, abound, multiply. In all, Paul will write six times about the *'riches'* of God. Here is a list of the Lord's riches:

- Eph. 1:7, the riches of his grace
- Eph. 1:18, the riches of his inheritance for the saints
- Eph. 2:7, the riches of his kindness
- Eph. 3:8, the riches of Christ
- Eph. 3:16, the riches of his glory
- Eph. 4:19, the riches of his supply

They needed to be strengthened *'he may strengthen you'* and so do we. The word *'strengthened'* (KRATAIOO) means: to empower, increase in vigor. Too often we feel incapable, powerless, incompetent, not making the grade and so forth. When this happens, we actually do not do anything with ourselves that encourages any spiritual growth.

WE stay put, immobilized as though we had our feet in concrete. We need to be strengthened, I need to be strengthened – it's perfectly normal. We should not be ashamed to confess that we need to be encouraged in life. The Psalmist wrote the following:

**Psalms 35**

**16 With ungodly mockers at feasts They gnashed at me with their teeth.**

**17 Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue me from their destructions, My precious life from the lions.**

**18 I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people.  
(NKJV)**

God's strengthening is:

**(v.16) ...he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being,**

Notice that it is the Lord God who strengthens his children. No amount of conferences, books, music or sermons will strengthen you like only the Lord can. When you are touched by his presence your entire life can suddenly be changed. Look towards the Lord, call upon his name and ask to be strengthened. Then wait patiently, by humbling yourself. His power is manifest when we simply rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit. When we believe that: 'God will see me through this' we see that his power is ALREADY in us!

**(v.16) ...with power through his spirit in your inner being,**

The '*power*' (DUNAMIS) meaning: force, miraculous power is given to his children in their '*inner being*'. The strength of the Lord is poured into his child. The word '*inner*' (ESO) means: inside, inner, inward and the word '*being*' (ANTHROPOS) means: man faced, a human being. When we are thirsty, we pour water into a glass and drink it. With the power of God, he pours it into his child and they become the recipient! The Lord God empowers, strengthens, edifies and encourages. All the great prophets of the past needed this and every honest child of God presently needs it also.

**<sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (you having been firmly rooted and established in love),**

The strengthening that we need is that – '*Christ may dwell in your hearts*'. This is the secret of a powerful Christian life. The power of the Father in his child through the Holy Spirit is living out Christ that is in us! The more Christ is lived through me, the more power and strength I will have. In other words: the less YOU are and the more HE IS, the stronger you will become! How foolish it is to believe that the power of God is given through some

mystical incantation or ceremony! Do you remember Simon who once was a magician? When he saw Peter lay his hands on new believers and the Holy Spirit descending upon them, he wanted to give Peter money so that he may also do the same? Peter was offended and told Simon that he actually did not have anything to do with them and that he needed to repent (Acts 8:9-24). The power of God is not bought nor given by one man to another. It is given by God when a disciple lives as he should. So, the more you reflect the light the more powerful you become, to be able to do what God places before you.

Paul adds *'having been firmly rooted and established in love'*. One can never experience the power of God that strengthens, if that person is not *'rooted and established in love'*. Love is the link of perfection (1 John 2:5; 4:12,17). When I read the word *'rooted'*, I see a tree with its roots driving deeply into the soil. This feeds it and solidifies it when there is a storm. Our love for the Lord and the brethren must be *'rooted'* in us. It is not something superficial and shallow. It is true and honest. The test to measure the power of God in me is the depth of my love for God and others! Do you pass the test?

His second prayer has to do with understanding spiritual life.

**<sup>18</sup> in order that you may be strong enough to grasp together with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth,**

There are many ways of interpreting the *'breadth, length, height and depth'* of the Lord God and what he does for his children. One of the explanations that I prefer is the following:

*'The breadth implies Christ's worldwide love embracing all men; the length its extensions through all ages (Eph. 3:21); the depth its profound wisdom, which no creature can fathom (Rom. 11:33; the height its being beyond the reach of any foe to deprive us from it (Eph.4:8)'* – Bengel.

**<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

The greatest knowledge is not found in molecular structure of life, Nano technology, astronomy or quantum physics! The greatest knowledge is knowing the love of Christ – this surpasses all. May I encourage all my reader to understand that there is nothing more important to know, understand and live than the *'love of Christ'*. Because Jesus is LIFE (John 1:4; 11:25; 14:6) and the true BREAD OF LIFE (John 6:35,48). And when we have this knowledge of Christ's love for us, we will:

**(v.19) ...be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

The fullness of God is not being able 'to walk on water' or having the capacity to do 'miracles' or even 'knowing every single verse in the Bible'. The fullness of God is to be filled with Jesus Christ. This is God's plan for his adopted child that he should be *'filled up to all the fullness of God'* which is Christ Jesus. Are you looking to be filled to the fullest? If so let Christ through the Holy Spirit truly live in you.

**2. The victory of prayer (20,21)**

Do you think that when we see ourselves as servants of all and are ready to suffer for the brethren – even if it meant prison, that our prayers will be of little use? In other words, are Paul's prayers for the Ephesians blocked in any way because he is imprisoned? Absolutely not – Paul says that God:

**<sup>20</sup> Now to the one who is able to do beyond all measure more than all that we ask or think, according to the power that is at work in us**

Of course, our prayers will be victorious, because God can do more than we can ever imagine! God and his power are *'beyond all measure'*. It may not be wise for Christians to try to prove the existence of God by science because with science all is measured and God is *'beyond all measure'*! Now this measure is *'more than all that we ask or think'*. Since God is immeasurable, our limited prayers and thoughts can never fathom the person of God.

**Isaiah 55**

**8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.**

**9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul's prayers (and ours) are not limited, as long as they are:

**(v.20) ...according to the power that is at work in us**

I believe that the more we see God as being who he really is and the more we want to see God working in us – the more his power will be manifested! This verse also teaches me that only prayers that are according to God will be answered. Paul ends his prayer with a small doxology – a word that elevates and glorifies the Lord God.

**<sup>21</sup> to him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.**

Paul's desire is that God will be glorified through each and everyone of his children and through his entire church. This is because Paul understood that knowing Christ was the greatest of all things and he was ready to suffer for the sake of his brothers and sisters. He did not mind prison, because of all the glory this brought to God. Still today, almost 2000 years later, we still praise the Lord and see his glory if we have the attitude of Paul while he was in prison.

May we understand:

- Our need to pray
- The victory of prayer
- And the power of experiencing Jesus Christ

## 13 – Walking in Unity

### Eph. 4:1-6

**Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to live in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called: <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; <sup>4</sup> one body and one Spirit (just as also you were called with one hope of your calling), <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who *is* over all, and through all, and in all.**

**(LEB)**

As with all of his epistles written to churches, Ephesians is also divided into two segments. The first is the theological aspect and the second the practical aspect. In Ephesians the theological aspect is to be found in the first three chapters and in the next three Paul will apply the theology to practical everyday living. Once more (as he did in 3:1) the apostle Paul will allow his readers to see who he really is – a prisoner!

### **Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord...**

Paul was truly a prisoner – he was jailed because of his testimony for the Lord Jesus. We have seen that Paul did not mind being in prison, if it was for the glory of the Lord and also helpful for the brethren. There were things that were on his mind, that he wanted to communicate to the Ephesians. The first is found in verse one.

**(v.1) ...exhort you to live in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called**

The life of the Ephesians – not material but spiritual, was on his mind. There was a sense of urgency, something pressing, something of great importance. The word ‘*exhort*’ (PARAKALEO) means: to call near, beseech. Paul is not using his authority but rather his emotions as a loving servant of the Lord. He is pouring out his heart in this matter. Paul wanted to let the Ephesians know how their conduct was important to the Lord.

(v.1) ... to live in a worthy manner

He wanted them to live a life that has worth. The word *'live'* (PERIPATEO) means: to tread all around, walk at large. The life he will speak about is not to be lived on special occasions, in their meetings or on religious feasts. It is to be lived every single day and everywhere they are. Their entire life was to be lived in a *'worthy manner'*. The word *'worthy'* (AXIOS) means: after a godly sort, worthy. Peter had the same thoughts when he wrote:

### 1 Peter 1

**13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;  
14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;  
15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,  
16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."  
(NKJV)**

How many people just waste their life away, sometimes not even knowing it! Time goes by like a river that flows into the oceans and one day they realize that life has almost passed away. What is a life of worth? What is a life that has true meaning?

### **(v.1) ...worthy of the calling with which you were called**

It is a life *'worthy of the calling you were called'*. The word *'calling'* (KLESIS) means: an invitation, calling or vocation. God, through our salvation in Christ Jesus, has given our lives a new orientation, direction and meaning. We no longer serve the world and the passions of this world. We no longer walk in the darkness. Believers are now summoned to live a life of worth, a life that is as noble as our calling. Paul also writes *'which you were called'*. Here the word *'called'* (KALEO) means: to call forth. The Lord God has personally called the names of his children, as a father calls out for his child. This calling is an all-embracing calling – it is for all who belong to Christ. No one is to be left out, no one to be forgotten and no one left behind. The calling in which we are to walk, is a life of worth before the Lord God. What does this worthy calling in life resemble? What does it mean to walk in such a way? Verse two answers that question.

**<sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love**

The first thing I want you to notice is the word *'all'*. Most of us can be humble and gentle and patient and able to put up with one another at least part of the time. It seems that the question is the extent or the depth of doing these things! Our calling is to be lived fully rather than partially.

First of all, believers are called to live a life of *'humility'* (TAPEINOPHROSUNE) means: humiliation of the mind, modesty. Paul spoke of this in his letter to the Romans:

### **Romans 12**

**3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**

**(NKJV)**

This speaks of our inner attitude. Paul was a humble man. He therefore saw himself as a servant of others and the prisoner of the Lord. Jesus also was a humble man for he said that he had come not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45)! If true believers are to serve one another, they all need to have a humble attitude and see themselves as they truly are – servants of the Lord.

Second, we are called to be filled with *'gentleness'* – which speaks of how people see us. The word *'gentleness'* (PRAIOTES) means: gentleness, which is humility in action. Am I humble in thought AND in action? If I believe that I am humble of heart and yet my actions are in contradiction to that, then I am fooling myself. What is my reputation? How are my gestures and actions? How do I speak or react? Am I gentle of heart? Is that my standard? Being gentle does not mean that we are feeble minded! Jesus was gentle, but he was as firm as an oak tree. With the adulteress woman he was forgiving and kind (John 8) yet with the religious hypocrites he was immovable (Mat. 23).

We are also called to be filled with *'patience'* (MAKROTHUMIA) meaning: longanimity, forbearance and fortitude. This speaks of my reactions when I am offended in one way or another. If somebody irritates me how do I react? Am I like a volcano that erupts every time things are not going my way? Do I allow the others to be wrong? Do I expect everything to be perfect all the time? Longsuffering gives the idea of being very, very patient. Does that generally depict my attitude? Paul spoke of this to the Thessalonians:

### **1 Thessalonians 5**

**14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.**

**15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.**

(NKJV)

Being humble, gentle and patient is manifested when Christians are:

**(v.2) ...putting up with one another in love**

The idea of *'putting up'* (ANECHOMAI) means: to bear with or endure. One can endure another, while being unpleasant, cold and unkind. Not so with the disciple of Christ! His attitude while *'putting up'* is just as important as the endurance itself! The ingredient that will permit humbleness and gentleness and patience and putting up is the *'love'* we manifest in our life. When we are not humble and gentle and patient and longsuffering with one another, it is simply because we first of all lack true Christian love. Paul will now explain how we can walk in humbleness, gentleness, patience and endurance.

**<sup>3</sup> being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;**

Walking in our calling will not come naturally or instantly or without any fight. For this goes against our old-man in the flesh. Believers are called to be *'eager to keep unity'*.

It takes effort, determination, will and volition. Paul speaks about the need to *'keep the unity'*. It is one thing to be in accord but it is another to *'keep the unity'*. Having unity is not a one-time thing like signing a peace treaty. Keeping unity gives the idea that one does all he can to make certain that unity continues to exist. There has to be a true desire in our hearts to walk the way our heavenly Father expects us to in unity. As you know there is a combat, a war, a fight between our flesh and our spirit. The battleground is my everyday walk in life. Sinning against the brethren does not take any effort but walking in the light and keeping unity does!

### (v.3) ...unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;

Our effort is to keep a bond of peace with others around us. The word *'bond'* (SUNDESMOS) means: a uniting principle, a joint tie. The common thread which will allow the *'unity of the Spirit'* to be well established and kept alive, is *'peace'* between all the brothers and sisters in the Lord. That is why believers should do all they can to make certain that peace is present when we are there. If there is someone who is not at peace with you, you have to do all you can to bring a remedy to this situation.

Since Paul is speaking of our unity with others he will give “seven spiritual unites” for us to reflect on.

**<sup>4</sup> one body and one Spirit (just as also you were called with one hope of your calling), <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.**

- **One body** and that is the Body of Jesus Christ.
- **One Spirit** who leads this spiritual body (the church)
- **One hope**, which is the return of our Savior Jesus
- **One Lord**, who we listen to – Jesus
- **One faith**, which is in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.
- **One baptism**, either of the Spirit or water baptism.
- **One God and Father**, from whom we get our name (3:15)

Our calling is to live a life of worth by doing all that is possible to maintain peace with those around us. May this be one of the goals in our Christian life.

## 14 – Building the body of Christ Ephesians 4:7-16

**<sup>7</sup> Now to each one of us was given this grace, according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,**

**“Ascending on high he led captivity captive;  
he gave gifts to men.”**

**<sup>9</sup> Now “he ascended,” what is *it*, except that he also descended to the lower regions of the earth? <sup>10</sup> The one who descended himself is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order that he might fill all *things*.**

**<sup>11</sup> And he himself gave some *as* apostles and some *as* prophets and some *as* evangelists and some *as* pastors and teachers <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all reach the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to a measure of the maturity of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be infants, tossed about by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of people, by craftiness with reference to the scheming of deceit. <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow into him *with reference to all things*, who is the head, Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined together and held together by every supporting ligament, according to the working by measure of each single part, the growth of the body makes for the building up of itself in love.**

(LEB)

The title of this section is ‘The building of the body of Christ’ – because in reality that’s what Paul is talking about. Notice that this section begins with the notion of ‘**each one**’ in verse 7 and ends with ‘**each part**’ in verse 16. Without question, the importance of each person doing his or her part in the body is undeniable! There is one thing that ‘each one of us’ who are saved by the redemption found in Christ has received:

**<sup>7</sup> Now to each one of us was given this grace, according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

Believers have received the grace necessary to fulfill their own part, to do what they have been called to do within the body of Christ. No one can say that he or she is not capable of doing their part in the Body of Christ, for the Lord God has given them the grace ‘*according to the measure of Christ's gift*’. The word ‘*measure*’ (METRON) means; a limited portion, a decree. What we see is that the brethren have all received some measure, some portion of a special spiritual gift. This, of course, is for the benefit of the Body of Christ.

Since Paul writes *'to each one'*, this confirms that ALL the children of God have received this empowerment from above. Not knowing what gift is ours does not mean that we have none, it simply means that it has not yet been discovered. God calls us to be active, he also equips us to be able to do so. What is needed is our DETERMINATION to use this gift. This grace has been given:

**(v.7) ...according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

Here we see that Christ is the giver of the grace, he is the provider of the grace we need to serve in his Body. The word *'gift'* (DOREA) means: a gratuity, a gift. There is nothing we can actually do to get such or such a gift. We are called to earnestly desire certain gifts but it is the Lord who has the final decision.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

**28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.**

**29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?**

**30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?**

**31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.  
(NKJV)**

As we will see, some receive different graces to be able to do different things or ministries (if you prefer) within and without the body of Christ. Although believers are all called to be active in the Body of Christ, they are not all called to do the same things.

