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EPHESIANS CHAPTER ONE

This quote came up in my study for this lesson. It is from the "Old Schofield" notes. "The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold but not explained by Christ, was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church."

Ephesians is the first of Paul's prison letters. This letter focuses on the doctrinal content of salvation, sanctification and service. In Ephesians Paul reveals the mystery of the spiritual body of Christ and gives us vital instructions for the family. Two major false doctrines have their roots in Ephesians. These are Hyper-Calvinism which concentrates on chapter one and Hyper-Dispensationalism which focuses on chapter three. Neither of these heresies show any work similar to Paul's and both ignore the practical applications of the last three chapters of the book.

Now, before getting into the chapter, have you wondered why God allowed Paul to be thrown into prison. This is just my thinking and not scripture but do you suppose that Paul had become too busy with his missionary work and God used prison to slow him down and in so doing make these great letters available to us and to all those Christians between then and now?

Now, moving on to verse one.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Notice here that Paul is an apostle with all the power and authority of the twelve. The first twelve were called directly by Jesus. After the death of Judas his replacement was selected by the eleven. Then Paul was selected by Jesus. It has always been my belief that Paul was selected to be the apostle to the Gentiles because the twelve would not go to the Gentile world despite being told by Jesus to do so. Remember “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”. That command was given after the resurrection but the Jews stayed in Jerusalem due to their bigotry where the rest of the world was concerned.

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

The heresy Hyper-Calvinism has its roots here. They focus on the words “chosen us” instead of the words “in him”. The bottom line of the Hyper-Calvinist belief is that we are chosen by God and, if chosen by him, we really have no choice in the matter. In other words we are predestined to be saved. If all we had were verses four and five we could make a case for that but we know from all other scripture that this is not the case. This is a perfect example of why we do not base doctrine on just one, or two, scriptures. Jesus was present before the foundation of the world but no Calvinist was placed into the body of Christ until the new birth.

Now concerning the spiritual blessings, there are no spiritual blessings of any kind whatever, other than “in Christ.” The phrase “in heavenly places” occurs five times in this letter and nowhere else. Jesus is now at the right hand of the Father and thus is “exalted in heavenly places”. So, we that are “in Him” are also with him in heavenly places. To put it another way, we belong to that heavenly realm also.”

Now listen carefully to these next verses. I will read through verse fourteen and then we can discuss the words we find there and I would like some class

discussion of those words.

6To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Some of the grandest and most important words in the vocabulary of Christianity are used in those few verses. such as adoption, redemption, foreordained, heritage and sealed.

Adoption; We are literally adopted into the family of God. You will find adoption in Eph 3 vs 6 and in many other places in the New Testament. Gal 3 vs 26 says “**For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

Romans 8 vs 17 says “**And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.**

Redemption; We are redeemed from the debt of sin. Right here in verse seven;

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Again in in Col 1 vs 14 **In whom we**

have redemption,through his blood,even the forgiveness of sins:

Foreordained; God,in his foreknowledge knows before the foundation of the world who will be saved and who will not. Nevertheless,everyone gets a chance. Here in Ephesians verse four;**According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**And Titus ch 1 vs 2 **In hope of eternal life,which God,that cannot lie,promised before the world began.** So,it isn't that some automatically get saved while others have no chance,but rather that God knows in advance who will get it and who will not.

Dispensation;This one gets some people upset. Let me state here that I am a dispensationalist. The word itself means management of affairs as in giving control of a household to a butler or manager. The way we use it in referring to bible belief is similar in that it is how we manage,or put in order, our belief system.

It never refers to a set period of time but rather how to rightly divide God's word. For instance,the rules that apply to us are very different from the rules that applied to the Jews under the Law. Going a bit further,the rules that applied to Christians before the conversion and calling of Paul are different than those that apply to us. Further,the rules that will apply in the Tribulation and Millennium are different than those we are under. We now have the complete word of God and are expected to study it.

Now ,moving on to verse fifteen and following. There are two prayers in Ephesians. Verses fifteen through 23 are a prayer for the church. We find another prayer in chapter three.

15Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

This verse is the beginning of Paul's prayer for the church at Ephesus and,by extension,the other churches and believers who would read the letter at some later time. How does it feel to realize that the apostle Paul prayed for you over two thousand years ago and that prayer still stands today.

16Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Prayer and thanksgiving go together. Paul never ceased to pray for his converts.

