

Intro - Ephesians 1:1-6

April 24, 2016

Intro:

1. I am excited that we are starting a new book in the Bible today.
 - a. I estimate that this study will take us through the end of August.
 - 1) Not nearly as long as the 2 ½ years it took us to get through the Gospel of Matthew.
 - b. It takes about 20 minutes to read through the entire book of Ephesians...
 - 1) So could I challenge you to make a goal of reading through the entire book once a week while we are in this study?
 - c. Today I would like to give you an introduction to the book of Ephesians and we'll look at the first 6 verses together.

Let's look at our passage: Read Ephesians 1:1-6 (NKJV)¹ and Pray

1. This book: was originally a letter written by the Apostle Paul as we see in verse 1.
 - a. This book is called a **Prison Epistle**, along with **Philippians**, **Colossians**, and **Philemon**, because Paul wrote while a prisoner of Rome due to his faith.
 - 1) This letter was written around 60 AD.
 - 2) From that time Paul would be released from prison and do some more missionary work before being rearrested and ultimately put to death in 66 AD.
2. This letter was not written to address **problems** in the church as 1 Corinthians and Galatians were, for example.
 - a. Instead, Ephesians was written to **explain** some of the great themes and doctrines of Christianity.
 - b. This letter was delivered to the believers in Ephesus by Tychicus, one of Paul's disciples, as the closing remarks of this letter reveal.
3. Paul is writing to the believers in the city of **Ephesus**.
 - a. Ephesus was the capital city of that region. **MAP**
 - 1) It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
 - b. Located in what was called Asia Minor in present day Turkey
 - 1) It served as a financial and worship center in that region.
 - c. Paul visited Ephesus on all 3 of his missionary journeys,

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- 1) During 2nd visit he stayed for about 3 years.
- d. Paul founded the church in Ephesus.
 - 1) Paul had a special bond with the **saints who are in Ephesus**.
4. Ephesus was probably most famous for the Temple of Artemis which was in the city.
 - a. This temple was dedicated to Artemis/Diana – the goddess of fertility.
 - b. In Acts 19:23-41 we read that many of the people were getting saved
 - 1) And they were turning away from pagan worship, which included the buying of idols.
 - 2) Demetrius the silversmith, who made and sold idols of Diana did not like this.
 - a) He was able to stir up the people into a riot.
5. Theme in Ephesians: We are **Chosen** in Christ, **Together** in Christ, **Walking** in Christ.
 - a. Like many of Paul’s writings, the first ½ of the letter is dedicated to doctrine – second ½ to duty.
 - b. Outline 1:

1) Doctrine
2) Duty
3) Difficulty

<u>Outline 2:</u>
Wealth of the believer
Walk
Warfare
6. If I could only share two verses with you from the entire book I think it would have to be...
 - a. **Ephesians 2:8–9** 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.
7. Also of Special Note...
 - a. Apostle John also lived in Ephesus at the end of his life.
 - b. Ephesus is one of the 7 churches mentioned in Revelation - the loveless church.
 - c. Phrases:
 - 1) “In Christ” 12 times...
 - 2) “Grace” 12 times
 - 3) “Walk” 7 times
 - 4) “Riches” 6 times

Ephesians 1:1 ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

1. Paul wasn't voted in or hired as an **apostle**. He was called an apostle **by the will of God**.
 - a. Paul is not boasting about this, but simply declaring what God has done.
 - b. Listen to how Paul describes his conversion...

1) **1 Timothy 1:12–15** 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 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.

2. Paul was certain of his calling in the Lord.
 - a. Do you know what God has called you to?
 - b. We often make a mistake in thinking we are not really being used by God if we are not in “full-time ministry.”
 - 1) It's Wrong to think that way.
 - c. God knows where He wants you to serve Him—whether on a construction site, a classroom, or while out shooting hops on the court...
 - 1) The Lord stations His men and women ingeniously where He sees they can minister most effectively...
 - a) And where people around them will be impacted eternally.
 - d. What has God called you to?
 - 1) If you are thinking... IDK.
 - a) Let me ask, “What has God prepared and trained you for?”
 - 2) Saul, before he became Paul was a student of the scriptures and he was zealous in protecting the Old Testament ways.
 - a) When Saul got saved and changed his name to Paul, we continued in what he had been trained, in spreading his religious beliefs.
 - b) The only thing that changed was he was using the Old Testament scriptures to show how they point to Christ.
 - c) Instead of sending people to prison he was willing to endure prison himself if

meant that others might come to know Christ.

3) What has God prepared you for? How can you use that for His glory?

a) Your calling might be for God to use you right where you are!

3. Encourage you: Be content to do what God has called you to do—to serve where He has placed you...

a. For your calling is just as holy and high a calling as that of any preacher or apostle.

b. While it's true that God instructs us to resist being prideful, almost as dangerous is the thought that we could never be good enough to be used by God.

1) Have you ever heard someone say, "I'm no saint!"

a) Well, if you are a Christian, then yes you are a saint.

c. When you Google saints you find old dead dudes with halos around their head.

1) But that's not what Paul meant when he addressed the believers as **saints** in Ephesus.

2) The word saint simply means **set apart**.

3) As a believer God has set us apart for His purposes, and it has never had anything to do with what you can do, but rather what He wants to do through you!