**<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,**

**“Ascending on high he led captivity captive;  
he gave gifts to men.”**

**<sup>9</sup> Now “he ascended,” what is *it*, except that he also descended to the lower regions of the earth? <sup>10</sup> The one who descended himself is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order that he might fill all *things*.**

Verse eight is a quote from Ps. 68:18 and it seems that Paul gives this verse a Christological point of view. Speaking of Christ who was victor and gave gifts to his people.

**<sup>9</sup> Now “he ascended,” what is *it*, except that he also descended to the lower regions of the earth?**

If *'he ascended'* means that Christ went to the heavenlies (Eph. 1:20) and sits at the right hand of the Father what does *'he also descended to the lower regions of the earth'* mean? It seems that Paul is bringing in opposition the heavens, and the earth. If Christ ascended to the highest point, he also descended to earth's lowest point – taking on flesh and living as a man. He stooped to the humblest condition as this Psalm tells us:

**Psalms 139**

**15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.  
(NKJV)**

In verse ten, Paul gives his readers an explanation for Christ's humiliation and exaltation.

**<sup>10</sup> The one who descended himself is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order that he might fill all *things*.**

It is *'in order that he might fill all things'* (Eph. 1:10, 22; 3:9). Christ is creator and sustainer of all things. He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. He therefore fills *'all things'*.

In verse 11, Paul gives more details about certain graces that have been given.

**<sup>11</sup> And he himself gave some *as* apostles and some *as* prophets and some *as* evangelists and some *as* pastors and teachers**

He only names a few, but they all have something in common - they all have to do with the establishing of the Body of Christ. Please notice that

**<sup>11</sup> And he himself gave...**

We first of all see that Jesus is the dispenser of grace and that he determines who will do what within his body – the church. Jesus gives the ministries within his Body and we also see in 1 Corinthians 12-14 that it is the Holy Spirit who dispenses the 'spiritual gifting' within the body. Paul will speak of four ministries that are the foundation of a healthy church.

**1. Apostles:** Those were the ones who were chosen as special witnesses of the life and resurrection of Christ Jesus; the original 12 and when Judas hanged himself, he was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26). Paul was not an original apostle although he received the mandate of an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9).

2. **Prophets:** These disciples spoke in the name of God, receiving from him what they were to say or teach. They were often heard within the churches, encouraging the brethren to walk in the Lord.
3. **Evangelists:** These people were specially equipped to bring the ‘Good News’ to others. They had a burning desire to see souls come to the cross. An example of this is Philip who was an evangelist (Acts 21:8)
4. **Pastor-teacher:** In the Greek, it is not two different people as pastor AND teacher but actually a pastor-teacher. These men would lead the congregation and expound the word of God, teaching who God is and what He expects from his children.

These are the basic ministries that are needed to establish healthy churches. Today we no longer have apostles because to be one you needed to have not only seen Christ in the flesh but also to have been with him from his baptism to his resurrection (Acts 1:21,22) Today we have prophets in the sense that some are specially called to be the ‘heralds’ or ‘proclaimers’ of the message of God (Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon, etc.). Unfortunately, many believe that a prophet is a person who foresees the future. This is sometimes true, but a study of the bible will reveal that many of the prophets who the Lord sent were men who mostly reminded and warned people of what God has already said. Not everyone is a Daniel or a John the ‘revelator’ – far from it! We certainly have evangelists today, some are well known such as Billy Graham, Dwight Moody and Hudson Taylor. Others are not known but evangelize openly in their daily lives. And finally, there are Pastor-Teachers, who take care of a group of believers in a local church. Whatever ministry we have received, one thing is certain – we have received the grace to be able to do it and to do it well!

We now come to the question ‘WHY’ – why has God established apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers?

**<sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ,**

The prophets proclaim God’s will, the evangelists proclaim God’s salvation and the pastor-teachers proclaim God’s calling. In other words, especially for a pastor-teacher’s ministry, people receive these spiritual gifts not to cater to the needs of God’s people (although they should care for them), nor is it to win a popularity contest (although it’s wonderful to be liked by others). The pastor-teacher – teaches God’s people – God’s word, so that they will do God’s bidding (or works if you prefer). Again, we must ask the question ‘WHY’ – why prepare God’s people?

First, *'for the equipping of the saints'*. It is their sacred duty to equip those who have called upon the name of Jesus to be saved from the coming judgment. The word *'equipping'* (KATARTISMOS) means: complete furnishing, perfecting. The job is not done until the disciple has been fully educated in the things of the Lord. Teaching is primary in the disciple's life. No one can say 'I have learned enough'!

Second, *'for the work of the ministry'*. Filling up the disciples with knowledge is not the objective per say. Once knowledge has been received, the disciple needs to *'work'* in the ministry he has been equipped for. The word *'work'* (ERGON) means: to work, toil, an effort. The disciple needs to go out there and get working. Many have good knowledge of the Lord, but fewer are those who actually do what they know what they ought to be doing.

Third, *'for building up the body of Christ'*. The word *'building up'* (OIKODOME) means: a structure, a building or edifying. The third aspect of the gifts given, is for the betterment of the local church. A building always needs repairs so that it will keep its beauty and function. So, does the body of Christ. All believers need to be edified and encouraged, for if they are not, they will not be able to minister like they should.

When believers do 'works of service' something happens, that will not happen if they are not done. The body is build up! In other words, when we do God's work it builds people up, it strengthens them. It gives and procures something wonderful, as we work, we also receive, as we work, we are also filled!

When we are active for the Lord, we are not the only ones who are built up – so are the people who we help. They are encouraged, because they see that God provides help through the brethren. It is a win-win situation. Whether you do the works or receive the works – you are built up by the Lord. These works of service (ministries) that God has prepared for us, this *'building up the body of Christ'* has four facets and they are all found in verse thirteen.

**<sup>13</sup> until we all reach the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to a measure of the maturity of the fullness of Christ,**

The first is:

**(v.13) ...until we all reach the unity of the faith**

When we care for each other, when we are there for each other, when we take time for each other – it will unite us in the faith. There is no better way to be united than through tangible acts of kindness towards each other. This unity will bring us not only closer as human beings but mostly in our common faith.

We will glorify the Lord, for those who have thought of us and cared for us in difficult times. Knowing that someone out there has your best interest at heart, certainly encourages your faith.

The second is:

**(v.13) ...and the knowledge of the Son of God**

We can acquire knowledge through our bible studies and personal reading but what better way to 'see' Jesus than through our active brothers and sisters? We can be witnesses of God's grace, patience, forbearing and providence through the life of the brethren.

The third is:

**(v.13) ...to a mature man**

No longer will we be children expecting everything to come to us. We will no longer will we be spoon-fed. When we do works of service, we become the ones who take care of others and by doing so we GROW in Christ. We become mature, when we are giving instead of taking. Being mature is a balance between knowledge AND being active in the Lord. Remember what James wrote:

**James 1**

**22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

**23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;**

**24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.**

**25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**

**(NKJV)**

The forth is:

**(v.13) ...to a measure of the maturity of the fullness of Christ,**

This is the goal for all believers - to grow in Christ, therefore becoming a mature disciple. We are not called to remain babies in Christ, but to grow.

### Hebrews 5

**12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.**

**13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.**

**14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

**(NKJV)**

In verse fourteen, Paul will speak about the IMPORTANCE OF MATURITY.

**<sup>14</sup>so that we may no longer be infants, tossed about by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of people, by craftiness with reference to the scheming of deceit.**

And once more, Paul gives four reasons concerning the importance of being mature in Christ. All four are found in verse fourteen.

The first is:

**(v.14) ...so that we may no longer be infants**

An infant is 'cute' but no parent desires his child to remain an infant. Christ does not want us to stay as an infant in our faith and service. He does not want us to always be on the receiving end. As we have seen before, MATURITY is when we stop being child-like and act as grows-up disciples.

The second is:

**(v.14) ...tossed about by waves**

This gives the picture of not being *anchored* in our lives and in our faith. We should be able to stand up and face whatever is thrown at us by life or the enemy. Disciples should be strong and stand solidly on Christ, who is the foundation of our faith. We should not be pushed around and beaten up by every adversity that comes along.

The third is:

**(v.14) ...and carried about by every wind of teaching,**

This time maturity is manifested in the spiritual realm. Maturity makes us able to discern what teachings are right or wrong, what teachings come from God or from the enemy!

### **Romans 12**

**2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.  
(NKJV)**

There should be no more tossing here and there, just because somebody says something new or different.

The fourth is:

**(v.14) ...by the trickery of people**

Maturity is now manifested in wisdom in regards with the schemes of men. We should no more be caught by cunning, crafty and deceitful plans of people who are our spiritual enemies.

Once again, Paul speaks of being ‘grown up’ in Christ.

**<sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow into him *with reference to all things*, who is the head, Christ,**

So, our standard of maturity is CHRIST. Maturity is also manifested through the way we speak. It is one thing to tell the truth of Christ but quite another to do so ‘*in love*’! To the Colossians Paul wrote:

### **Colossians 4**

**6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.  
(NKJV)**

Paul ends with a picture of what the entire Body becomes in Christ.

**<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined together and held together by every supporting ligament, according to the working by measure of each single part, the growth of the body makes for the building up of itself in love.**

- A mature body is *joined together and held together*.
- A mature body is *supported by every ligament*.
- A mature body has *each single part working*.
- A mature body *grows and builds itself up in LOVE*.

May all disciples of Christ realize that they are part of the body of Christ (the Church) and that each and every one needs to seek out his spiritual gift and do the works that the Lord has prepared for him. When all do this, the church will be in good health and bear fruit for the Lord.

## 15 – The New Man

(Eph. 4:17-24)

<sup>17</sup> **This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, *that* you no longer walk as the Gentiles walk: in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance *that* is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, <sup>19</sup> who, becoming callous, gave themselves over to licentiousness, for the pursuit of all uncleanness in greediness.**

<sup>20</sup> **But you did not learn Christ in this way, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard *about* him, and you were taught by him (just as truth is in Jesus), <sup>22</sup> *that* you take off, according to your former way of life, the old man, who is being destroyed according to deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and put on the new man (in accordance with God), who is created in righteousness and holiness from the truth.**

(LEB)

Paul has already taught us that we must *'live in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called'* (4:1). I must admit that I do not often see myself as having a HIGHER calling – from God Himself. I see myself as my physical eyes see me, with all my weaknesses, sins and failures. But I am called to look at myself with my spiritual eyes and see myself as the Lord Himself sees me. My life should be transformed *because* of my celestial calling. In this section, we will be taught what this Celestial calling actually means in our everyday living.

<sup>17</sup> **This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, *that* you no longer walk as the Gentiles walk: in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance *that* is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, <sup>19</sup> who, becoming callous, gave themselves over to licentiousness, for the pursuit of all uncleanness in greediness.**

Paul begins with a word of insistence and by doing so, he manifests the utmost importance of what he will write. Two words are used to manifest the gravity of the matter. The first is the word *'say'* (LEGO) meaning: to set forth, a set discourse or speech.

This is not some sort of random, babbling thoughts he is putting on paper but serious words. They are so serious that the second word he uses is *'testify'* (MARTUROMAI) which means: to be a witness, to testify. He is actually testifying *'in the Lord'*. Not only is the Lord a witness of what will be said but Paul is actually a witness FROM the Lord to the Ephesians! It is as though Paul testifying to us in a heavenly court in favor of God. By reading this passage you become a witness of Paul's testimony of what must now also happen in your life. This is the testimony of the Lord given to Paul for ALL believers, not only the Ephesians but all who would come to the saving faith.

**(v.17) ...*that* you no longer walk as the Gentiles walk**

Our *'walk'* (PERIPATEO) means: to tread all around, walk at large. This needs to change! We are called to no longer do certain things, we are called to set aside some things, we are called to totally abandon other things. This is what believers are called to abandon - the way the Gentiles live. In this case by Gentiles (ETHNOS), Paul refers to those who have not come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Ephesians had become children of God and were expected to live as such.

We were all taught by our parents not to live a certain way, not to 'hang around' with a certain crowd or that we don't do things like that. Our heavenly Father, who abundantly loves us, tells us not to live like the Gentiles – we also no longer do things like that. Our way of living is different than what we see on TV, or read about in magazines, or see on the Internet. Our way of living can not be compared with our neighbors, or friends at work, or our non- believing relatives.

Paul will give seven reasons why our lives should not look like the Gentiles and they are found in verses seventeen and eighteen.

**1. We cannot be like Gentiles because of the *'futility of their mind'* (v.17)**

The word *'futility'* (MATAIOTES) actually means: inutility, depravity or vanity. The believer's life should not be like the Gentiles' lives because their lives are empty and have no profit in themselves. The way that they think, brings a lot of nothing and gives nothing and profits nothing in life! How many people without Christ do we know, that have a truly satisfying life? It's the way that they think (which opposes God) that bears this fruit of emptiness and profitless. Not so for us because we have the mind of Christ!

**1 Corinthians 2**

**14 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.**

**15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.**

**16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.**

**(NKJV)**

**2. We cannot be like Gentiles because they are *'being darkened in their understanding'*. (v.18)**

Our lives should not be like theirs, because their understanding is darkened.

**<sup>18</sup> being darkened in understanding,**

The word *'darkened'* (SKOTIZO) means: to obscure, to darken (in Greek) and the word *'understanding'* (DIANONIA) means: deep thoughts or the faculty of the mind.

A blind person may have a correct mind even though his eyes are obscure and only see darkness. But a non-believing person has a mind that is in darkness and can only produce dark empty reflections even if he can see with his eyes! Their minds are not only empty and profitless for them. Their minds, their capacity to think things out is obscure and totally in the dark. Their reasoning can never be right, honorable and credible before God, just as a blind man cannot describe the colors of the leaves of a maple tree in autumn! Not so for the believer, because our mind has passed from darkness unto the light. As with the blind man to whom Christ gave back his sight, we can also spiritually say:

### **John 9**

**25 ...One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."**

**(NKJV)**

We can now reason, because we are in the light of Christ.

### **3. We cannot be like Gentiles because they are '*alienated from the life of God.*' (v.18)**

Our lives should not be like theirs because we are alive in Christ while they are still living in spiritual death.

**(v.18) ...alienated from the life of God**

The word '*alienated*' (APALLOTRIOO) means: to estrange away, to be non-participant. They have no unity with God, they have no communion with God, they cannot approach God, they are enemies of God (Rom. 5:10; Phil. 3:18) and all that is godly!

They do not see God or taste God or feel God. They are like stillborn babies – not a breath of life in them. How can we be like them when we have in us the very giver of life? How can we act like them having been born anew? We have been drawn close to God, we now bear His name and are His children! We are united with God, because of Jesus Christ.

#### **Galatians 4**

**4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,**

**5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

**6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"**

**7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

**(NKJV)**

#### **4. We cannot be like Gentiles because of *the ignorance that is in them*. (v.18)**

They may know many things, they may be smarter than we are. But they lack the greatest knowledge of all – the mystery that lies in Jesus Christ!

**(v.18) ...because of the ignorance *that is in them***

They are filled with '*ignorance*' (AGNOIA) which means not to know in Greek. This is either through lack of information or lack of intelligence. They believe that they can live meaningful and intelligent lives but there is a lack of what truly has any eternal worth. Not so for us because we are not ignorant of the plans and mysteries of God for, they have been revealed in his Word and also by the Holy Spirit.