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Paul addresses the throne of God and requests special understanding of new revelations given by the Holy Spirit. There is still a need for Christians to pray that God will help them to understand scripture. Many of its teachings require serious study to be clearly understood.

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

This verse is referring to enlightenment given by the Holy Spirit as he calls us and teaches us. The call comes from the Holy Spirit and calls us to Jesus. Understanding is realizing what God has done for us and enlightenment is realizing that though God owns the universe his “pearl of great price” is us.

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

The ultimate demonstration of God's power, was the resurrection of Christ. That is the act above all others that shows the unlimited power of God to do all that he has promised. Without the resurrection of Christ, the Christian gospel would mean nothing.

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Paul uses these two verses to show us the supremacy of Christ. He is far above even angelic beings and has dominion over all things. This verse along with over a hundred others convey the idea that Jesus is God. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Paul teaches here, as well as in his other letters that we are the body of Christ

on this earth. Notice that at the end of verse 22 there is a comma meaning the thought continues into verse 23. It is His church and His body, bought and paid for. Christ is the head and through the church (the body) he directs his work on earth.

We who are in Christ are perfect, not on our merit, but on the merit and righteousness of Jesus.

EPHESIANS CHAPTER TWO

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

In other words we are born dead and remain in that condition until we are “born again” into the Body of Christ.

Quickened, that is, made alive. In the spiritual view sin equals death.

As far as God is concerned those in Christ “**were dead in trespasses and sin**” (that is past tense) are now dead to sin.

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Remember that Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” and that he now works through the lost. Lost people are usually governed by selfishness. The selfish person walks after his or her will and not after the will of God. Jesus himself refers to Satan as “the god of this world”.

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Before we were saved we also worked for Satan whether we realized it or not. The saved person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, while the unbeliever is indwelt by one or more unclean spirits. The spiritual resurrection of the believer is past but the bodily resurrection is future.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

By His grace He has made us alive in Christ. Do not ever confuse the body of Christ, that is, the Church, with the family of God. The family of God includes all those believers before the resurrection as well as the Church and will also include those saved during the Tribulation and the millennium. Different rules have applied to different groups of people. Remember that word, dispensation, which does not apply to a period of time but rather to groups of people.

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

As part of the body we are even now together with Jesus in heaven. We have to wait for our bodies to catch up with the soul and spirit. That is a hard one for me to get my mind around.

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The “He” in that verse is God the Father.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

I assume all of you have these two verses underlined and memorized. This is the clearest account of salvation from the resurrection to the rapture. Notice here that both the grace and the faith come from God and not from us. These two three words phrases “not of works” and “not of yourselves” sum up our salvation experience. You must believe to be saved and even the belief comes from God.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

This is more of Israel's referring to Gentiles as quote”the uncircumcision”.

This is important.

It is well worth noting here that when a person is saved(born again),there is a

spiritual circumcision in that the spirit is cut away from the body and soul. This is what the Old Testament circumcision was a type of, and a preview of. This is also why you will occasionally hear a christian say that they do not sin spiritually or “in the spirit”. That is a true statement.

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

We, the Gentiles were “afar off”. If you recall your Old Testament very few Gentiles were saved after the call of Abraham. Hagar, maybe Naman the Syrian, the people of Nineva once Jonah cleaned off the vomit, and Ruth are the ones I can think of at the moment. Notice the contrast between verse 12 and verse thirteen. Verse twelve says “at that time” meaning the time you were lost and verse thirteen says “But now”, showing us as people under the blood.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

That middle wall of partition spoken of probably has a double meaning here. It was the wall between the Jew and Gentile and may also have been referring to the middle wall of the temple (veil) having been split from top to bottom. Now there is no wall and both groups are saved the same way. Maybe groups plural is the wrong way to put it. We are one group, one body.

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

God then called a special apostle to bring the gospel to us. What if there had been no Paul? Would we be here today? I believe God would have found another to carry the message. God has done away with the enmity between God and the believer. He has reconciled us to Him by the cross.

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to

them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

There is now peace between Jew and Gentile but it has a further meaning in that there is also now peace with God.

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

All of Christianity is built by standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Paul names the apostles and prophets but is careful to remind us that Jesus is the cornerstone on which everything is built. In construction a cornerstone is laid first so all the buildings lines can be taken from that point. It is fitting that Jesus is the cornerstone from which all of the Christian church is laid out.

