Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ -- A Bible Study The Potter’s House

Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ: Chapter 1 -- In Him

1. Introduction – **Ephesians 1:1-2**

* Ephesus: City in Asia (Asia Minor) in what is now Modern Turkey
* Ephesus: A Church founded by Paul, **Acts 18:19-21**
* Opposition: **Acts 19:23, 28-29**
* Issues: **Acts 20:17-18, 28-30**, **Revelation 2:1, 4**
* These issues and the opposition are addressed in this Epistle which deals with doctrine on the Nature of Christ and Our Identity in Christ.
* Discuss the challenges posed by scriptures written in an epistle form.

2. Our Identity in Christ – In Him

* **Ephesians 1:3-4, 5-6** – Notice Paul is describing God in terms of what God has done for us. Why is that important? What does it mean, “He made us accepted in the Beloved?”
* **Ephesians 1:7-8, 9-10** – Why do you think the term In Him is used twice here? (Hint: Think about who is supposed to get the glory for making these things come to pass?) **Galatians 2:20-21**
* **Ephesians 1:11-12** – What does the term “predestined” refer to? (Discussion thought: Have you heard of the Calvinist’s Doctrine of Predestination?) **Isaiah 46:10, 1 Peter 1:20**
* **Ephesians 1:13-14** – Who did we trust for salvation? Are you “in Him?”
* **Ephesians 1:15-16, 17-19, 20-21** – What is Paul praying for this church to see?
* **Ephesians 1:22-23** – Who put all things under whose feet? **Philippians 2:9-11**
* Why is this last thought so important for a city like Ephesus?
* So if they lost “their first love” by the time we get to Revelation 2, who or what would that love have been based on what we have read in this epistle so far?

3. Questions?

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Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ: Chapter 2 – The Changed Life

1. Review – **Ephesians 1:1-2**

* Where was the city of Ephesus located?
* Who founded it? Which of the 12 Apostles dwelt there?
* What were some of the issues and challenges facing the church there?
* What is one challenge of trying to understand an epistle like this?
* What important phrase appears over and over again in chapter 1?
* Why is this significant?

2. The Change He wrought in us – by Him

* **Ephesians 2:1-3** – What is the difference between the believer in Jesus Christ and those who are not yet saved (according to this text)? **2 Corinthians 5:17**
* Who is this “prince of the power of the air?” **Luke 10:18**
* Thought: What did Jesus do to “calm the storm?”
* Note verse 3 – What makes us “children of wrath?”
* **Ephesians 2:4-7** – what phrase do we see being repeated here? (Remember Chapter 1)
* *Who* is the key to our reconciliation and new life with God?
* **Ephesians 2:8-9** – Note, this verse defines the *mercy* in verse 4 – *mercy* is what in verse 8?
* **Ephesians 2:10** – is says that God created us for a purpose, what is it? Compare this to **James 1:22** – What does this mean about what we “do” now that we are saved?
* What does this suggest about that “once saved, always saved” doctrine?
* **Ephesians 2:11-13** – Who or What is the “Circumcision?” What brings us near to God and to the “circumcised?”
* Are Gentile believers circumcised? **Romans 2:29**
* **Ephesians 2:14-18** – What makes Jewish and Gentile believers “one body?”
* What is the “wall of separation?” When did it come down? **Matthew 27:50-51**
* ***True or False:*** The wall of separation between God and man was never dwelt with under the law.
* **Ephesians 2:19-22** – Without God we were *what?*
* We are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit! **1 Corinthians 6:19**
* We are part of a “building” that is the true Temple of God on the earth today! **1 Peter 2:4-6**

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Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ: Chapter 3 – The Mystery of the Gospel

1. Review – **Ephesians 1:1-2**

* Where was the city of Ephesus located? Who founded the church there?
* What were some of its spiritual problems?
* *Ephesians* is an *epistle*. What is one challenge of trying to understand an epistle?
	+ Interesting Facts: Ephesians was written as *a tract*; Ephesians was *a circular letter*
* What is the difference between the believer in Jesus Christ and those who are not yet saved (according to chapter 2, verses 1-3)?
* Who reconciles Gentiles and Jews and sinful man with God?
* Who is the “prince of the power of the air?” How do we know?
* What are we created for in Christ Jesus?