We have a spiritual knowledge that they greatly lack which makes all the difference in life. Believers are called to not be ignorant of spiritual truths (Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 12:1; 2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Thes. 4:13)

**5. We cannot be like Gentiles because of their *'hardened hearts'*. (v.18)**

Another reason Paul gives the Ephesians that they should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, is because of the state of their hearts.

**(v.18) ...because of the hardness of their heart**

The word *'hardness'* (POROSIS) means stupidity or blindness. In other words, their hearts are blind or hardened before spiritual truths. Their hearts are like a rock which water cannot penetrate. Even if their hearts would soak in the Living Waters for years and years it would not change a single thing, because they are too hard. The seeds of the Gospel cannot take root, the ground (their hearts) is too hard. Remember what Jesus said in his parable of the four grounds:

**18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:**

**19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.**

**20 "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;**

**21 "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.**

**22 "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.**

**23 "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."**

**(NKJV)**

Gentiles have hearts as 'stony places' (v.20). This is not so with believers. Our hearts have been changed, more than that we have been given a new hearts (Ez. 36:26) – which welcomes all that is of God.

**6. We cannot be like Gentiles because *they have lost all sensitivity.* (v.19)**

**<sup>19</sup> who, becoming callous...**

The word 'callous' (APALGEO) means: to become apathetic. Gentiles are indifferent to true spiritual things. They are past being able to have any desire for them. They are spiritually numb inside, ice cold, untouchable, not being able to detect any true feelings within themselves about God. They have feelings, but not for the things of God, for they desire and thirst for things of darkness.

**Psalms 16**

**9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.**

**10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

**11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

**(NKJV)**

But not so with us, we have been revived, we now can truly feel the way we were meant to feel about the Lord. We desire to be with him and serve him.

**7. Finally we cannot be like Gentiles because *they have given themselves to sensuality.*  
(v.19)**

**(v.19) ...gave themselves over to licentiousness, for the pursuit of all uncleanness in greediness.**

Notice that the Gentiles '*gave themselves over*' to this lifestyle. It seems that they have little shame or embarrassment towards their sinful life style. Their dark hearts love '*licentiousness*' (ASELGEIA) meaning: filthiness, wantonness. They are like swine that love to roll in the mud. They cannot hold themselves back, they love all '*uncleanness*' (AKATHARSIA) meaning: physical or moral impurity.

Gentiles desire the things of darkness. It's in their blood, in their minds, in their hearts and they are never satisfied – always wanting more and more. This is not so with true believers – they can hold back, they can master, they can say no to the filth of this world. And when they do fall, they come to the cross for forgiveness and start once more on the right path.

These are the seven reasons why the Ephesians are called to no longer live the way Gentiles do. We will also be able to do this if we follow what the apostle Paul reminds the Ephesians to do in verses 20 to 24.

**<sup>20</sup> But you did not learn Christ in this way, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard *about* him, and you were taught by him (just as truth is in Jesus), <sup>22</sup> *that* you take off, according to your former way of life, the old man, who is being destroyed according to deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and put on the new man (in accordance with God), who is created in righteousness and holiness from the truth.**

This is the turning point of our section. Paul has taught why we can no longer live as Gentiles, now he will teach how this fundamental change occurs.

**<sup>20</sup> But you did not learn Christ in this way, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard *about him*,  
and you were taught by him (just as truth is in Jesus),**

Paul begins with the learning process. All disciples are called to be learning. Growing as a Disciple of Christ is a lifelong process which is called sanctification. When we are born-again, we are not instantly filled with all the knowledge and wisdom needed to perfectly reflect the beloved Son. We grow in Christ as we learn of him. When Paul writes '*But you did not learn Christ in this way*' he is referring to the way Gentiles live. The word '*learn*' (MANTHANO) means: to understand, to learn in any way. We were once taught how to live, by our family, friends and society but now we learn from a different person – Christ. When Paul writes '*if indeed you have heard about him*' this gives us the possibility to believe that Paul did not take for granted that everyone who would hear or read his letter were automatically children of God. Back then, as it is today, not everybody in our gatherings are true Christians. May we never take for granted that one is born-again simply because he says so! Never forget that Jesus said to his disciples:

### **Matthew 7**

**16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"**

**17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.**

**18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.**

**(NKJV)**

A final point to notice is '*and you were taught by him*'. Here we see that Disciples of Christ are personally taught by the Lord. We also know that the Holy Spirit teaches and guides in the truth (John 16:13). Let's take a look at how our conduct changes from the way of the Gentiles to the way of the Lord.

**<sup>22</sup> that you take off, according to your former way of life, the old man, who is being destroyed according to deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and put on the new man (in accordance with God), who is created in righteousness and holiness from the truth.**

There are three facts Paul points out.

### **1. We are not to live as Gentiles but must take off the old man (v.22)**

We must participate in this process, God gives us the grace to have victory but we must grasp it. We must first of all be determined to *put off* or *take off* the old self.

**<sup>22</sup> that you take off, according to your former way of life, the old man, who is being destroyed according to deceitful desires**

In other words, we must take off (like we take a coat off) the old man. The *'old man'* is a picture that Paul uses when he speaks of our old life, or the old ways of living before, we are saved. The *'old man'* represents our old un-regenerated self, the fleshly desires that controlled us. Paul writes that the believer needs to *'take off'* this *'old man'*. Paul explains we can do this in his letter to the Romans:

### **Romans 6**

**6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

**(NKJV)**

We need to understand what has happened at the cross and set aside what we were and close the door behind us. We must recognize that it is possible to take off the old man and stop saying ‘I just can’t change’. Sin has no compassion even for the person it uses to manifest itself. Listen to what Paul states: ‘*who is being destroyed according to deceitful desires*’. Sin only brings destruction, devastation and ruin. Its pleasure is short lived and it leaves the sinner deeper in regret and despair. By taking off the ‘*old man*’ we will no longer live as Gentiles.

## **2. We will be able not to live as Gentiles when *we have a new attitude of mind* (v.23)**

The battlefield of the enemy is your mind! That is where he attacks you, that’s where he seeks to wound you.

**<sup>23</sup> be renewed in the spirit of your mind,**

Your mind is where the ‘*old man*’ desires to keep you enslaved to false beliefs. He who has your mind has all of you. That is why the Lord said that you need to love your God with all your heart, soul and MIND (Mat. 22:37) for that is the greatest of all the commandments. Our spiritual enemy also desires to possess your mind through wicked works (Col. 1:21). We are also told not to set our minds on the things of this world but on the things that are above (Col. 3:2) This *new attitude of the mind* springs from the word of God. Believing the word of God and practicing the word of God will wash away our old attitude. Our new attitude is saying, “Yes Lord, I can do it if you say so!” Notice that the word ‘*renewed*’ (ANADEIXIS) means: the act of showing. When believers are being ‘*renewed in the spirit of your mind*’ this gives the idea that it is not just a new way of thinking, but actually a new way of thinking AND living. We are never called to gather up facts but rather to live what we have gathered!

### 3. Finally, we will be able to not live as Gentiles when we *put on the new man* (v.24)

Once we have taken off the old self and have changed the attitude of our mind, the last step is to *put on the new self*.

**<sup>24</sup> and put on the new man (in accordance with God), who is created in righteousness and holiness from the truth.**

In other words, God wants us to wear something new (since we have taken off the old man). Again, we see that it is the believer's responsibility to '*put on the new man*'. God will not do this for us. Let's not forget that he has equipped all of his children with the capacity to walk anew by giving us his Holy Spirit who empowers us (Ps. 18:32,39). But what does this new person look like? He is created to look like the Son,

#### 2 Corinthians 3

**18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

(NKJV)

This new person has three main traits of character. The first is '*righteousness*' (DIKAIOSUNE) meaning: equity of character or act. The new man does things right, he thinks right and loves justice. He is virtuous and morally just. The second trait of character is '*holiness*' (HOSIOTES) meaning: purity of character, pious, holy. He has the mind of Christ and acts upon it. He is honest and true. He has high standards of living and will not deter from them. He is a godly person, one who shines in the crowd. Finally, the last trait of character of this '*new man*' is '*truth*' (ALETHESIS) meaning: truth, true, verity. He speaks the truth and lives the truth. He can not be corrupted or be swayed from being truthful.

This is what the '*new man*' looks like – does he look like you?

## 16 – Grieving the Holy Spirit

### Eph. 4:25-32

**<sup>25</sup> Therefore, putting aside the lie, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, <sup>27</sup> nor give place to the devil. <sup>28</sup> The one who steals must steal no longer, but instead must labor, working with his own hands *what is good*, so that he may have *something* to share with the one who has need. <sup>29</sup> *No rotten word must proceed* from your mouth, but only something good for the building up of the need, in order that it may give grace to those who hear, <sup>30</sup> and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> All bitterness, and rage, and wrath, and clamor, and abusive speech, must be removed from you, together with all wickedness. <sup>32</sup> Become kind toward one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as also God in Christ has forgiven you.**

(LEB)

In this section the apostle Paul will divide things into two categories the things that should and the things that should not be done in our daily lives. This is a continuation from our last section. Since the ‘*old man*’ has been taken off, this is what the ‘*new man*’ should and should not do. Did you know that all that we do will ULTIMATELY have an effect on our relationship with the Holy Spirit who the Lord God has given us for our guidance? God is very much interested with our *conduct* – the way we live. We have seen in 4:1 that we should conduct ourselves according to our heavenly calling. In 4:17 we also see that God does not want us to live as the Gentiles do. In this section, Paul will give plain lessons on the do’s and the do nots of everyday living as a Disciple of Christ. It will be profitable for every true believer to make a ‘check list’ as we go along. This is just to see how we measure up! Paul first begins with a list of the do nots.

**<sup>25</sup> Therefore, putting aside the lie, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are members of one another.**

The first DON’T begins with the tongue. This little member causes so much trouble and pain it is no wonder that he begins with it! Remember what James wrote about this little member?

### James 3

**5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!**

**6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.**

(NKJV)

Just as we were told to *'put off'* the old man we are now told to *'put aside'* all lies. The word *'lie'* (PSEUDOS) means: falsehood, lies. Don't use falsehood (speak truthfully is in the positive sense). Believers are told not to lie, to stretch the truth, to embellish things, and exaggerate things when we speak with each other. We are told to *'speak the truth'*. The truth often hurts and that is why we refrain from telling it. We do not want to hurt the person's feelings. Or we may want to *'fit in'* and *'go along'* with what others say. We may want to *'look good'* by exaggerating events or facts. Whatever the reason, it is not good before the Lord. Christians are called to stop lying simply because the brethren *'are all members of one body!'* The word *'members'* (MELOS) means: a limb, part of the body. They are the Body of Christ and we need to respect and esteem them. In a spiritual way, when we lie to the brethren we lie to Christ!

The second DON'T is, "*Be angry and do not sin*".

**<sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger,**

The word *'angry'* (ORGIZO) means: to provoke, to be enraged, to become exasperated. Sometimes we can become exasperated with people and that is when our tongue may say things that are ungodly. It also may be a time when we act in a way that dishonors the Lord. Whether in speech or in action, believers are told *'do not sin'*.

The word '*sin*' (HAMARTANO) means: to miss the mark, to err, to offend. If we are '*not to sin*' that means that we need self-control, having our mind in control and not our emotions. It mostly means that we allow the Holy Spirit TO TAKE CONTROL of our entire being. We know that anger is a normal emotion that occurs when we have been attacked (in any form or fashion). The problem is not the anger, but the fruit of the anger in our hearts. If your anger makes you sin, then it is not godly anger. But if your anger makes you do something positive which glorifies the Lord, then it is righteous anger.

We also have a word of warning: '*do not let the sun set on your anger*'. There is a reason for this:

### **Hebrews 12**

**14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:**

**15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;**

**(NKJV)**

When we do not pursue peace and holiness with people and keep anger in our hearts, it does not go away. It may become quiet but when the right time arrives it will spring forth and roar like a lion. The writer of Hebrews speaks of '*any root of bitterness*'. This bitterness in you will be the cause of sin. These weeds of anger will poison your life. This means that we have to settle or manage "anger moments" right away!

The third DON'T is: to '*give a place to the devil*'

**<sup>27</sup> nor give place to the devil.**

When we let the sun set on our anger, it opens up a door that becomes difficult to shut! The words *'give place'* (TOPOS) means: a spot, a space or a location. Being angry and not settling the matter creates a 'space' in our heart and the devil will automatically fill that void. When holiness goes away – darkness rushes to take its place. We are not to *'give place'* to the *'devil'* (DIABOLOS) which means: false accuser, slanderer. He is called the accuser (Rev. 12:10), a murderer and the father of all lies (John 8:44). The devil will use this situation to invade your heart, make you sin and destroy your relationship with the Lord God as well as with others.

A fourth DON'T is: *'he who has been stealing must steal no longer'*

**<sup>28</sup> The one who steals must steal no longer, but instead must labor, working with his own hands *what is good*, so that he may have *something* to share with the one who has need.**

That's pretty easy to understand – stop stealing! The word *'steals'* (KLEPTO) means: to filch, to rob. Paul is saying to stop doing what you are doing – no more stealing. Notice that he does not say except if you are hungry or except if you are very poor. Do not steal is one of the Ten Commandments:

## **Exodus 20**

### **15 "You shall not steal."**

**(NKJV)**

And there are no exceptions to this rule. That's putting off the 'old man'. Instead of stealing Paul says:

**(v.28) ...but instead must labor, working with his own hands *what is* good, so that he may have *something* to share with the one who has need.**

Here the person who stole has a new vision of what he should do. He should '*labor*' (KOPIAO) meaning: to work hard, toil, be wearied. This is the opposite of stealing. When you put on the '*new man*' you become productive for society even an honorable member of it! Notice that a definition of this word means to work hard and not hardly working! One is to give a good day's work to receive a good day's pay. This reminds me of what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

### **2 Thessalonians 3**

**10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

**(NKJV)**

So, what do you do with the money that you have earned, once you stop stealing?

**(v.28) ...so that he may have *something* to share with the one who has need.**

You give to the needy, which also is the opposite of stealing. The word '*share*' (METADIDOMI) means: to give over, share or impart. You give to the ones who are in need, the ones who are poor, the widow or the orphans, the homeless or the sick.

The fifth DON'T, speaks again about the use of '*rotten*' language.

***29 No rotten word must proceed from your mouth, but only something good for the building up of the need, in order that it may give grace to those who hear,***

Paul goes further than just saying: you must tell the truth. This time he speaks of *'rotten'* language! The word *'rotten'* (SAPROS) means: worthless, bad or corrupt. Paul is speaking of the content of our conversations. The content must be wholesome – it has to be *'good'* (AGATHOS) meaning: good, benefit and well. This should be the very nature of our conversations, which means two things.

It has to be *'good'* for the *'building up'* of the brethren. The words *'building up'* (OIKODOME) mean: a structure, a building, to edify. What is said should be used to encourage, fortify and strengthen those around us instead of gossiping about people and what they do. It has to be *'good'* so that *'it may give grace to those who hear'*. What do our conversations give to those who hear us? Are they happier in the Lord or do they become down and out? We should all be very careful and about the way we choose our words and subjects.

The sixth DON'T, deals with not *'grieving the Holy Spirit'*

***30 and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***

Don't *'grieve'* the Holy Spirit. The word *'grieve'* (LUPEO) means: distress, to be sad and cause grief. Do not make the Holy Spirit unhappy within you, do not be unpleasant with him, do not push Him aside. The Father has given each believer the Holy Spirit to live in them, and to guide them until the day of redemption. It is said that believers are *'sealed'* by the Holy Spirit. The word *'sealed'* (SPHRAGIZO) means: to stamp for security or preservation.