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

If we allow it, God places each of us exactly where he wants us in relation to the cornerstone. The purpose of all this is to provide a temple for God to dwell in. In Old Testament times God dwelt with his people. In the Church age he dwells in his people.

Our body is the temple(habitation) of the Holy Spirit

EPHESIANS CHAPTER THREE

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

When Paul wrote this, he was awaiting trial under Nero, and in all probability fully aware that he would be beheaded; but there is no word of complaint here. Paul regards himself not as Nero's prisoner but as a prisoner of Christ. In Paul's mind whatever he suffered and from whatever cause, it was for

Christ. It seemed to the world that Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government, but Paul thought of himself as suffering and being imprisoned for the sake of Christ.

The phrase "you" with Gentiles was not for the purpose of addressing the whole Gentile creation, but limited the meaning to his Gentile converts.

Paul informs his readers that he is in prison because of them and for their benefit. Paul teaches the Ephesians that they too are God's chosen people, not replacing the Jews but that now both are being added to the Body. By the gospel, they have the same promise in the Messiah Jesus.

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

God has given his new revelation to Paul. God sends Paul to the Gentiles and Paul realizes the honor and responsibility he now has. God has given Paul special understanding of His plans for the Gentiles and now Paul must make them understand the special place they now have as part of the Body.

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The 'mystery' is the good news that Christ has joined Jews and Gentiles into one body. Both are now saved and kept safe the same way. There is to be no more "Law" as the Jews kept it. We are now to be one Body in Christ Jesus.

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Paul realizes how weak he is and that he must depend on God to do the

work. Ironically the word Paul in Latin, the language of the Romans, means small or little. He fully realizes that he could do nothing without God's help. Paul also remembers that he was once an enemy of God and was responsible for putting Christians to death. God has forgiven him as he forgives each of us. Never forget that it was all of us who put Jesus on that Roman cross

Christians have a wonderful gift. We are heir to God's riches which can not be measured. This wealth is not money and possessions but rather spiritual riches and we have these riches now in our life upon the earth. These spiritual riches are limited only by ourselves when we refuse to grow closer to God through prayer and study of his word. This wealth is greater than anything that we can think of and it will last for eternity.

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

This reveals differences in Old Testament and New Testament. The mystery was not that Gentiles would be saved but that the Jews and Gentiles would be one body. This was not revealed until it was revealed to Paul. No one in the Old Testament received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the new birth, eternal security, spiritual circumcision, nor justification by grace through faith. (remember that it is Jesus's faith and not our own.) These things are given to the born again believer only. Aren't you glad we live in this dispensation. I know I would not make it apart from the grace of God given to us in the Body of Christ..

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Now that it has been revealed, God wants everyone to understand the "mystery".

God wants men and women to learn. He is pointing out that there are spiritual authorities and rulers who are surrounding us. They are the angels that we cannot see. God wants them to know about it too. Apparently the angels learn just as we learn. In other words, it was a mystery to them as well as to us. It was up to Paul and the other apostles. He makes this wisdom

known 'by the church'. There is no other way that everybody can know it.

This was the plan that God had from before the foundation of the world. It is all in Christ Jesus. God is working out his plan in human history.

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

In this verse, Paul explains what this means to Christians now. Christians have received the gift of salvation from God. We have received it by faith. We can now come straight to God. We can come without fear.

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

In other words, don't worry about Paul's trials and suffering. He well knows that it is for a reason and wants his readers to realize the same thing. There is no better way for God to achieve his purpose.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is important to remember that a person can pray in any position. That said, I do believe that much earnest prayer is done bowing in humility before the Lord. Jesus prayed like this. This was just before he died on the cross (Matthew 26:39). Stephen prayed like this just before he died (Acts 7:60).

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Remember that the family of God includes all saved people from Genesis through the end of the millenium as well as the angels. This is different from the Church which includes only those believers in this present dispensation.

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

This is Paul's prayer requesting daily grace that he might live in the fullness of the Spirit. This is further proof, if any is needed, that we are indwelt by the Spirit.

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

When we have faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in our 'inner person.

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and

length, and depth, and height;

Paul comprehended the vastness of the universe as compared to the smallness of the Earth. The “deep” mentioned in scripture is the container of the universe with the throne of God being due north. You find this in Psa 48:2,75:6-7 as well as in Isa 14:13. It is worth noting here that the North Star is the only star in the northern hemisphere that does not change position.