2. “For this reason” – Paul’s Sacred Destiny

* **Ephesians 3:1** – What “reason” is Paul referring to here?
* Consider the whole sentence – **Ephesians 3:2-7** – What is the mystery? (Hint: Note the colon [:]) **Galatians 3:26-29**
* Paul is saying that he, Paul, was created to do a particular good work. What was it?
* What does Paul mean when he says he is a “prisoner?” **2 Timothy 1:8**
* **Ephesians 3:8-9** – Why would Paul make this statement in verse 8? **2 Corinthians 12:7**
* Why does Paul consider himself “least?” **1 Corinthians 15:9**
* And his purpose according to verse 9?
* **Ephesians 3:10-12** – What is that tremendous phrase we saw before in chapters 1 and 2?
* What is Paul’s point in verses 10-12? (Hint: Note especially verses 10 and 11)
* Long sentence here – why do you think Paul’s epistles contain such long, run-on sentences?
* **Ephesians 3:13** – What is it about Paul’s current situation that he wants them to not lose the victory over? (Hint: Remember verse 1) **Galatians 6:9**
* **Ephesians 3:14-17** – What is Paul doing here?
* **Ephesians 3:18- 21** – What is Paul’s great prayer here?
* Consider the irony of Jesus’ words in **John 16:12-13** – What privilege does Paul express in this epistle that Jesus’ own Apostles could not receive?

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Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ: Chapter 4 – The Conduct of Christians

1. Review – **Ephesians 1:1-2**

* Where was the city of Ephesus located? Who founded the church there?
* What were some of its spiritual problems?
* How is Ephesians different from the other epistles?
* *Ephesians* is a *circular* epistle. Can you explain that?
* In what way was Paul a “prisoner” as he describes himself in chapter 3?
* What was the “mystery” that Paul felt was his destiny to share with the Gentiles?

2. New Creation Realities

* **Ephesians 4:1-3** – What does Paul mean here by “walking worthy” in verse 1?
* Note the word “beseech” -- What does it mean? Paul uses the same language in **Romans 12:1**. What is he trying to convey in both Ephesians and Romans by this word?
* Discuss the meaning of each of the words Paul uses in verse 2 to describe how we should be as believers. What do they mean?
	+ Lowliness (Humility)
	+ Gentleness (Meekness)
	+ Long-suffering
* Consider verse 3 – How is the Holy Spirit essential to such Christian behavior? **Galatians 5:22-25**
* **Ephesians 4:4-6** – Explain
* **Ephesians 4:7-10** – Verse 7 is rather simple -- there is a portion of grace “measured out” for everyone, enough for all who will come to Christ -- but verses 8-10 are obscure.
* Discuss verse 8, a text from Psalm 68 – Christ is identified by what He accomplished – what three things are described here?
* What are verse 9 and 10 about? **John 1:1 and 14, John 3:13**, **John 20:17**, **1 Peter 3:18-19**
* **Ephesians 4:11-16** – Who puts these gift ministries in the church? **1 Corinthians 12:28** For what purpose? How does this compare with the ministries we often see in the religious world?
* **Ephesians 4:17-19, 20-24** – Who should we NOT be walking like?
* What is “the new man?” **2 Corinthians 5:16-17**
* The challenge of the Christian life is that some believe grace and our liberty in Christ are a cover for sin and so much evil behavior is excused in the church, but this is **not** the Gospel that Paul or our Lord Jesus Christ ever taught! **Romans 6:1-2, Matthew 7:21, 1 Peter 2:15-17**
* So here are some “commandments” for New Testament believers in Jesus Christ:
	+ **Ephesians 4:25, 26-27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32**
* Always keep in mind that we were saved for good works… and walk in that thought!

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Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ: Chapter 5 – Relationship Advice

1. Review – **Ephesians 1:1-2**

* Where is Ephesus? Who wrote to them warning them to return their first love?
* Why? What was that about?
* Paul describes himself as a prisoner in this epistle – in what way?
* What three Christian virtues does Paul “beseech the brethren” to possess in their walk?
* Do Christians have commandments to follow? What does it mean to “walk worthy?”