The Holy Spirit in the believer, will preserve him until the time of redemption has finally arrived whichever comes first, your passing into eternity by death or by the rapture of the church. When believers grieve the Holy Spirit, it is like being mean to a caretaker, who affectionately helps you and protects you day in and day out. It just doesn't make any sense to do so!

Now Paul gives a list of Do's in verse thirty-one and thirty-two:

**<sup>31</sup> All bitterness, and rage, and wrath, and clamor, and abusive speech, must be removed from you, together with all wickedness.**

The **first** to Do list is: Get rid of all the following:

The first is '*bitterness*' (PIKRIA) meaning: poison, bitterness. Bitterness is a poison which can dwell in you. Remember the story of Cain and Abel and the bitterness of Cain. Because his offering was refused by the Lord, bitterness burned inside him so much that he finally killed his brother Abel (Gen. 4:8).

The second is '*rage*' (ORGE) meaning: violent passion, indignation. This manifests the loss of control of one's emotions and becoming violent. This reminds me of Paul's own testimony in Acts 26:11 where he states that he was so '*enraged*' towards Christians that he persecuted them.

The third is '*wrath*' (THUMOS) meaning: fierceness, hot anger. An example of this is given of the Ephesians, who after the speech of Demetrius against Paul and his companions, became filled with '*wrath*' (Acts 19:28) and set out to capture Christians.

The fourth is '*clamor*' (KRAUGE) meaning: outcry, tumult. This is an onomatopoeic word which imitates the raven's cry. This word is used when the Sadducees and the Pharisees clashed together over the existence of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:9). It gives a sense of protesting out loud.

The fifth is '*abusive speech*' (BLASPHEMIA) meaning: vilification against God, to rail at or to revile in a general way. Jesus teaches his disciples that '*abusive language*' (blasphemies) comes out of the heart (Mat. 15:9).

The sixth is '*wickedness*' (KAKIA) meaning: badness, depravity, malignity. When Simon the sorcerer asked Peter to give him the power to give the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-25) Peter answered him by telling him to repent of his '*wickedness*'.

These are the six things which all true believers are called to '*take off*'. Is there any work that still needs to be done in your life? Are some of these still alive and well in your heart?

The **second** to do list is: have these abundantly in your life.

**<sup>32</sup> Become kind toward one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as also God in Christ has forgiven you.**

The first is '*be kind*' (CHRESTOS) meaning: easy, better, good and pleasant. In Luke 6:35 Jesus says to do good by loving your enemies. This speaks of the inner attitude towards others even if they are not good or kind towards you. Being '*kind*' is walking an extra mile with someone who is forcing you to do so (Mat. 5:41).

The second is *'be compassionate'* (EUSPLAGEHNOS) meaning: sympathizer, tender-hearted. What better story to illustrate being compassionate than the story of the 'Good Samaritan' (Luke 10:33). He took good care of a complete stranger who was left stranded to die by the road-side.

The third is *'forgiving'* (CHARIZOMAI) meaning: to grant as a favor, pardon, rescue. When someone sins against us (whatever it may be), we need to forgive him. Our standard is the forgiveness that we have receive from God because of Christ's sacrifice. In other words: 'If God has forgiven you of all you have done against Him, you also are called to forgive everything that others do against you'! This is what Jesus teaches in his parable of the servant who did not want to forgive his friend (Mat. 18:21-35).

In all things, our model is Christ. By putting aside, the *'old man'* and letting the *'new man'* live, we will become Christ-like. Also, never forget that your conduct will affect your relationship with the Holy Spirit, so don't grieve Him.

## 17 – Walk in love

(Eph. 5:1-6)

**Therefore become imitators of God, as beloved children,<sup>2</sup> and live in love, just as also Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a fragrant smell.<sup>3</sup> But sexual immorality, and all uncleanness, or greediness, must not even be named among you (as is fitting for saints),<sup>4</sup> and obscenity, and foolish talk, or coarse jesting (which *are* not proper), but rather thanksgiving.<sup>5</sup> For this you know *for certain*<sup>1</sup>, that every sexually immoral *person*, or unclean *person*, or greedy *person* (who is an idolater), does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.<sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these *things* the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.**

(LEB)

Have you noticed that we are all imitators? We all have idolized someone in the past, wanting to look like them or wishing we could be them! I remember when the Beatles came out in 1963 on the Ed Sullivan Show. I lived in New York city at that time and young people became crazy about them! I wanted to imitate them (and I was only 9!). It was Beatle-mania!

- Beatle's haircuts
- Beatle's boots
- Beatle's coats
- Beatle's style

Not only me, but my friends also imitated them. We were mesmerized, fascinated and enthralled by the 'Fab Four'. That is an example of wanting to imitate someone. But now that the '*new man*' has come forward it is a different story and the apostle Paul calls the Ephesians to '*become imitators of God*'

**Therefore become imitators of God, as beloved children**

The word '*imitators*' (MIMITES) means: an imitator, a follower. We are no longer to imitate or desire to resemble anyone else but the Lord God! How are disciples to do this since God is invisible and we can not see him? How then can we imitate him? The writer of the book of Hebrews has the answer:

### **Hebrews 1**

**1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers  
by the prophets,**

**2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all  
things, through whom also He made the worlds;**

**3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and  
upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our  
sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,**

**(NKJV)**

To imitate the Father, we need only to look at the Son. For Jesus is the '*brightness of his glory*' and '*the express image of his person*'. By studying the Son and learning his ways, his disciples will be able to imitate the Father. True believers are to be like a mirror, which reflects the image it sees, or a chameleon which imitates the background it's in. We are called to shine forth and manifest who the Father is! Paul reminds them WHY they should be imitators of God.

**(v.1) ...as beloved children**

It is because of the tender love of God for us that we should desire to be transformed into his image. Believers are not only God's children – we are his *'beloved'* children! The word *'beloved'* (AGAPETOS) means: dearly or well loved. Those who have placed their faith in Christ are exceedingly loved by the Father. The eyes of God have fallen upon them and they are hidden in his heart.

**<sup>2</sup> and live in love, just as also Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a fragrant smell.**

Imitating God means that we should *'live in love'*. The word *'live'* (PERIPATEO) means: to tread all around, walk at large. In other words, imitating God should be manifested in all the aspects of our life! Every morning our prayer should be "Oh Father, help me today to live a life of love unto you and those around me." The main characteristic of this life should be *'love'* (AGAPE) which means: love, affection, benevolence, charity. Remember what Jesus said:

### **John 13**

**34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

**35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

**(NKJV)**

Everybody is talking about living a life filled with love, but what does God say that it really means?

**(v.2) ...just as also Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a fragrant smell.**

1. *Just as Christ loved us.*

**Our model is Jesus. If we imitate Jesus, if we emulate Jesus, if we reflect Jesus – then our life will be a life of love.**

- How did Jesus act with the woman caught in adultery?
  - He forgave her
- How did Jesus act with the sick?
  - He healed them
- How did Jesus act with those who were hungry?
  - He fed them

But the greatest manifestation of his love for the Father and his disciples is that he *'gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a fragrant smell'*. As disciples of Christ, our obligation is to know how Jesus acted and to imitate him by loving others as he did. Paul teaches how we can become imitators of the love of Christ.

**(v.2) ...and gave himself**

The word *'gave'* (PARADIDOMI) means: to surrender, yield, deliver up. Jesus had to ABANDON his life, to be able to love others. We will never lead a life of love if the FIRST person we love is OURSELF! Jesus *'gave himself'* up and that's exactly what we have to do. To live a life of love we absolutely need to give ourselves up to the Lord God. Christ gave himself up as *'an offering'* (PROSPHORA) which means: presentation, an oblation, offering up. He also gave himself up as a *'sacrifice'* (THUSIA) which means: a sacrifice, the act or victim. In other words, Jesus totally offered himself to the Father. His life of love ended by giving up his life on the cross and taking upon himself our sins, so that he could be punished in our stead! Did you know that all true believers are also called to offer themselves as a sacrifice? This is not as a sacrificial Lamb of God but as a manifestation of our attachment to God.

## **Romans 12**

**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

**2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

**(NKJV)**

When Christ offered himself, what effect did it have upon the Father?

**(v.2) ...for a fragrant smell**

The Father enjoyed the life of love and the sacrifice of his son. I truly believe that the Father also enjoys when our lives are given up for the love of others, as we are taught by Paul:

## **2 Corinthians 2**

**14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.**

**15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.**

**(NKJV)**

Now Paul will describe what a sweet-smelling life of love IS NOT! These are mentioned in v. 3,4

**<sup>3</sup> But sexual immorality, and all uncleanness, or greediness, must not even be named among you (as is fitting for saints), <sup>4</sup> and obscenity, and foolish talk, or coarse jesting (which *are* not proper),**

A life of love has not even a scent of the following:

First of all, '*sexual immorality*' (PORNEIA) meaning: harlotry, fornication. A life filled with imitating Christ has nothing to do with an illicit life-style. This is certainly a common thread among modern false prophets and spiritual guides. The child of God should remain single and abstain from all sexual activity or marry and have a normal sexual life with his spouse.

The second is, '*all uncleanness*' (AKATHARSIA) which means: impurity physical or moral. This speaks of being tainted by sins of impurity. It could be in our thoughts or in our actions, or our desires that fall upon what is not acceptable to God.

The third is, '*greediness*' (PLEONEXIA) which means: avarice, to covet and greediness. This is essentially the opposite of love because love gives (John 3:16) and does not take away!

**(v.3) ...must not even be named among you (as is fitting for saints),**

Not only are these things not to be done but they are not even to be mentioned! The word '*named*' (ONOMAZO) means: to name, assign an appellation. Speaking about the above three things just isn't done within God's family.

Paul continues on with his list – of things a life of love does not have:

**<sup>4</sup> and obscenity, and foolish talk, or coarse jesting (which *are* not proper),**

The fourth is, '*obscenity*' (AISCHROTES) which means: shameful, filthiness. This may come under anything that is shameful, from stealing and gossiping all the way to sexual debauchery.

The fifth is, '*foolish talk*' (MOROLOGIS) which means: silly talk, buffoonery, foolish talking. This is talking about stupid stuff, things that do not make any sense. This also should not be on our lips.

The sixth is, '*coarse jesting*' (EUTRAPELIA) meaning: witticism in a vulgar sense, ribaldry. This may be composed of certain jokes either being crude in themselves or improperly suggestive. Paul says that '*coarse jesting*' is not a proper thing to say. Then Paul switches to something that a life of love does:

**(v.4) ...but rather thanksgiving**

The mouth, instead of being a trash dispenser, should be a fountain of '*thanksgiving*' (EUCHARISTIA) meaning: gratitude, grateful language. Remember what the apostle James wrote:

### **James 3**

**8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.**

**9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.**

**10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.**

**11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?**

**12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.**

**(NKJV)**

Only a hypocrite will speak with the two sides of his mouth! Paul then speaks of the seriousness of these six things that should not be in a believer's life.

**<sup>5</sup> For this you know *for certain*<sup>1</sup>, that every sexually immoral person, or unclean person, or greedy person (who is an idolater), does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these *things* the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.**

What Paul is about to say is said '*for certain*' (GINOSKO) meaning: to know, be aware of, perceive. Paul is not guessing that something might happen – he is certain of it. Here he speaks of three types of people who live in certain sins. He speaks of:

The '*sexually immoral person*' (PORNOS) meaning: a debauchee, libertine, whoremonger. These are people who love to live out their sexual sins. They have no remorse, no sense of morality, or of what is right or wrong. They eagerly wait for the opportunity to indulge themselves in illicit sexual activities. This '*sexually immoral person*' will not have '*an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God*'.

The '*unclean person*' (AKATHARTOS) meaning: impure, foul and unclean. This person lives and thinks in an unclean way. It may just be their lips that never stops speaking about certain subjects, their eyes that feast on immoral material or just the way that they are that

makes them *'unclean'*. These people who have no regret and relish in what they do, will not have *'an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God'*.

The *'greedy person'* (PLEONEKTES) meaning: desiring more, eager for gain. They are the ones who love money or material things that just accumulate and hoard things. They are always wanting more and never being satisfied with what they have. These are the ones who will not help others because there is a cost, or a loss for them in doing so. These people will not have *'an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God'*.

They will not have an *'inheritance'* (KLERONOMIA) meaning: patrimony, inheritance. They will not enter the *'kingdom of Christ and God'*. Paul is not speaking about believers who struggle with sin and repent and once more walk in the light. He is speaking about unregenerated people who believe that they are just fine with God! For the true believers, John explains the process of sinning and receiving forgiveness:

**5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**

**6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

**7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

**8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

**9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

**10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**

(NKJV)

Let us be grateful that Jesus has washed us from the condemnation of the practice of sexual *immorality, all uncleanness, greediness, obscenity, foolish talk and coarse jesting*. May we keep far away from them.

**<sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these *things* the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.**

Here Paul gives us a warning – we all need warnings for our spiritual safety.

**<sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words**

There are people out there who will encourage us to live the kind of life that was just described. The word '*deceive*' (APATAO) means: to cheat, delude and deceive. Even in our Christian churches there are false teachers and preachers who twist the word of God and teach that the times have changed and that we ought to see things differently now. Do not be deceived by them. The word of God never changes. What was immoral in the New testament is still immoral today! They try to '*deceive*' with '*empty words*' ((KENOS) meaning: empty and vain. Their words have no weight or legitimacy before the Lord, so don't be afraid of them and don't accept what they teach. Thus everywhere in our society, we are pushed to live a life of misconduct or rebellion before God.

**(v.6) ...for because of these *things* the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.**

Judgment time is coming and the '*wrath*' (ORGE) meaning: abhorrence, punishment and anger of God, will one day come upon all who are alive and have mocked the Holy God of Israel. These are the '*sons of disobedience*' the ones who rebel against the Lord God.

EPHESIANS

18- 'Live as children of light'

5:7-14

**<sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be sharers with them, <sup>8</sup> for you were formerly darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Live like children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), <sup>10</sup> trying to learn what is well-pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even expose *them*. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak *about* the things being *done* by them in secret, <sup>13</sup> but all *things* exposed by the light are made visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything made visible is light. Therefore it says,**

**Wake up, sleeper,  
and rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.**

**(LEB)**

In our last section, we were taught by Paul to 'walk in love'. We have seen that God has poured his love into us:

**Ephesians 2:4**

**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,  
(NKJV)**

**Ephesians 5:2**

**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.  
(NKJV)**

As we 'walk in love', automatically we will 'live as children of light' which is the title of this section.

**<sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be sharers with them**

Before being able to '*live like children of light*' there is one thing that a believer ABSOLUTELY HAS TO DO and this is non-negotiable for the Lord God. We are no longer to '*be sharers with them*'. The word '*sharers*' (SUMMETOCHOS) means: to be a co-participant. No longer are we to participate with them, in any thing that does not reflect the character of God. The apostle Peter also tells his readers that the time had come for them to no longer live as the gentiles do.

### **1 Peter 4**

**1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

**2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

**3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles-- when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.**

**4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.**

**5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**  
(NKJV)

The Corinthians also had difficulty with the concept of being separate people – set apart for God. They lived in the flesh and associated themselves with Gentile and Pagan ways of living. Paul is outraged and writes the following:

### **2 Corinthians 6**

**14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?**

**15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?**

**16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."**

**17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."**

**18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."**

(NKJV)

May all believers analyse their relationships and see if they glorify the Lord. Never forget, that Christians are called to please the Lord who has saved them from the coming judgment.

**<sup>8</sup> for you were formerly darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Live like children of light**

I want you to notice the word '*formerly*' and consider the meaning of this. The word '*formerly*' (POTE) means: at some time, in the past. This 'once upon a time' was the story of every true believer's life.