4) We have been set apart **in Christ Jesus** for His purposes.

Ephesians 1:2 ² **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. A very typical Pauline greeting. **Grace** and **peace**.

a. **Grace** always comes before **peace**.

1) You cannot have peace without first receiving grace from God.

b. **Grace** is God's unmerited, undeserved favor.

c. **peace** speaks of quietness, rest, tranquility, but also of security and safety.

1) You must accept God's grace before you can have peace.

2) If you lack peace, start by looking for God's grace and when you find grace, peace was be a natural byproduct.

Ephesians 1:3 ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

1. Paul begins this section by blessing the Lord.
 - a. To bless the Lord means recognizing God's glory, praising Him with worshipping love.
 - b. We bless Him because He has already **blessed us**... It says, **who has blessed us**
 - 1) Paul is writing this from inside a **Roman prison**... Say what?!?!?
 - 2) How can someone in prison speaking of being blessed?
 - a) Paul knows what he has received from the Lord and prison cannot change that or take it away.
 - b) Paul has taken time to consider all his blessings in the Lord and it leads him to bless the Lord in turn.
 - c. C.H. **Spurgeon**, "We are not sitting here, and groaning, and crying, and fretting, and worrying, and questioning our own salvation. He has blessed us; and therefore we will bless him. If you think little of what God has done for you, you will do very little for him; but if you have a great notion of his great mercy to you, you will be greatly grateful to your gracious God."
2. What has God blessed us with? *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*
 - a. Yes, promotions, money, happiness, cool stuff would all be nice, but are not promised any of that.
 - 1) God promises EVERY spiritual blessing available to those who are **in Christ**.
 - a) Spurgeon, "These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings; they are priceless in value."
3. Are there blessings out there that you haven't embraced yet?
 - a. Like an unopened gift, are their special blessing waiting for you to accept and embrace?
 - b. Yes, and always, for the goodness of God is limitless and...
 - 1) Romans 8:32 **32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**
4. The "**us**" in verse 3 refers to Christians at large. This would include both Jews and Greeks.
 - a. The message of the cross and the work of the church is intended to bring all people together under One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is

above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph 4:5-6).

b. We need to take off our cultural and personal comfort blinders.

1) God wants to reach all people with this message of love, forgiveness, life and hope and He wants to use us in bringing that message to them.

Ephesians 1:4 ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

1. We are chosen and that is a special thing.

a. Harriot Tubman was chosen to replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill.

2. Guzik, “Believers are chosen by God, and they are chosen before they have done anything or have been anything for God. The great light of this truth casts some shadows; namely, in trying to reconcile human responsibility with divine sovereignty.

a. (Guzik cont.) Yet the purpose of light is not to cast shadows but to guide our steps. The light of God’s selection gives us assurance... of His plan and His love towards us.”

b. God’s methods are meant not to confuse you but to comfort and encourage you.

c. God tells us that He has chosen us because He wants us to know how much He loves us and wants us to be a part of His family.

3. Chosen that we should be **holy**.

a. The word **holy** here comes from the same Greek word translated saints.

1) Both these words mean set apart. We have been set apart for His purposes.

b. Chosen that we should be without blame / without fault.

1) In a fight or in responding to an accusation... “It’s not my fault!”

2) God says, “When you are in Christ you are without fault!”

4. As holy saints we are to live our lives **before Him in love**.

a. John 13:35 **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**

b. The prevailing character trait of all Christians should be love.

Ephesians 1:5 ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

1. Everything God does is on purpose. According to the **good pleasure of His will**.
 - a. Our destiny is that we would be adopted **as sons** [and daughters].
 - b. In Roman law, “When the adoption was complete it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law he was a new person. So new was he that even all debts and obligations connected with his previous family were abolished as if they had never existed.” (Barclay)
 - c. The term **adoption** was also used in the Roman Empire of a slave being adopted and becoming a joint heir in his master’s business and house.
 - d. This implies an intimate relationship w/ the Father, being wholly accepted by Him and a joint heir with Christ! (See Rom 8:17)
2. Some might say, “*How do I know if I have been predestined by the Lord to be saved?*”
 - a. Well, trust in the Lord and if you do, you will find that you were predestined to become a son.
 - 1) Romans tells us *whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame...*
 - b. Maybe you are saying, “*Well I don’t want to do that!*”
 - 1) I’d say, “*Well maybe weren’t predestined.*”
 - c. D. L. Moody put it in his quaint way. He said, “The whosoever**wills** are the elect and the whosoever**won’ts** are the nonelect.”

Ephesians 1:6 ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

1. Because God has chosen us and predestined us we can certainly **praise** Him based on **the glory of His** undeserved **grace**.
 - a. We are **accepted** in Christ the **Beloved**.
 - b. That word **accepted** in Greek is **χαριτόω** Charitoo, which means favored highly and full of Grace.

Conclusion:

1. We have received Grace which in turn leads to having peace.
 - a. If you are lacking Peace, don't look for peace, look for the grace of God.
2. We are blessed therefore we Bless Him!
3. We have been chosen and predestined.
4. It doesn't matter how you feel about yourself.
 - a. Satan the accuser wants you to feel ugly and gross and unacceptable.
 - b. But by God's grace we are saved.
 - c. By God's grace we have been adopted.
 - d. We are accepted because we're in the beloved—we're in Christ.