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

The human mind is not large enough to understand it all. It is beyond our ability to grasp.

Paul prays that the Father will fill you until you are full but it is not possible to contain him inside any human person. So, in effect Paul is asking that we receive all that we can of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Paul now starts a hymn of praise, or doxology. God knows what we ask before we ask. He knows our thoughts and dreams. He has the power to go beyond any of these. He is able to do much more than we can ever ask or imagine. The power comes from Christ through the Holy Spirit. He lives in our inner person. This is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Everything that there is will eventually give God the glory. It will be for eternity. This is God's great master plan for the human race. He gave it to us by Jesus Christ. Christ's love and power are in the Christian and in the church. The church will carry out God's purpose in the world. We have the strength of the Holy Spirit to do this.

EPHESIANS CHAPTER FOUR

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Notice that word vocation. People, that means your job. In other words your job is obeying, and following, Christ. Regard everything else you do in this life as a hobby that will pass away one day.

God has called you, so your lives must be lived for him .

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

You should be completely humble, gentle, patient and show love to people who do not agree with you. Every word in verse two is about Christians dealing with other Christians. Christians are hard to get along with and it takes help from the Holy Spirit to put up with most of us. Oddly enough it isn't doctrinal differences that most Christians fight over. It will be things like how to dress, how long a person's hair should be or what color the church walls should be painted.

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Spirit, who gives peace, binds us together. The first part of that verse shows us that the Spirit will give us the power to remain together in Christ even when we disagree. I do believe that doctrinal differences automatically force us apart.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

There is one real Lord, one real faith and one real baptism. There are many false copies of these things.

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Now, this is news to me. As Christians we get different amounts of grace. As we have just been studying that we all are called to do something in the Body, I suppose Jesus gives us the amount we need to do what he has assigned us to do.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

These captives are the spirits of people. 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6 tell us they were. You will hear from time to time that those he led were sin, death and the “curse” but if that were the case, what did he do with them? He did not bring them back to the earth and He most certainly did not take them to heaven. Do not ever fall for that one. Death is not destroyed until Revelation 20:14. They were the spirits of the Old Testament saints and they are now in heaven with Him.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

During the three days that Jesus was in the heart of the earth, He deposited the sins of mankind into hell. If you doubt this, consider that when he died he had all the sins of mankind on him and when he came up they were gone. There he preached to the spirits in prison. See 1 Peter 3:19. He also led the resurrection of the righteous dead. See Matthew 27:52-53. It is important to remember that He came up first.

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Verse ten is self explanatory. He went down, He came up, and He went up. All this that prophecy might be fulfilled.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

The Holy Spirit comes in Acts 2 and gifts are given. Notice that these gifts are people. These men are gifts given to the Church. This is not the tongues, miracles and healing found in 1 Cor 12.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

The apostles and prophets had the work of building the church. Their work was to speak the word of God. It meant to bring words of hope and strength to the church. Judas and Silas did this in Acts 15:32. They encouraged the brethren.

We sometimes call a person who tells people the good news about Jesus an

evangelist. Acts 21:8 describes Philip as an evangelist. In 2 Timothy 4:5, Paul tells Timothy to 'do the work of an evangelist'.

Then there are pastors and 'teachers. Paul does not separate these two gifts. They teach the Bible to the members. The pastors and teachers have a duty. It is to feed the members of the church with the word of God, the Bible.

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Verses 12 and 13 tell us why the gifts were given. Keep in mind that the Church at this time did not have the complete word of God. Even if they had had it, many could not read. Prophets, pastors, evangelist and teachers were the only means many of the people had to learn the word of God.

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Verse 14 Jesus said that we should be like children in our simple faith in him but not like children as we grow as Christians. By prayer, study and listening to preaching we should quickly reach a point where we are not swayed by false doctrine. The false things that can sway us, away from our faith, are not always about doctrine but can be about other things in life. A lot of the TV preachers are putting out one book after another and not all of them are helpful to the Christian. Here is an example of false teaching that sounded really good but was useless and even harmful. Years ago there were preachers going around to churches teaching that when all the planets lined up just so, we were out of here. The grain of truth in that was that all of the planets were coming into perfect alignment. Of course when they lined up nothing happened. Now this was going on in Baptist churches as well as some others. No matter who teaches it, if it doesn't line up with the Bible ignore it.