My personal story begins like this ‘Once upon a time I was darkness, but now I am light in the Lord’. This ‘once upon a time’ does not exist any longer, it has been done away with. Things have permanently changed for we have passed from darkness to the kingdom of his Son (Col. 1:13). How can this be?

**8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.**

You see once (in the past) you were darkness (SKOTOS) meaning: shadiness, obscurity or darkness, but now (in the present) you are light (PHOS) meaning: to shine, luminous. This shining is ‘*in the Lord*’. No one can shine if he is not in the Lord. It is only when I am in the Light that I can reflect this light and shine brightly. This is what the new birth brings. A bit like ‘once I was in my mother’s womb’ but now I am in the world’. In natural life there is a ‘before’ I was born and an ‘after’ I was born. In spiritual life it is the same. There is a before I was born-again and after I was born-again. Examples of formerly being darkness are things such as: lying, hypocrisy, being egocentric, idolaters, worldly and so forth. By the grace of God, believers have become light, just as we were darkness beforehand. My very nature has changed. My DNA was modified and I became a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) – a creature of light and this is God-given!

**Matthew 5:14-16**

**(14)"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.**

**(15)"Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.**

**(16)"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

**(NKJV)**

Jesus said ‘let your light shine before men’ and this is what Paul is speaking about in this section. Have you noticed how easily we see ourselves as being ‘dark’? We fail, we are immoral, we lack, we are deficient, and we sin. Much of our mindset is on ‘being darkness’.

Why do you think is it so difficult for believers to ‘reset’ their thinking and simply believe what the Word of God says of us – ‘you are LIGHT of the world.’

Paul writes that we are lights ‘*IN the world*’. I can only guess that I can be a true light only if I shine ‘*IN the world*’. Being a light in church, in conferences, in Bible studies, in our homes is one thing. But we are called to be lights IN the world. As Jesus said we cannot be hidden, we are like a city that is set on a hill (Mat. 5:14). Try to imagine that city during night time – it can not be hidden because light emanates from it – so should light emanate from us in this dark world. What I was, I am no longer.

I was darkness and I am now presently light. What Christ wants from his disciples is to be what we have become – children of light. That is why Paul writes:

**(v.8) ...Live as children of light**

The word '*children*' (TEKNON) means: a child. Being a child of light and living as a child of light is different. Living as a child of light is manifesting what it means to be a child of light. In verse nine, Paul will speak about three different aspects of living as a child of light.

**9 (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth),**

The first fruit of the light, consists of '*goodness*' (AGATHOSUNE) which means: virtue or beneficence. Living as children of light is filled with generosity and charity and benevolence and kindness. This virtue (trait of character) must be seen in us. This is what we must be known for. What do people know me for? is it my: generosity, charity, benevolence, goodness and kindness? If not, what then am I known for?

The second fruit of light, is righteousness (DIKAIOSUNE) meaning: equity of character, being just. Have you noticed that all these fruits of light have to do with our character! Am I a just person? Can people come to me expecting that I will be fair, impartial, objective and unprejudiced? Am I known to be honest in what I do? Do people come to me for counsel or simple advice concerning life matters?

The third fruit of light, is truth (ALETHEIA) meaning: simply truth. Is my yes – yes and my no – no as Jesus taught us in his sermon on the Mount?

**Mat. 5:37**

**"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' for whatever is more than these is from the evil one.  
(NKJV)**

Do people see you as being truthful, honest, frank and open? Can they trust your word? Is the information that you give without fault? In verse ten we have a direct command:

**10 trying to learn what is well-pleasing to the Lord.**

As children of light, one of our solemn duties is to discover '*what is well-pleasing to the Lord*'. Some may wonder how we can do this. The words '*well-pleasing*' (EUARESTOS) means: fully agreeable, acceptable.

As for myself, I use the R & R method: Read and Reflect. I take into consideration what I read from Scripture and set my mind to reflect on what it teaches. Then I also think of parallel verses on the same subject. Once this is done, once more I think, reason, reflect, and contemplate. I ponder, consider and deliberate in my mind what is before me. I analyse all of that and that is how I find out '*what is well-pleasing to the Lord*'. It is only after this that I apply it in my life. The prophet Isaiah spoke these words to those who desired to live a life that was well-pleasing to the Lord God.

### **Isaiah 56**

**4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,**

**5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.**

**(NKJV)**

In every aspect of our daily life as children of God, we are called to live as children of light and to be able to do this we all need to learn what pleases our Lord and practice it.

**11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even expose *them*.<sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak *about* the things being *done* by them in secret**

Paul continues to tell the Ephesians what to do, to be able to 'live as children of Light'. There is something that I must not do.

**(11) Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness**

In verse seven, we were told not to be '*sharers with them*'. There are things that God absolutely does not want his child to do. We know certain things such as: stealing, gossiping, lying and so forth. But here we see something that we do not mention often in our conversations – believers need to stay away from '*fruitless deeds of darkness*'. The word '*fruitless*' (AKARPOS) means: barren, fruitless. The word '*deeds*' (ERGON) means: work, toil, act, labor. There are deeds that are done, that have no worth at all before the Lord. Think of the labor of Cain when he toiled the ground at the sweat of his brow and then took some of his harvest and offered it to the Lord. This took time and effort on his part, but all of this was worthless before the Lord:

**Gen. 4**

**3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.**

**4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,**

**5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**

**(NKJV)**

Abel on the other hand offered the firstborn of his flock and the Lord '*respected Abel and his offering*' – why? Simply because the fruits offered by Cain were not what the Lord desired and those of Abel were. A great many believers do things for the Lord yet it is not well-accepted because they are not fruits of HIS choice! To be a healthy child of light we cannot associate ourselves with the '*fruitless deeds of darkness*' or the people from whom they originate. Paul tells the Corinthians why this HAS TO BE:

**1 Corinthians 10:21**

**You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.**

**(NKJV)**

- The cup of the Lord or the cup of demons
- The table of the Lord or the table of demons

It is either things of light or things of darkness. Jesus said:

**Mat. 6:24**

**"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.**

**(NKJV)**

We can say that no one can serve two masters; Darkness and Light. We are not only told to not have anything to do with darkness but we are also called to:

**(11) ...but rather even expose them.**

It is our duty to speak up when twisted theology and evil deeds are being spread around. The word '*expose*' (ELEGEHO) means: convict, rebuke and admonish. We should not shy away or simply let things pass. Too many people and believers (even without knowing it)

are saying things that are simply not true. There is a cost to this. On one side, we may not be welcomed to do so. People, in general, do not like being corrected. On the other hand, if this is not done, then the gospel will become twisted and the truth will be lost. Paul now gives one of the reasons why we should expose false doctrine.

**12 For it is shameful even to speak *about the things being done by them in secret***

The word shameful (AISCHRON) in Greek means exactly the same as in English (a shameful thing). What is done is disgraceful, dishonorable, and shocking. It goes against being a ‘*child of light*’, against the very nature of our God. That is why Paul says that these things should not even be mentioned in our conversations. These things that they do are so shameful that they are ‘*being done by them in secret*’. The word ‘*secret*’ (KRUPHE) means: privately, in secret, like a thief steals during the night so he can not be seen! When we casually mention the disgraceful things of this world in our conversations we glorify the darkness in which they live. So, let’s be careful with the subjects that we choose to speak of. Paul now ends this section by coming back to its beginning – like a full circle!

**<sup>13</sup> but all *things* exposed by the light are made visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything made visible is light. Therefore it says,  
Wake up, sleeper,  
and rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.**

Paul comes back to the light and what light does. What happens when we ‘flick the switch’ in a room at night? All the things that are in the room are suddenly apparent and nothing that is there can be hidden. What also happens is that once you can see this in the room, the possibilities for you to hurt yourself by hitting them is gone. We all have banged our toes on a piece of furniture in the dark – and it hurts! That is the importance of ‘living as children of light’ and exposing darkness – by doing so people will not get hurt! But most of all the gospel will remain pure.

**For everything made visible is light. Therefore it says,  
Wake up, sleeper,  
and rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.**

The verse that Paul is quoting is probably Isaiah 60:1, what we see is that he places the name of Christ where the name of God was written.

**Isaiah 60:1,2**

**Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.**

All children of the light are called to '*wake up*' and also '*rise from the dead*'. Once this is done it is then that '*Christ will shine on you*'. It is useless to believe that you will bear the light of Christ IF YOU DO NOT wake up and walk in the Lord! May all true believers desire to live as '*children of the light*' for that's who we have become!

## 19 – Walking in wisdom

### Eph. 5:15-20

**<sup>15</sup> Therefore, consider carefully how you live, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Because of this do not become foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not be drunk with wine (in which is dissipation), but be filled by the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and singing praise in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always for all *things* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the God and Father, (LEB)**

The apostle Paul will now speak of the wisdom that we all need in our lives. So far, believers are told to:

- *live a life worthy of our calling* (4:1-16)
- *no longer live as Gentiles* (4:17-32)
- *be imitators of God* (5:1-7)
- *live as children of light* (5:8-14).

None of this can be accomplished if we *do not have heavenly wisdom* within us. We can surely say that God's wisdom, is one of the important factors for our life, if our desire is to honor him. The book of Proverbs begins with this opening statement:

### Proverbs 1

**1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:**

**2 To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,**

**3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity;**

**4 To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion-**

**5 A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,**

**6 To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.**

**7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

**(NKJV)**

We are confronted with the first phrase that says:

**<sup>15</sup> Therefore, consider carefully how you live...**

We are told to '*consider carefully*'. The word '*consider*' (BLEPO) means: to look at, to take heed, to regard. In others words Paul wants the Ephesians to reflect on their lives. To reflect, not ineffectively, but very '*carefully*' (OUN) meaning: accordingly, verily and certainly. He is asking the Christians to do something that people don't necessarily like to do. Thinking deeply about ourselves and facing our wrong-doings is not pleasant.

People are often told to '*consider carefully*' when there is danger that lurks for themselves and for others. We may be injured or even crippled for life. We are told to be VERY careful, as if careful was not enough! Paul is thinking about '*how you live*', this was the subject of their inner search. The word '*live*' (PERIPATEO) means: to tread all around, to walk at large. Nothing must be left behind or unturned, for everything we are, needs to be examined and analyzed! How we live is noticed by God and also by people around us.

**(v.15) ... not as unwise but as wise,**

How we live (as we have seen before) should reflect the character of God. Paul tells us that there are two ways that we can live. The first is '*as unwise*' (ASOPHOS) meaning: unwise or fool. This verse describes the unwise:

## **Psalms 14**

**1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.**

**(NKJV)**

Living as the unwise is equivalent to living as the Gentiles do, both in their corrupted hearts and detestable works before the Lord. If this way of living is found in the believer's heart then it must be cast aside, thrown away, burned or destroyed. This is the simple reason that it causes animosity between you and the Lord.

On the other hand, the Ephesians were called to be '*wise*' (SOPHOS) meaning: wise or clear. Remember what Joshua told the Israelites:

## **Joshua 24**

**14 "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!**

**15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."**

**(NKJV)**

In a way, believers are all called to make the same choice as Joshua did – to follow and serve the Lord. He certainly was filled with heavenly wisdom. In verse sixteen Paul tells us how wisdom should be lived.

**<sup>16</sup>making the most of the time because the days are evil.**

Opportunities are often given, we can see them if we have eyes to see and a heart that is open. We are commanded to be *'making the most of our time'*. Idleness, laziness and lethargy are certainly not godly qualities! It seems that too much time is wasted! The words *'the most'* (EXAGORAZO) means: to buy up, to rescue from loss. It is the opposite of wasting our time. God has given an amount of time for us to live and we are expected to use it wisely. Believers need to make the most of their *'time'* (KAIROS) meaning: an occasion, a proper time, an opportunity. We are called to seize all the opportunities given and use them for the glory of the Lord. This reminds me of when Mary and Joseph had lost sight of Jesus when he was twelve years old and they had gone to Jerusalem. Three days later, when they found him this is was their conversation:

## Luke 2

**48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."**

**49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"**

(NKJV)

Even at the age of twelve, Jesus was *'making the most of the time'* that was given to him. Have you ever thought that as a believer you also are called not to waste any time and opportunity given to you? Everyone has them but sadly not everyone takes them! Every opportunity should be taken, we should not lose our time. Paul tells the Ephesians why they should not lose their time.

**(v.16) ...because the days are evil**

How different things really are than what we think! We often wait for a ‘better time’ or the ‘perfect time’. We analyze the situation with our limited minds and conclude that we should wait for another occasion. How foolish are we to stand upon our own thinking instead of simply *‘making the most of the time’* or the occasion that is presented before us by the Lord. But Paul tells us to take every opportunity *‘because the days are evil’!* The days or the times that we live in are *‘evil’* (PONEROS) meaning: hurtful, evil, diseased and malice. ALL the days and ALL the times are covered with spiritual darkness. Let us no longer wait for the ‘perfect time’ for there is no ‘perfect time’! Now is the time to act! In the book of Hebrews, on three occasions the writer tells his readers to act today and not wait for tomorrow (Heb. 3:7,8; 3:15; 4:7). In verse seventeen, we are once again told not to be foolish in life.

**<sup>17</sup> Because of this do not become foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

Because the days are evil and, in a way, time is short, believers are told *‘not to become foolish’*. This is the second time that Paul speaks of foolishness (v.15 and 17). Notice that he writes *‘do not become’*. This gives proof that a spiritual person can become a foolish child of God! We need to be very careful because the enemy lurks around us (1 Peter 5:8). We are not to become *‘foolish’* (APHRON) meaning: mindless, stupid or egocentric. This is the opposite of what we are told to be in verse fifteen with the word *‘wise’*. Paul is saying that it is possible to simply lose our ‘good spiritual sense’ and to become stupid before the Lord. Think of Lot when he chose where he would live knowing that it was part of the territory of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 13:10) and how that disturbed all of his life. He was *‘foolish’* and egocentric, wanting the best land for his sheep at the cost of living so close to an immoral society. Let us not be fools, because the times are evil!

**(v.17) ...but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

The word *‘understand’* (SUNIEMI) means: to put together, to comprehend. Again, believers are told to think deeply about what they are doing. This time, it deals with knowing what *‘the will of the Lord is’*.

This is what we should recognize and identify – the will of God. There is no greater goal in a Disciple’s life than desiring to please his Savior, by knowing and doing his Lord’s desire. Remember what James wrote:

### **James 1**

**23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;**

**24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.**

**25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**

**(NKJV)**

The word ‘*will*’ (THELEMA) means: a determination, a choice and a decree. One can say that there are two ‘wills’ of the Lord for his disciple. The first is his general will which is given for ALL his disciples. Love one another, do not lie and serve one another are but a few of these ‘wills’ or commandments if you prefer. There is NO CHOICE for the disciple but to apply them in his life. Then there is the specific will of God for you personally. You may be called to be a missionary or a professor in a Christian school. This specific ‘will’ is for you and not for ALL believers. We need to know what God wants of us in general but also what God wants of us specifically. Wisdom is knowing what God wants of me. One of the important things that God wants of all his children is:

**<sup>18</sup> And do not be drunk with wine (in which is dissipation), but be filled by the Spirit,**

Being wise is staying far away from the fruit of the vine or anything that has alcohol content in it. The word *'do not be'* (ME) means: an absolute denial. No disciple can ever do this – never! There are NO exceptions to this! The word *'drunk'* (METHUSKO) means: to be intoxicated. This gives the idea that we are under the influence or effect of something, as though that something takes control of you and how you act. This something is *'wine'* (OINOS) meaning: wine. It is the alcohol content in the wine that is taken that brings an effect on our personality and this IS NOT PERMITTED. When this happens there is *'dissipation'* (ASOTIA) meaning: profligacy, excess, riot. Alcohol in a person's blood often changes his character and he becomes *'another person'*, and this is not for the best or for the glory of God! Did you know that over 85% of crimes are made *'under the influence'* of alcohol or drugs? Drunkenness is not from God and its effects are terrible. So, what should believers do?