2. Imitating Christ in our most important relationships

* **Ephesians 5:1-2** – Imitating God means doing what? How? **1 Corinthians 11:1**
* **Ephesians 5:3-4** – Note the contrasts here; how can any Christian excuse this kind of behavior?
* Then why do you think so many “Christians” and “church-attenders” still continue to behave in a manner that is “not fitting?”
* **Ephesians 5:5-7** – “For this you know” – apparently this doctrine is well known among first century Christians. Note the warnings. What are they?
* What is the “big lie” that so many believers embrace? **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** – Why is so much of the same material covered in both Ephesians and Corinthians along these lines of teaching?
* **Ephesians 5:8-10, 11-14** –
* Based on the previous verses, what is the “purpose” of the light Christ gives in verse 14?
* Some more commandments – Consider these “commands” that are much like the ones in Chapter 4 – Read/Explain each: **Ephesians 5:15-16, 17, 18-21**
* What do these verse tell us about our “liberty in Christ?”
* “With liberty comes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. With grace comes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* Re-read and note verse 21 before moving on to the next verse!
* **Ephesians 5:22-24** – So in light of verse 21, is there anything “controversial” about verse 22?
* What does “submit” mean? We will see shortly in verse 33.
* Why do you think women need to be told to do this?
* What example here is used to explain submission?
* How does the example of the church’s relationship to Christ make submission easier to grasp?
* If a woman refuses to “submit” to her husband in the Godly way expressed in this text then what does it say about her attitude toward the Church and Christ?
* What about unsaved, backslid or “unspiritual” husbands? **1 Peter 3:1-6**
* **Ephesians 5:25-27** – Why do men need to be told this?
* Note verse 26-27 – how does a man’s love for his wife “sanctify and cleanse” her?
* **Ephesians 5:28-31** -- Look at verse 28, what is it that men really love?
* **Colossians 3:19** – How does bitterness affect a man? **1 Peter 3:7**
* **Ephesians 5:32-33** – Note verse 32, marriage helps us understand the church and our relationship to Christ and VICE-VERSA! Also what word is used for submission in verse 33? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Men NEED respect. Woman NEED love. Your job is to provide for all of your spouse’s needs so they don’t go looking for it in the wrong place!

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Ephesians -- Our Identity in Christ: Chapter 6 – The Armor of God

1. Review – **Ephesians 1:1-2**

* Who founded the church in Ephesus?
* What challenges to the Christian faith did that city present?
* How have they been addressed in this epistle?
* Who does Paul challenge us to imitate in chapter 5? How?
* What warning is given to the Ephesians regarding their behavior?
* When Paul addresses marriage in Ephesians Chapter 5, what other relationship is he providing insight about?
* What are wives instructed to do in Chapter 5? Why?
* What are men instructed to do in chapter 5? Why?

2. Spiritual Wisdom to Stand

* **Ephesians 6:1-3** – Paul is quoting from what Old Testament rule? **Exodus 20:12**
* But does the Old Testament law apply to the New Testament believer? **Matthew 5:17-19**
* All of the moral laws of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament except one, do you know what it is? **Exodus 20:8-10**
* **Ephesians 6:4** – What does this mean?
* **Ephesians 6:5-8, 9** – This is the law for the Christian Employees and Employers – take heed!
* **Ephesians 6:10-13** – With the word “Finally” Paul is wrapping up the entire epistle – NOT just this chapter! Note how he emphasizes spiritual warfare in his conclusion – Why does this need to be emphasized? What is it that most Christians forget when they are being tempted? **1 Peter 5:8-9**
* So what is the purpose of the “whole armor of God” according to verse 13?
* The armor of God is not an altogether original idea of Paul’s – **Isaiah 59:17**
* Bad Theology: I once heard a radio preacher describe how he imagines himself “putting on the whole armor of God” in the morning before he gets out of bed. That is NOT what Paul means here!
* Read and discuss HOW we apply each of the described pieces of armor:
	+ **Ephesians 6:14**
	+ **Ephesians 6:15**
	+ **Ephesians 6:16**
	+ **Ephesians 6:17**
* **Ephesians 6:18-19** – Paul is asking the people of Ephesus to do what for him?
* What does he mean by “ambassador in chains?” **Acts 28:16**
* **Ephesians 6:21-22, 23-24**

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