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Unlike such evil men, we should 'speak the truth with love'. This means that we should not only speak the truth. We should also act the truth. We act the truth as we behave properly towards other people. Truth and love must be in the right balance. It is possible to have all truth but no love. It is also possible

to have all love but no truth. We speak the truth 'with love' to help other people. We must spread the truth and we must love each other.

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

This is a wonderful expression of the body of Christ. Paul had just spoken of Christ as "the head." He is also the whole body and the scripture says "we are in him". Paul makes it clear that every part, that is, every member of the body of Christ to make its own contribution to the building up of the whole.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

The key word here is alienated. These people have been given up on by God because of the hardening of their heart. This is a clear statement that the Holy Spirit can, and will, quit calling a person if the person resists long enough.

A person is first hardened by their own wickedness and then by a hardening from God himself. Remember the references to Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. The Bible clearly says that God hardened his heart.

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

These people who are hardened are now past all moral and spiritual leading by the Holy Spirit.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Since you have heard, and have been taught the standards of Christian behavior you have no excuse for not living it.

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

In verses 22-24 we are given the flip side. Put off the old man and put on the new man. This is just another way Paul uses to remind us that we are “born again” and thus “new creatures”. This is one of the best ways to know if you are truly saved. If there have been no changes in your life then you need to step back and check up on yourself. Make sure of your salvation.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

The Holy Spirit comes back over and over to the subject of lying. I don't think we Christians put nearly enough emphasis on this sin. Lying has become so commonplace that we just accept it as a part of life. We say things like “oh well, it's just a little white lie”. There is no such thing as a little white lie. That thing itself is a devil's lie. In my concordance there are over one hundred negative references to lie, lies, lying etc. I will just quote one of these verses. Proverbs 12 vs 22 says “**Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight**”. Do notice that the word abomination is the same word used to describe God's feeling about homosexuality.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

There is such a thing as righteous anger. If you are angry, do not allow it to make you sin. Stay angry for a while if you must but get over it and move on.

27 Neither give place to the devil.

This has at least two meanings. First, do not allow things in your life that will allow evil spirits to enter. An example is the demonic TV shows and movies. Someone once said that watching a demon movie on TV was just like opening a window in your house, and inviting in all sorts of evil spirits. Get rid of any demonic statues in your possession. An example would be a statue of Buddah or anything similar. Posters of things like zombies also come to mind.

The second level here has to do with physical places. Religious images and perversions can attract Satan and his legions to a place. See Rev 18:2 for an

example. The power of the blood and the name of the Lord Jesus can cleanse these places though in really strong places it sometimes takes prayer and fasting. See Mark 9:29

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

I guess verse 28 is self explanatory. Stop stealing and go to work. Keep in mind that not all stealing is done at gunpoint. If you are living off someone else's work and not contributing anything, then you are stealing as surely as the crack addict holding up the local 7-11.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Most of us know better than to tell, or to listen to, dirty jokes but how about those who seem to delight in innuendo and work it into their conversation as often as possible? How about the lying we mentioned a few verses back? How about gossiping? All of these are corrupt communications. The Holy Spirit does tell us that we shall give account of every idle word.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

How do we grieve the Spirit? Any sin that we do saddens the Holy Spirit. He can also be grieved when we fail to pray or do not spend time in God's word.

Skipping church without good reason, and those things we covered in preceding verses like lying, gossiping, foul language. In other words if you are doing anything that you know is wrong it grieves the Spirit that resides in you

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Verses 31 and 32 give us instruction on how to treat each other. God has forgiven us and we are told, that as Christians, he does not even remember our sins. For this reason Paul goes on to say, 'forgive each other'.

EPHESIANS CHAPTER FIVE

Paul continues teaching how to live a useful life.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

We are to be as much like Jesus as we can. You must let his love rule your life. You must love each other as Christ himself loved you. Our dedicated life is a sacrifice that is pleasing to God.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Verses 3,4 and 5 are warnings against unclean behavior. Do not mistake these to mean you can lose your salvation. In another place Paul says, "and such were some of you". Be careful of those dirty jokes that we were also warned about in the last chapter. Foolish talking could cover a lot, all the way from bearing false witness to gossiping. By the way, false witnessing has nothing to do with a courtroom. It is simply telling stories about another that are not true. Remember from our study in the book of James how easy it is for the tongue to ruin someone's reputation. Notice too, in verse five that the kingdom belongs to both God the Father, Christ and, by extension, the Holy Spirit.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