**(v.18) ...but be filled by the Spirit,**

The word *'filled'* (PLEROO) means: to make replete, to cram and to level up. Instead of being filled with wine and being controlled by its alcohol content, believers are told to be filled *'by the Spirit'*. Let the Holy Spirit take control of your life. Paul will give a short list of what being filled with the Spirit produces.

**<sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and singing praise in your heart to the Lord,**

- speaking to one another (communication)
- Psalms (are found in the Bible)
- Hymns (are not found in the Bible)
- Spiritual songs (that bring encouragement)

Being filled with the Holy Spirit will certainly be manifested through our speech! The person who is controlled by the Holy Spirit can be found in a crowd – just listen to his speech. They speak to everyone, they sing hymns and other spiritual songs. Their speech is filled with grace. All these songs and music must come from a special part in ourselves! Paul writes *‘in your heart’*, that is the soil which produces the verbal fruit of the Holy Spirit living in you. He also speaks of the person they are intended for: *‘the Lord’*. The lips of a spirit-filled child do not praise just anyone but they praise his Lord and Savior.

**<sup>20</sup> giving thanks always for all *things* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the God and Father**

Not only does the spirit-filled believer speak in a spiritual manner to one another but he also is *‘giving thanks’* (EUCCHARISTEO) meaning: to be grateful, to express gratitude to God! In other words, thanksgiving – that is the subject of our overflow to the Father! We should give thanks *‘always’* (PANTOTE) which means: at all times. Learning to give thanks to the Father, even when things seem horrible to us, manifests a heart that loves God for who he is and not for what he does for you. Paul writes that giving thanks is something that should be done always AND *‘for all things’* (PAS) which means: all, any, every, the whole. It refers not only to the things we enjoy but also to the things we do not understand that are happening to us. When Job lost everything that he loved except for his wife this is what is written of him:

### **Job 1**

**20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.**

**21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."**

**22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.**

**(NKJV)**

So, wisdom is giving thanks to the Lord (for everything). The last act of wisdom Paul speaks of has to do with the people around us. What else are believers to do in God's wisdom?

- not getting drunk
- being filled with the Spirit
- having spiritual songs in our hearts and lips
- being thankful for everything
- and submitting to one another.

**20 – The Christian Marriage**  
**Eph. 5:21-33**

<sup>21</sup> being subject to one another *out of reverence for Christ*

<sup>22</sup> —wives to their own husbands as to the Lord, <sup>23</sup> because *the* husband is *the* head of the wife, as also Christ *is the* head of the church (he himself *being the* Savior of the body). <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, thus also wives *should be subject* to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her; <sup>26</sup> in order that he might sanctify her by cleansing *her* with the washing of water by the word; <sup>27</sup> in order that he might present to himself the church glorious, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such *thing*, but that she may be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> Thus also husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who loves his own wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as also Christ *does* the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “For this *reason* a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> (This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.) <sup>33</sup> Only you also, each one *of you*, must thus love his own wife as himself, and the wife *must respect* her husband.

(LEB)

<sup>21</sup> being subject to one another *out of reverence for Christ*

This section deals with being ‘*subject to one another*’. The word ‘*subject*’ (HUPOTASSO) means: to obey, put under and subdue. This is the general attitude of the believer towards others. We do not see ourselves as being superior to others but as their servants. Remember what Christ said:

**Mark 10**

**42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.**

**43 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.**

**44 "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.**

**45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

(NKJV)

A person who says that he is filled with the Holy Spirit and yet is not at the service of others is not telling the truth! We are to be '*subject to one another*' for this reason and it is '*out of reverence for Christ*'. The word '*reverence*' (PHOBOS) means: alarm, fright, being afraid. He is Lord and Master, Creator and Sustainer. He has purchased you by his shed blood at the cross and believers owe him everything. It is out of deep reverence for Christ that we serve each other!

Paul will speak of submission from 5:22 – 6:9. Willful personal submission deals with relationships and relationships are probably one of the most difficult things to keep in balance in our lives. These are the relationships that Paul will be teaching the Ephesians about:

- Wives towards husbands 5:22-24, 33
- Husbands towards wives 5:25- 33
- Children towards parents 6:1-3
- Fathers towards children 6:4
- Slaves towards their masters 6:5-8
- Masters towards slaves 6:9

One important thing to be noticed in all of these relationships of submission, is that they are ALL linked in one way or another to Christ. Notice how Paul links them to Jesus Christ.

- For the wives it is – *as to the Lord* (5:22)
- For the husbands it is – *as Christ loved the church* (5:25)
- As for the children it is – *in the Lord* (6:1)
- For the fathers it is – *the training and instruction of the Lord* (6:4)
- For slaves it is – *as you would obey Christ* (6:5)
- For masters it is – *their Master and yours is in heaven* (6:9)

Whoever we are, there is no distinction or favoritism. We are all called to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ and not necessarily because of the qualities or personality of the person we are dealing with. This is important to understand. We do this because of Christ and what he has done in our favor. Our relationship with our spouse, children, masters & slaves may not be worthy of our deference unto them but that is not the question. We are to submit because of Jesus, his worth and love for us.

Another important thing to notice is the word '*being subject*' that we find in verse twenty-four. This word(HUPOTASSO) means: to obey, put under, subdue. It is a voluntary, intentional and deliberate placing of our self under the authority of someone else.

In verses 22-24 it is the wives who are asked to voluntarily place themselves under the authority of their husbands.

**<sup>22</sup>—wives to their own husbands as to the Lord, <sup>23</sup> because *the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church (he himself being the Savior of the body). <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, thus also wives *should be subject to their husbands in everything.****

Why should wives voluntarily place themselves under the leadership of their husbands? Right away, Paul gives the first reason: *'as to the Lord'*. It is the desire of the Lord God and that should suffice. The entire universe is structured and is governed by laws of physics. Everything functions as it should because everything is submitted to the pattern the Almighty has placed them under. When disorder steps in, it brings chaos and destruction. For our relationships to be healthy and happy they also need to be structured by the Almighty. Our duty is to recognize the laws that govern human relationships and abide by them. The second reason why wives are to place themselves under the leadership of Their husbands is:

**<sup>23</sup> because *the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church (he himself being the Savior of the body).***

Paul talks about the order of creation (man – woman – children). He brings the believers back to the very beginning of human relationships found with Adam and Eve and later with their children. The order of society is not something new, it is something that has always been, since man appeared on earth. It is a divine order that governs human civilization especially the family nucleus. When wives place themselves under the authority of their husbands there is a transfer of responsibility. It is the husband who becomes responsible for things that happen. If this is so, what does it mean to the husband that the responsibility is placed on him by God? It means that he becomes accountable before the Lord for his entire family.

Paul writes that the *'husband is the head of the wife'*. The word *'head'* (KEPHALE) means: the head, either literally or figuratively. He is the leader, the protector and provider. He should be the person that the wife can look up to for leadership, encouragement and comfort. Relationships become difficult when the husband is not the *'head'* that he should be. When one feels secure and respected in a relationship it is effortless to follow such a leader.

Also notice that Paul writes that wives should submit *to their own husbands* in verse twenty-two. It is false to believe that women are to voluntarily submit themselves to ALL men. This is not so and it never was! The same idea is also given in verse twenty-four. The wife is ‘linked’ to her husband like with no other man. Do wives have to respect other men – yes, but as she would with every other person she meets.

**(v.23) ...as also Christ is *the* head of the church (he himself *being the* Savior of the body).**

Paul reminds his readers what it means to be the head of someone by giving the example of Christ being the head of the church it is the same word in Greek in both instances. As the church looks to Christ for his leadership, so should wives look towards their husband for leadership also.

At this point we need to be reminded of the role of the wife in the life of her husband. If the husband is the head, does this mean that she is to be silent before him? Paul brings the model of headship all the way back to the Garden of Eden and we must never forget why the Lord God gave Eve to Adam.

### **Gen. 2**

**20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.**

**21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.**

**22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.**

**23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."**

**24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

**25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**

**(NKJV)**

Adam was in need of ‘*a helper comparable to him*’. The word ‘*helper*’(EZER) in Hebrew means: aid, help. She is not his slave but an aid that offers her help. Adam needed help and the Lord God gave him Eve to complement him and encourage him in his life. This is what Matthew Henry wrote concerning Eve in Gen. 2:20.

“...the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor by his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved”

**<sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, thus also wives *should be subject to their husbands in everything.***

A wife is never asked to be under the authority of any other man but her husband. In what sense should she be under his leadership? It seems that it is *‘in everything’*. The word *‘everything’* (PAS) means: any, all, every. Does this mean that the husband is to dictate every aspect of his wife’s life? Has God decreed that the husband is the dictator, tyrant and despot over his wife? If not, what does it mean that *‘wives should be subject to their husbands in everything’*? It means that if ever there is a disagreement, wives should let the husband have authority and by this the responsibility of the outcome of the disagreement is in HIS hands. A wise husband will later recognize his fault and understand that his wife is there to bring him help which is manifested with her thoughts and ideas. Does *‘in everything’* have a limit? Absolutely! A wife is never called to submit to her husband if what he is asking is against the general will of God. All that is done is for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). A last aspect of the relationship a wife has with her husband is found in verse thirty-three:

**<sup>33</sup> Only you also, each one *of you*, must thus love his own wife as himself, and the wife *must respect her husband.***

The word *‘respect’* (PHOBEO) means: to frighten, to be alarmed, to revere. No wonder the Lord asks a wife to *‘respect’* her husband. It is well-known that human psychological studies all come to the same conclusion: One of the most desired things that a husband wants from his wife is respect. Any married woman would be wise to take into consideration what the Lord says and *‘respect’* her husband. When he does make a wrong decision (and he will) and you had placed yourself under his authority, it would be wrong to say: *I told you so!* It would only manifest a lack of respect and sarcasm. How can a husband lose his wife’s respect? When ...

- He doesn’t keep his word
- He doesn’t provide for his family
- He always thinks of himself first
- He doesn’t spend time with the family
- He brings shame upon her

**<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her; <sup>26</sup> in order that he might sanctify her by cleansing *her* with the washing of water by the word; <sup>27</sup> in order that he might present to himself the church glorious, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such *thing*, but that she may be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> Thus also husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who loves his own wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as also Christ *does* the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “For this *reason* a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> (This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.) <sup>33</sup> Only you also, each one *of you*, must thus love his own wife as himself, and the wife *must respect her husband*.**

In this section of human relationships, the Lord now turns his sight to the husband.

**<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her;**

Husbands are told: *‘love your wives’*. The word *‘love’* (AGAPAO) means: to love in a social or moral sense. It also manifests the attitude of the Father towards the Son. This means that a husband should manifest love for his wife just as the Father manifested love for his Son! If husbands would just do this it would change the face of every Christian marriage on earth. Who would not desire to voluntarily submit to a person who manifests so much love for them? For all husbands who desire to have greater harmony with their spouse and wonders how this can be done, Paul has the answer. Love you wife as the Father loves his Son!

The example given is *‘as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her.’* A husband is called to have Christ as his model for he is the husband of the church (Rev. 19:7). How did he love her? Up to what point was he ready to go for her? As a husband, Jesus had NO LOVE LIMITS for the church. He even *‘gave himself for her’*. He gave his life and willingly suffered for her benefit. Husband, this is what you are called to do. This is true love.

Advancing with the example of Christ being the perfect husband, Paul continues to show what a husband needs to do in regards to his wife.

**<sup>26</sup> in order that he might sanctify her by cleansing *her* with the washing of water by the word;**

Not as Christ did on the cross, but in a special way, he needs to do what he can to '*sanctify her*'. If Christ did this at the cross, how are husbands to do this in a practical way? By...

- Teaching her when she asks about certain verses
- Reading the bible with her
- Praying with her
- Having ministries with her
- Encouraging and edifying her in the Lord

Husbands are to participate in her Christian growth. They need to provide (even at their own expense) for her to attend bible conferences specially oriented for women. They should take care of the kids and let her partake in churches ministries for women. This is how Christ loved his church, by denying himself so that she could grow.

**<sup>27</sup> in order that he might present to himself the church glorious, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such *thing*, but that she may be holy and blameless.**

Christ had a plan for his wife – the Church. It was for her to become '*glorious*' and '*not having a spot or wrinkle*'. He also wanted her to become '*holy and blameless*'. Husbands CAN NOT do that, only Christ is able to make these things true. But, as a husband, do you also have a spiritual plan for your wife?

**<sup>28</sup> Thus also husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who loves his own wife loves himself.**

After giving the example of the love of Christ for his wife (which is his own body), Paul reminds husbands that they also need to see their wives as being part of themselves. A husband is to love his wife, '*as their own bodies*'. How does a man love his own body?

- He nourishes it
- He keeps it warm
- He protects it from the sun
- He cleans it
- He buys special things for it

If we are able to do these things for our body, husbands are called to do the same for their spouse. In other words, a husband is to nurture and cherish his wife because she is also part of his body. How do I come to this conclusion? Simply because it is written!

## Genesis 2

**23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."**

**24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

**(NKJV)**

When Adam saw Eve, he knew she was ‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’. It is also written that *‘she was taken out of man’* and that *‘they shall become one flesh’*. When a man is joined with a woman they become ‘ONE’ not only physically but also spiritually. Husbands need to ask themselves ‘how do we love ourselves?’

- We think of ourselves first
- We are very generous with ourselves
- We pamper ourselves
- We do what we like to do

Again, if we are able to love ourselves like this, as husbands we are also called to love our wives the exact same way. Filled with wisdom Paul writes:

**(v.28) ... The one who loves his own wife loves himself.**

Since our wives are part of ourselves, the more we love our wife the more we love ourselves! How can this be? Simply because when we love our wife the way the Lord teaches us the more she will respond by returning this love. A man is certainly a fool when he does not love his wife!

**<sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as also Christ *does* the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body.**

In what way can a husband hate his wife (*his own flesh*)? By...

- Refusing her the legitimate things she should have
- Denying her physical and psychological care
- Not being present in her life
- Not appreciating and encouraging her
- Denying her what she would like simply because you don't understand that specific desire

If a husband is to never hate his own flesh what should he do instead?

**(v.29) ...but nourishes and cherishes it, just as also Christ *does* the church,<sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body.**

How did Christ '*nourish and cherish*' his wife the church?

- He spoke to her
- He encouraged her
- He warned her
- He protected her
- He spoke of God to her
- He provided for her
- He was present in her life

Again, husbands are called to look at the relationship Jesus had with his church. Look at how he dealt with her and how he was always caring, teaching and protecting her and how he gave the ultimate sacrifice (his own life) to save her from eternal judgment.

**<sup>31</sup> “For this *reason* a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> (This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.) <sup>33</sup> Only you also, each one *of you*, must thus love his own wife as himself, and the wife *must respect* her husband.**

The husband is called to '*leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife*'. We are once again pulled back in time, all the way to our first parents. Although Adam and Eve had no parents, we are told to leave them and become 'one' with our spouse. What does it mean in daily life to 'leave his father and mother'?

- You don't count on them any longer to provide for you
- You don't run to them when there is a problem
- They don't have authority over you
- They can't tell you how to run things
- You allow your wife to be who she is and do not expect her to be like your mother

So many marital problems are caused because the husband or the wife has not left their parents to begin a family of their own. The husband is still under his mothers' apron and by distance she still pulls the strings in his marriage.

**<sup>32</sup> (This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.) <sup>33</sup> Only you also, each one *of you*, must thus love his own wife as himself, and the wife *must respect* her husband.**

All of this is a mystery – Christ and the church. It is difficult to understand how God can have such an intimate life with his beloved creatures. This is how a husband '*must love his own wife as himself*'. I would like you to notice that there are nine things that a husband must do in relationship with his wife.

- Love her
- Give himself up for her
- Make her holy
- Love her as his own body
- Do not hate her
- Feed her
- Care for her
- Leave father and mother
- Be united with her

In contrast there are only two things mentioned (submission & respect) for the wife to do unto her husband. Why do you think this is so? Whether for the husband or the wife all of this is out of reverence for Christ (5:21)

## 21 – Relationships

### Eph. 6:1-9

**Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>“Honor your father and mother” (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>“in order that it may be well with you, and you may *live a long time* on the earth.” <sup>4</sup>And fathers, do not make your children angry, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ, <sup>6</sup> not *while being watched*, as people pleasers, but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> serving with goodwill as to the Lord and not to people, <sup>8</sup> *because you* know that each one of you, whatever good he should do, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. <sup>9</sup> And masters, do the same *things* to them, giving up threats, knowing that both their Lord and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him.**

(LEB)

In this section, Paul continues to write about relationships. Have you noticed how difficult it is to have a balanced, fruitful & fulfilling relationship? Sometimes relationships never seem to work and other times they do but only for a while. Rare are relationships that last a life-time without any sort of “growing pains”. There are some relationships that you personally choose in life (personal friends or spouse) while others are imposed (siblings, co-workers). Our lives are filled with relationships, how important it is for believers to listen and understand the message God has for them in this section.

Our first “type” of relationship is the “Family type” – we are all born into this one and it falls into the category of relationships that we did not choose. I personally did not choose my father but if I would have, I would have chosen someone else. My brother and sister were much older than me and if I would have had the choice, they would have been closer to me in age. I did not choose that my family divorced when I was seven, nor did I choose to move to New York City – far from the rest of my family. I suppose it could be the same with some of you. If you could, you would have changed some family relationships. But we simply can’t! Because of this we need to be attentive to what the Lord teaches us about relationships.

## **Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.**

This is a continuation from our last section which spoke about the relationships between spouses. Paul now speaks to children which are the fruit of their relationship. He writes that children are to *'obey your parents'*. The word *'obey'* (HUPOKONO) means: to listen attentively, to heed or conform. Children are to give an attentive ear to what their parents are saying and then act accordingly. This is difficult for every teenager who rebel against almost everything their parents would have them do or not do. But is there a reason why all children should listen to their parents? Does the Lord God say this only to irritate them? We should be attentive to his ways since the Lord has perfect wisdom. There is a reason for this and it is simply because: *'for this is right'*. The word *'right'* (DIKAIOS) means: equitable, just, holy and right. In other words, children are to obey because God says so, it is the good thing to do. This does not mean that parents are not to explain things, quite the contrary they should! It simply means that in the end children should do what they are told because it is the right thing to do before the Lord. There is a double-sided promise attached to this commandment which is found in verses two and three.

**<sup>2</sup>“Honor your father and mother” (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>“in order that it may be well with you, and you may *live a long time on the earth.*”**

- that it may be well with you
- that you may live a long time on the earth

In reality it's a “good deal” – obey your parents and life will be much better and longer for you. I wonder how many men and women have been or are imprisoned, simply because they did not listen to their father and mother?

The second relationship has to do with fathers concerning their children.

**<sup>4</sup> And fathers, do not make your children angry, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

Fathers have an important role to play in the life of their children. Here Paul covers two of them.

**(v.4) ...do not make your children angry**

The first, speaks about not making your children angry. The word angry (PARORGIZO) means to enrage, to provoke violently. Sometimes the reaction to a father's 'NO' may be fierce on their part, this we have no control of. What Paul is saying is that as a father HIS part must not be done in such a way where automatically the child will respond angrily. Our words need to be chosen wisely and be filled with wisdom. In our tone, they need to hear that we love them and are concerned. We are not to be brutes or tyrants with them.

### **Proverbs 15**

**1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.**

**(NKJV)**

### **Ephesians 4**

**29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

**(NKJV)**

Fathers should not provoke their children by their speech or deeds for it will get them nowhere. In fact, it will dishonor the Lord God. Remember how it was when you were young and your father (or mother) rebuked you unwisely and how that irritated you. Don't imitate them, you're a child of God now and that makes all the difference.

The second, is that fathers are to bring their children up in the Lord by training and instruction.

**(v.4) ...but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

All fathers have a ministry towards their children and that is bringing them up in the Lord. (This ministry is not exclusively for fathers, but Paul is speaking to them in this section.) Fathers are to '*discipline*' (PAIDEIA) meaning: education, training, discipline. This gives the idea that fathers are to teach the ways of the Lord to their children.

### **Deuteronomy 6**

**6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.**

**7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (NKJV)**

Fathers are also called to bring spiritual '*instruction*' to their children. The word '*instruction*' (NOUTHESIA) means: mild rebuke or warning. Not only are they to teach but also to remind them and possibly (if they do not respond well) to rebuke them mildly.

Our third relationship deals with a slave towards his master. Today, we will consider this section as a working relationship, since slavery has been abolished (Praise God!). As someone who is working for others, our attitude should be the following:

**<sup>5</sup>Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ, <sup>6</sup>not *while being watched*, as people pleasers, but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup>servicing with goodwill as to the Lord and not to people, <sup>8</sup>*because you know that each one of you, whatever good he should do, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.***

The first thing, that Paul teaches about this relationship is '*obey your earthly masters*'. The word '*obey*' (HUPAKONO) means: to listen attentively, to heed and to conform. This is the same word that Paul uses in verse one with the children towards their fathers. Slaves (for us today it would be workers) need to listen to their superior and act accordingly. This should not be done with a negative attitude but rather '*with fear and trembling*'. The word '*fear*' (PHOBOS) means: to be put in fear, alarm or fright. Servants should be worried about doing things right and the consequences of not doing so. (As a young and un-saved man, I lost a job because of not caring too much about the quality of my work! On the other hand, when I did receive salvation my attitude changed and with time I was well looked upon by the authorities and I became head of three departments where I worked!) The word '*trembling*' (TROMOS) means: quaking with fear. Work should not be taken lightly. It seems that Paul is emphasizing the attitude that workers should have. They should work seriously and diligently.

All of this should be done with '*sincerity of your heart*'. The word '*sincerity*' (HAPLOTES) means: singleness, without self-seeking. The work that one does should not be self-seeking it should be for the benefit of the ones you work for. One should do the best they can for their sake. Paul then describes what he means by '*sincerity of your heart*'.

**(v.5) ...as to Christ, <sup>6</sup>not *while being watched*, as people pleasers,**

As I wrote earlier, ALL relationships are related in some way to OUR personal relationship with Christ. So, people are called to work as though they are working for Christ himself! A verse that comes to mind is:

## Philippians 2

**14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,**

**15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,**

**(NKJV)**

Paul will now tell the Ephesian slaves how NOT to do things and to how RIGHTFULLY do things for their masters.

**<sup>6</sup> not *while being watched*, as people pleasers,**

This is not how to work. It is as though you are '*being watched*'. The word '*being watched*' (OPHTHALMODOULEIA) means: that needs watching. Some workers work fine as long as someone is watching them but as soon as this is not the case, they become careless. This is not how Christian workers should do their jobs. Work is to be done for the Lord with or without any supervision. This speaks of the honesty manifested in our work. Paul also writes '*as people pleasers*' (ANTHROPARESKOS) which means: man-courting. This is the another side of the same coin - working when being watched just to make certain that you please the one watching you. Only hypocrites do that!

**(v.6) ...but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart,**

One should work well all the time because he is working for the Lord! By working well, slaves (or workers) are '*doing the will of God*'. The word '*will*' (THELEMA) means: a determination, a choice.

This is what God wants you to do. No one should wonder if he or she is allowed not to work well, or be lazy or not have his work at heart. Just as God said ‘Thou shalt not steal’ he also says ‘Obey your earthly masters’. This obeying should be done with the right attitude *‘from the heart’*. The word *‘heart’* (PSUCHE) means: spirit, mind, soul – that immaterial part of you in you! Don’t grumble, complain or protest while you work – do it out of love for your Lord and Savior. Be proud that you are given the grace to worship the Lord through your work!

**<sup>7</sup> serving with goodwill as to the Lord and not to people,**

It seems that Paul is repeating himself but by placing emphasis he is pointing out the importance of his teaching. We serve:

- with fear and trembling
- with sincerity of heart
- not as being watched
- with a heart-felt desire to do so

Paul adds *‘with goodwill’* (EUNOIA) meaning: kindness and benevolence. This is what your master should see when he looks at you working! It shows when you work with a heart full of happiness. The idea of working *‘as to the Lord’* is once more placed up-front. I wonder if we get what Paul is emphasizing? Work as for the Lord and in all you do, do it for the Lord.

## 1 Corinthians 10

**31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

(NKJV)

The apostle Paul has encouraged the slaves to be honest in their work, not to please men but to please the Lord who has redeemed them. He will bring one last point and this is to encourage them. This should also encourage all true believers since all that we do should also be done for the glory of the Lord God Almighty.

**<sup>8</sup> *because you know that each one of you, whatever good he should do, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.***

Paul reminds the slaves *'that each of you'*. This manifests that the Lord God is not forgetful of the work of EACH and EVERY single person whether he is a free man or a slave. God is watchful over all of his children no matter who they are or their social status – they are ALL his children by adoption!

This is what God is watchful of *'whatever the good he should do'*. Now the word *'good'* (AGATHOS) means: good, well, benefit. There is no small amount of *'good'* that will be forgotten. Remember the words of Christ:

### **Mark 9**

**41 "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.**

**(NKJV)**

All the good that is done either by slaves, servants, mothers, children, rich or poor, whoever they may be, they *'will receive back from the Lord'*. The words *'receive back'* (KOMIZO) means: to take care, to provide, bring and receive. What is done for the name and glory of the Lord, will be given back to that person by the Lord himself. This will be done at what is called the Tribunal of Christ!

## 2 Corinthians 5

**9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.**

**10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

**(NKJV)**

All of this work should be done with the following attitude:

1. Acting as if it were for Christ (v.5)
2. Not being hypocrites (v.6)
3. Acting from the heart (v.6)
4. Knowing that God will repay all you do that is right (v.7,8)

Our last relationship is the opposite of what we have just studied. It deals with the masters toward his slaves.

**<sup>9</sup> And masters, do the same *things* to them, giving up threats, knowing that both their Lord and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him.**

Paul teaches us how to relate to those who work for you. First, we see that masters have to treat their workers right - '*do the same thing to them*' just like slaves were taught to act out of their hearts for their masters because of the Lord. The masters also have to have the same attitude towards their slaves. If today you have authority over workers, it is your responsibility to treat them well and in all justice. Be fair in all of your relationships as unto the Lord for he has been more than fair with you!

Paul also writes '*giving up threats*'! In those days the lives of slaves were in their master's hands and I can see that it would be common that they would use threats (of violence) against them to get the work done. As a believer all threats are out of the question for this is not how Christ worked with his disciples. We are also told why using threats should stop – '*knowing that both their Lord and yours is in heaven*'. Paul is saying – don't forget that their Lord is also your Lord and he knows what is going on! God is not partial and will not let threats 'slip by' simply because you are the master! Actually, there is only ONE master and that is the Lord God. So, masters are:

1. Not to threaten them
2. To remember that both have the same Lord and Master
3. That there is no favoritism with Christ and it should be the same with them

## 22 – The armor of God

### Eph. 6:10-17

**<sup>10</sup> Finally, become strong in the Lord and in the might of his strength. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil, <sup>12</sup> because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. <sup>13</sup> Because of this, take up the full armor of God, in order that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, girding your waist with truth, and putting on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and binding *shoes* under your feet with the preparation of the good news of peace, <sup>16</sup> in everything taking up the shield of faith, with which you are able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one, <sup>17</sup> and receive the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,**

(LEB)

In this section Paul speaks of our spiritual warfare. Because this warfare is invisible, we tend to forget all about it. If believers could see the casualties of this spiritual war, would they not be more active? When you think of it, the casualties are very present – right in front of our eyes. We see them everyday, we hear about them all the time, but we don't link all of this to spiritual warfare. What is the root of all the following problems:

- Alcohol & drug abuse
- Teen violence & street gangs
- Wars & terrorism
- Poverty & hunger
- Hatred & racism
- False religions & New Age movement
- Abuse & exploitation of women and children
- Slavery & cheap labor
- Social injustice & upheaval

It is sin and all that it implies! Every day you can see the impact of the spiritual war in the newspapers, TV and internet but it's as though 'it's not our war'.

Don't fool yourself! If you are born-again it is your war, and you have been enrolled in the Lord's army. You can not hide and there is no safe place. Our spiritual enemies are ever present, trying to hurt the children of God so that they will become useless for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

**<sup>10</sup> Finally, become strong in the Lord and in the might of his strength.**

Paul tells the Ephesian believers to '*become strong*' (ENDUNAMOO) which means: to empower, enable, make strong. Literally it means '*be strengthened*'. Paul knows that all believers need to be strengthened when they are in battle. Most of us do not feel strong or ready for war, so what are we to do? How do believers become strong enough to face this spiritual battle? Paul writes '*become strong in the Lord*'. It is the Lord that enables his children to be strong and to be able not only to face but to overcome the enemy. Do you remember what the Lord God told Joshua just before he began to conquer the Promise Land?

### Joshua 1

**5 "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.**

**6 "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.**

**7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.**

(NKJV)

God told Joshua *'be strong and of good courage'* and then he repeats himself with *'be strong and very courageous'* How was Joshua going to do that? *'I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you'*, would be the answer. With the Ephesians it is the same:

**(v.10) ...in the might of his strength.**

Believers are to be strong in the Lord because of HIS might and HIS strength. The word *'might'* (ISCHUS) means: forcefulness, ability, might. The word *'strength'* (KRATOS) means: vigor and dominion. The Lord God delights in delivering his people through his mighty hand as he did with the crossing of the Red Sea. He also fed his people for 40 years before they entered the Promise Land. Let all believers rely on the power and might of the King of kings. He will be their shield and their fortress! God is there to empower his children and to do so he gives them an armor!

**<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,**

We are told to *'Put on the full armor of God.'* Note that it is written **the full armor** of God. As soldiers we must be fully dressed for combat. If an enemy wants to kill you and sees you are missing a piece of armor – where do you think he will strike you? He will strike you where you are the most vulnerable. As believers, we use God's weapons but we rarely use all of them! In this section we are given two reasons why we are to wear the **full armor** of God. The first one is found in verse 11.

**(v.11) ...so that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,**

The first reason for wearing the full armor is so you can take your *'stand against'* the devil's *'stratagems'*. The word *'stand'* (HISTEMI) means: to stand, establish. The armor of God will enable you to stand up instead of falling to the ground. It will permit you to face the enemy instead of running away! This stand is *'against'* (PROS) meaning: a motion towards, to that end. The specific reason is that you will be able to face and stand before the devil. Paul writes that the devil has something particular that he uses against believers and that is his *'stratagems'* (METHODEIA) meaning: travesty, trickery, lie in wait. What is meant by the devil's schemes? Just look at how he approached Eve in the garden. He brought doubts to her mind and openly told her that God had lied to her and did not want her to have the best she could have. It seems that without the full armor of God, believers will not be able to discern the tricks the devil uses against them – for we will lack the wisdom to do so.