As Christians you should not listen to those who do not speak the truth. This will pull you away from God. Be careful of some of these TV charlatans. You know I am thinking of people like Binny Hinn, Joyce Meyer, Joseph Prince, and Joel Osteen. The wrath of God is real and it is

coming. Keep in mind that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament and check out his instructions concerning Jerico, Sodom and Gomorrah and Ai. Those instructions were to not even leave the family dog and cat alive. When he comes again it will not be as a lamb.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

This is referring back to 3,4,5,and 6. Leave these things alone.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

This verse doesn't say walk in the light. You are to walk as the light.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

We have the list of the fruit of the Spirit from Gal ch5 vs 22. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love,joy,peace,longsuffering (that'spatience),gentleness,goodness,faith,meeekness,temperance:against such there is no law.** Notice that fruit is singular here. You should have them all,if not at once then surely as you grow as a Christian. The normal work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer will automatically produce the fruit.

That is,of course,if you allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life.

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Darkness suggest sin that needs to be hidden. Men hide such things because they love sin. Instead of participating reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

And have no fellowship with those who celebrate the heathen mysteries, which are really the unfruitful works of darkness One thing that Paul hasn't mentioned yet but it is hinted at in this passage is the sin of witchcraft and all those heathen practices like astrology and fortunetelling that go with it.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the

dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

This is a call to the Christian dead from lead poisoning. In other words, the lazy Christian who is no good to the body of Christ.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

This is simply making the most of the time we have available. This passage has a double meaning. Paul is cautioning the Ephesians that their time is short and that bad things are about to happen. Many who read these words for the first time would soon suffer persecution and death. The temple was about to be destroyed by the Romans and many Christians would be put to death by Nero. It is worth noting that God did not allow the Temple to be destroyed until Paul had had time to spread the word among the Gentiles.

The second meaning is for us. How much time do we waste each day? We will have to give account. What is the time waster in your life? Check up on yourself. Is it a hobby, maybe the internet or your phone or possibly the TV set. We all have something we could cut back on and do more for the Lord.

Be careful about how you use your time. Use it in the right way. Use every opportunity to turn people to Christ. The days are evil and the time left is short. The idea here is to rescue time from the distractions and cares of the world, in other words, you are rescuing your time from the evil things of this world.

Remember, the time is short for us as it was for the Ephesians. Wasting time is wasting life. Look up, He's coming.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Understand the will of the Lord. That is sometimes easier said than done but you can understand by prayer and study, always checking against the Word of God. Keep in mind that if it doesn't line up with scripture it is not from the Holy Spirit but rather from an evil spirit.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Although all Christians have been baptised by the Spirit at salvation, not all Christians are filled with the Spirit.

We do not have drunkards any more. Drunkenness is no longer a sin. Isn't that a relief. Now we just have alcoholics and it's no longer a sin it's a disease. The contrast spoken of here is to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that it might be mistaken for drunkenness. This is a reference back to Acts ch 2 vs 13-15 which says. *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

This was not a lot of staggering around and acting like the usual kind of drunkenness but referred to the “tongues” speaking and probably the fact that they were obviously under the control of something which could not be seen.

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Music is a very necessary part of worship. It sets the stage so to speak. Music from the human voice, instruments and from the heart are a good way to put the spirit in a receptive mode for the message. Spiritual music exalts the spirit

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

So long as these experts follow the lord. A wise teacher remains a student for life.

Next we are going to talk about submission and the differences between men and women. I am not talking about the obvious physical differences here but the difference in the way we think. Here is a personal example; Some years ago, when Cindy's children were small, she came for a visit. Now, I like these grandchildren and they like me so it's not a problem when they are left in my care while Cindy and her mother go shopping. They weren't over the horizon before the youngest one had an attack of diarrhea. I mean top to bottom coverage. Not a problem. I march him outside, strip him and turn the water hose on him. When I think he is clean enough I say go inside, dry off and put on clean clothes. While he is doing that, I bury the clothes he was wearing.

The kids happy,I'm happy,problem solved to everyone's satisfaction. That is until Cindy and Ann get home. That is where the difference comes in. They weren't concerned about the kid. They were concerned about the clothes. Cindy actually dug them up and washed them...in our washing machine. As far as I was concerned it was time for a new washer. To this day,I believe my way was the right way and if I were faced with that situation tomorrow I would do the same with one exception. I would burn the clothes so they couldn't put them in the washer.