The second reason for wearing the full armor is found in verse 13.

**<sup>13</sup> Because of this, take up the full armor of God, in order that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand.**

The second reason speaks of being able to resist the devil. Sometimes our stand against the enemy is not done in one day. Sometimes it takes weeks and even months of perseverance before believers gain the victory. That is when *'resistance'* or perseverance is needed. Without the full armor of God, I cannot stand up when a day of evil comes – for I am too weak and I will not be able to resist and persevere. Now that we know why it is important to wear the full armor of God, let us continue with our text. Reminding the Ephesians that they are in a spiritual war and that the Lord God will provide an armor for them, Paul points out who the enemy is.

**<sup>12</sup> because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.**

This is who they will '*struggle*' against. The word '*struggle*' (PALE) means: to vibrate, giving the idea of wrestling. It seems that this is an arm to arm combat! The struggle IS NOT against '*blood*' (HAIMA) meaning: blood of men or animal. Nor is it against the '*flesh*' (SARX) meaning: flesh stripped from its skin, the body as opposed to the soul. Paul confirms that the real enemy is not made of flesh and blood. It is not a person or some created beast. The enemy is not of this world but rather of another – the spiritual world. We would call them, fallen angels, demons, impure spirits. Paul names four types of fallen angelic enemies.

The first are '*rulers*' (ARCHE) meaning: a commencement, chief in rank. These fallen angels seem to be high ranking in the order of things in the kingdom of darkness. Paul also speaks of them in Eph. 1:21 and 3:10.

The second are '*authorities*' (EXOUSIA) meaning: force, magistrate, jurisdiction. Paul speaks about them in Eph. 1:21, 2:2, 3:10.

The third are '*rulers of this darkness*' (KOSMOKRATOR) meaning: a world ruler, an epithet of Satan. The correct rendering is '*the world rulers of the darkness of this age*'. These reign in the dominion of '*darkness*' (SKOTOS) meaning: obscurity, shadiness. This is the only place in the New Testament where this Greek word is used

The fourth are the '*spiritual forces of wickedness*'. The word '*spiritual*' (PNEUMATIKOS) means: non-carnal, supernatural. There is no doubt that Paul is not speaking of human rulers. The word '*wickedness*' (PONERIA) means: depravity, malice, iniquity.

This is what they delight in. Paul writes that they are to be found in the *'heavenly places'* (EPOURANIOS) meaning: above the sky, celestial. These are the enemies that each and every true believer has to stand up to. It is the armor of God that will give me the wisdom and strength that I need for victory! So, let's look at the armor of God.

Some believe that it is an *invisible armor* that one puts on when he gets up in the morning! The person mimics the action of placing all these parts on them believing that this will protect them. As we will see, this is not the case at all. It is not something invisible that you put on rather it is something that you do!

#### 1. The belt of truth.

**<sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, girding your waist with truth, and putting on the breastplate of righteousness**

What does *'girding your waist with truth'* speak of? First, let's look at the word *'girding'* (PERIZONNUMI) which means: to fasten one's belt. This is the first element of the armor given by Paul. A believer must be tightly wrapped around with *'truth'* (ALETHEIA) meaning: true, truly and verily. It speaks of living without lies, being honest and truthful, having no one to tell your dark secrets to because there are none! How can one be a witness for Jesus who is the truth (John 14:6) if he is not living in truth? The apostle John rejoiced after those who live in God's truth!

#### 2 John 1

**4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.**

(NKJV)

If the enemy can find a lack of truth in your life, he will do all he can to expose you and your testimony for the Lord, will crumble.

## 2. The breastplate of righteousness.

### (v. 14) ...and putting on the breastplate of righteousness

As the believer needs to gird himself with truth, we see that he also has to be *'putting on'* (ENDUO) which gives a sense of sinking into a garment. In both instances the believer has to do something, be active and manifest a godly character. Again, this is not some sort of hocus-pocus, magical thing that happens. The believer needs to slip on the *'breastplate'* (THORAX) which means: the chest, a corset. The *'breastplate'* protected the heart and the important organs of the chest. What is greatly needed to protect here is our *'righteousness'* (DIKAIOSUNE' meaning: equity of character. The enemy will try to destroy your character through all sorts of events and circumstances. If you get angry, if you lie, if you cheat, the enemy will gladly use this to tear you down. A child of God needs to manifest a godly character. This speaks of living in the light and having received the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's being a true son or daughter of the Almighty.

## 3. The feet of readiness.

### <sup>15</sup> and binding *shoes* under your feet with the preparation of the good news of peace,

With this piece of armor, one needs to be *'binding'* (HUPODEO) meaning: binding under one's feet. Once again, this piece of armor must be solidly attached to the believer. This was to protect the feet. For if the feet are not protected you can not advance and will become an easy prey since you are no longer mobile. What we see is that the believer must move forward with *'preparation'* (HETOIMASIS) meaning: to prepare, to be prepared.

His banner is *'the good news of peace'*. Believers are to move forward with the gospel story on their lips. It speaks of being ready to serve especially as an evangelist – talking about salvation, sharing your faith. Remember what Paul wrote:

### **Romans 10**

**13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."**

**14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?**

**15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"**

**(NKJV)**

4. The shield of faith.

**<sup>16</sup>in everything taking up the shield of faith, with which you are able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one,**

Our fourth piece of spiritual armor is the *'shield'* (THUREOS) which means: a large shield. The Roman infantry had different types of shields. The one Paul is writing about is the shield that was used in defending. It was long and large and covered most of the body. This is not the ones used in arm to arm combat when soldiers would have a sword, in one hand and a smaller shield in the other. Paul is saying that in the believers combat against his spiritual enemy he needs a lot of protection and this protection is his *'faith'* (PISTIS) which means: credence, conviction and assurance.

Our faith will protect us, it will *'quench'* (SBENNUMI) meaning: to extinguish. Our faith will totally blow away the *'flaming arrows'* of the enemy. The word *'flaming'* (PUROO) means: to be ignited, to glow and to be inflamed. Arrows were dipped in tar, then lit up hoping that it would cause a fire in the enemy's camp. The word *'arrows'* (BELOS) means: a missile, spear, arrow or dart. Whatever it may be that is thrown at you it will be quenched because of your faith. It is the *'evil one'* that is using these *'flaming arrows'* against you. The term *'evil one'* (PONEROS) means; hurtful, evil and vicious. Do not be mesmerized, the enemy is never to be seen as partly good for he is evil! So, have faith and believe what God tells you and do not hesitate to act upon his word. By doing, this your shield of faith will become stronger.

#### 5. The helmet of salvation.

**<sup>17</sup> and receive the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,**

Have you noticed that this is the only piece of the armor that the believer receives? It is because it deals with salvation and one can not earn or buy his salvation! So, what must the believer receive? It is the *'helmet'* (PERIKEPHAIAIA) which means: encirclement of the head. It is something that we place over our heads. What protects the head of the believer, or what must be kept in his head? It is *'salvation'* (SOTERION) meaning: defender, defense and salvation. Our salvation must be securely kept in mind. Believers, while in combat, must come back to the cross and the grace They received through the offering of Jesus' own life as a sacrifice for their sins. This salvation of yours will keep you going and moving forward in battle.

#### 6. The sword of the Spirit.

**(v.17) ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**

This piece of spiritual equipment is different because it is the only offensive weapon that is given. Believers are given a sword not only to defend themselves but also to attack their enemy. The word '*sword*' (MACHAIRA) means: a knife, punishment or a sword. This is the '*sword of the Spirit*' (PNEUMA) meaning: a current of air, a spirit or the Holy Spirit. No wonder believers are told not to quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19) and not to grieve him (Eph. 4:30). Our spiritual sword will become useless if we do not have a good relationship with the Holy Spirit. The believer's sword is not made of metal but '*the word of God*'. In Greek '*word*' (RHEMA) means: an utterance, a saying or a word. It is the word of God that is to be used against our spiritual enemy. This is exactly what Christ did when he was attacked by Satan in the desert (Luke 4:1-12).

By living in the truth, being righteous, spreading the gospel, believing upon God, having salvation in you and using the word of God, you will be able to take your stand against the schemes of the enemy and you will be able to position yourself when the day of evil comes along.

## 23 – Conclusion

### Ephesians 6:18-24

<sup>18</sup> with all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the Spirit, and to this *end* being alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and for me, that a word may be given to me at the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for the sake of which I am an ambassador in chains, that *in them* I may speak freely, as it is necessary for me to speak. <sup>21</sup> Now, so that you also may know *my circumstances*, what I am doing, Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all *things*, <sup>22</sup> whom I have sent to you for this *reason*, that you may know *our circumstances*, and he may encourage your hearts.

<sup>23</sup> Peace to the brothers and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace *be* with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

(LEB)

In the conclusion of his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul speaks about prayer. Some believe that prayer is part of the armor of God but it would be out of context since it is not a part of a real armor as the other parts were. Prayer seems to be something that is added ‘on top of’ the armor, something that covers all other aspects. Paul says that the believer’s prayers should be in all ‘*supplication*’ (DEESIS) meaning: petition, request, and supplication. This speaks of the attitude in prayer. One should not be nonchalant and lukewarm as though it didn’t really matter if they were answered or not. Some pray, without a real desire or a sense of urgency. Remember what Jesus said about disciples with such an attitude:

### Revelation 3

15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--

**18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.**

**(NKJV)**

This is how Paul tells the Ephesians to pray.

**<sup>18</sup> with all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the Spirit, and to this *end* being alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints**

The first way is '*at all times*'. This gives the idea that one should be ready to pray in any circumstance, at anytime and anywhere. Believers should bring to the Lord all of their prayers for none are too insignificant or trivial. In good times, as in hard times, prayer should be part of the believer's daily living.

### **Psalms 55**

**16 As for me, I will call upon God, And the LORD shall save me.**

**17 Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.**

**(NKJV)**

The second way is '*in the Spirit*'. This is in contrast with the flesh. James speaks about believers who pray for the things that will satisfy their flesh and not for the glory of God. Then they wonder why God does not answer them!

## James 4

**1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**

**2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.**

**3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.**

**(NKJV)**

The third way is *'being alert'* (AGRUPNEO) meaning: to be sleepless, keep awake. It is sometimes difficult to be alert when we pray. Our minds often wander and our attention is elsewhere. Paul encourages the Ephesians to keep their minds on the Lord when they pray, just as we see the Psalmists do:

## Psalms 61

**1 <<To the Chief Musician. On a stringed instrument. A Psalm of David.>> Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer.**

**2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.**

**(NKJV)**

The forth way of praying is *'with all perseverance'*. What is also needed is persistency in our prayers. We should continue to pray and bring our petitions before the Lord. We should never give up and always hope that the Lord will answer. Perseverance in praying was also the teaching of Jesus.

## Luke 18

**1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,**

**2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.**

**3 "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'**

**4 "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,**

**5 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"...**

**(NKJV)**

The fifth way is *'for all the saints'*. This was to manifest that praying should overflow unto the brethren. Believers should care enough to pray for those who are in the faith. This reflects what Jesus said in Acts. 20:35 that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

**<sup>19</sup> and for me, that a word may be given to me at the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for the sake of which I am an ambassador in chains, that *in them* I may speak freely, as it is necessary for me to speak.**

Paul also asks the Ephesians not to forget him in their prayers. He needed their prayers and supplications before the Lord. Even though he was in prison he kept on ministering to those he met. What a model for all believers! How easily we tend to 'sit back' when things are not going our way. In verse nineteen, Paul tells the Ephesians what to pray for him about.

The first thing they could pray for is *'that a word may be given to me at the opening of my mouth'*. Paul's desire was to evangelize and he was asking for the Lord's help. He needed the right words to be *'given'* to him. The word *'given'* (DIDOMI) means: to give, to bestow, to bring forth. In his wisdom, Paul knew that his words would not suffice but only the words of God would have the power necessary to bring forth salvation.

## Romans 1

**16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

(NKJV)

May we also never believe that our words, our thoughts, our system will bring someone to faith.

The second thing they could pray for Paul was *'to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel'*. Although we may see Paul as a Christian 'super hero' he actually wasn't. He had his fears and trembling during his ministry. He needed supernatural *'boldness'* (PARRHEIA) meaning: outspokenness, assurance. He needed courage and boldness and so do we!

The third item that Paul wanted them to pray for was *'that in them I may speak freely'*. Paul speaks of his chains and the fact that he is an ambassador (PRESBEUO) which means: to be a senior, act as a representative. How could he still be a representative of Christ and spread the gospel if he was in chains? Paul did not have a limited view of ministry. Even in chains he could represent Christ but what he needed was to be able to *'speak freely'*. The word *'freely'* (PARRHESIAZOMAI) means: to be frank in utterance, to speak boldly. We also can speak boldly and be frank in our presentation of the gospel. Paul was limited in the amount of people that he saw.

But when he saw them, he asked for prayers so that he could evangelize with the Lord's words and power. Paul knew that it was *'necessary for me to speak'*. The word *'necessary'* (DEON) means: be met, must, ought and should. He was called to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and he was burning to do so. May I ask if it is the same with you?

We now come to the conclusion of the epistle to the Ephesians.

**<sup>21</sup> Now, so that you also may know *my circumstances*, what I am doing, Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all *things*, <sup>22</sup> whom I have sent to you for this very *reason*, that you may know *our circumstances*, and he may encourage your hearts.**

In verse twenty-one Paul speaks of Tychicus, it is the first time in this Epistle but not the first time in his writings:

- Acts 20:4
- Col. 4:7
- 2 Tim. 4:12
- Titus 3:12

Tychicus was a beloved co-worker in the Lord. He was a missionary that worked alongside Paul like Timothy and others did. Let's look at what is written concerning him in verse twenty-one?

**<sup>21</sup> Now, so that you also may know *my circumstances*, what I am doing, Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all *things*,**

He was sent so that the Ephesians would know *'my circumstances'* (KATA) which means: according as, pertaining to. Tychicus would bring news about Paul. We also see that Paul calls him *'my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord'*.

Here we see Paul's attachment to him for he called him a '*dear brother*'. We also see that Paul considered him a '*faithful servant*'. The word '*faithful*' (PISTOS) means: trustworthy, sure, true. Tychicus had proven that he was a true '*servant*' (DIAKONOS) which means: to run at errands, an attendant.

**<sup>22</sup> whom I have sent to you for this very reason, that you may know our circumstances, and he may encourage your hearts.**

Paul also says that Tychicus was sent to '*encourage your hearts*'. The word '*encourage*' (PARAKALEO) means: to call near, to invite. Its amazing to see that Paul, even though he was in prison, thought of others and did not want them to worry about him. He truly was a Disciple of Christ. May our hearts feel the same attachment for our brethren.

In verses twenty-three and twenty-four we have Paul's final blessing on the Ephesians.

**<sup>23</sup> Peace to the brothers and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.**

This is what Paul wishes upon the believers. He blesses them with '*peace*' (EIRENE) which means: peace, prosperity, quietness. Then he speaks of '*love*' (AGAPE) meaning: love, affection, benevolence. He then speaks of '*faith*' (PISTIS) which means: persuasion, credence and conviction. All of this '*from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*'. They are the ones who dispense these upon the brethren. He finally ends with the blessing of '*grace*' (CHARIS) which means: graciousness, benefit, favor. The favor of the Lord God was asked to be poured upon those '*who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility*'. Grace was for those who really loved the Lord Jesus. It was for those who loved him not in a casual way but in '*incorruptibility*' (APHTHARSIA) meaning: unending, sincerity. Should these four things not also be the wishes that we have towards our brothers and sisters in the faith?

May all of us who love the Lord Jesus in a true, deep and honest way, also be blessed in our daily living.