Verse 21 leads into the next verses so pay attention to it. Some of you don't like it but God says do it. Paul teaches this as a way for Christians to live together in peace.

Submission is voluntary,it is personal,it is mutual and it is always opposed to personal selfishness.

This submission means that;we should each be willing to help each other,to listen to each other,to learn from each other,and to allow another person to correct us.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Quoting now from the Common Man's Reference Bible.

“God established the institution of marriage for the holy purposes of comfort,completeness,enjoyment,friendship,fruitfulness,security,protection,instruction and doctrine.”

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

This is to be understood in the light of the obligation, given in verse 25, for the husband to love his wife even as Christ loved the church. Now I am quoting from one of the commentators.” *There never was any kind of effective organization that functioned without a head. From ants and bees in the insect world to central governments, an effective social unit of any kind requires a head; and it could not have been otherwise with regard to the human family, the oldest of God's organizations among men, being prior to that of any state, or of the church. By the appointment of God himself, the husband was named head of the family.*”

The phrase “as unto the Lord” does not mean that the husband gets the same

deference as they would yield to Christ himself, but that deference is a duty which they owe to the Lord.

Keep this in mind. The husband will answer to God for the conduct of his household but if the wife refuses to be submissive to the husband then she will answer to God for her actions just as the husband will answer for his.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

This is the original, ideal marriage. I believe most women would want a man who would die for her if necessary. This is the picture given here by the phrase “**and gave himself for it**”.

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

This text is not about water baptism. Our Lord is doing something to the church now so that she might be presented to Him in a “spotless condition.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

In the same manner as Christ loved the Church. They are one flesh and now we are one flesh with Christ.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Verses 30 and 31 are quotes from Genesis. Notice that the man is said to leave his father and mother but this is not said of the wife. Women do tend to stay closer to their families than men do after marriage and this is as it should be. Men who stay too close to their mother after marriage are almost always

headed for trouble from the wife.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

There is another difference here between wife and husband. The husband is commanded to love his wife but the same command is not given to the wife. Instead she is told to reverence her husband. We might use the word respect in place of reverence though reverence does denote a deeper feeling.

EPHESIANS CHAPTER SIX

Now we get to the children and how they are to be treated and what we need to require from them. A good parent is not a friend to his, or her, child but rather a parent with all that entails. You become friends with your children when they are grown and no longer require parenting. Those who try to be friends with their child run a very real risk of raising a child who becomes out of control as a teenager.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Paul was writing about Christian homes. He did not teach that children should obey instructions which contradict basic Christian principles. There is a fine balance between fear and respect. Think of it this way. You have fear of the Lord but also love for him. That is the perfect relationship between parent and child. Too much harsh discipline will produce a rebel while too little discipline, and /or too much permissiveness will produce a parasite that is good for nothing.

2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

This is a promise from God. It promises here a full and long life if you honor your parents. God will keep his promise but keep in mind that it is in your power to make this promise of no effect. If you take up mountain climbing or

auto racing,or,if you eat to the point of morbid obesity,or drink until you ruin your liver then God is not obligated to give you that long,healthy life.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The child who is constantly upset or who can never do anything well enough to please a parent will eventually seek love outside the family. Now,though the verse says fathers it certainly includes mothers.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

We have now switched to servants. These servants are slaves and these slaves are to please their masters just as they would please Christ. In the New Testament slaves are told to stay where they are and serve their masters. That is found in 1 Cor ch 7 vs 20-22. Here is an interesting nugget. The New Testament tells a preacher to preach this and says if he does not he is “**proud, knowing nothing**”. This,along with the proper relationship between saved master and saved slave is found in 1Tim ch 6 vs 1-4—go there

Finally,here is another nugget. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that all men are created equal. Lincoln said that.

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

There is a similar pair of verses in Colossians 3:24-25. The Lord sees all that we do. God will reward us if we do good things and punish us if we do evil things. This is not about our salvation. No amount of good work will give us that. We are not rewarded with salvation for our “good “ works. It is God’s gift of grace. We will receive rewards from God for what we have done. But we receive it only by God’s grace. Check your personal motives. Some people think only about themselves and work to get rewards. That is sin and they need to repent of it. Make sure that any work you do is out of love and respect for God. If it is not then God will not reward it.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Until the coming of Jesus women, and children and slaves had no rights. In fact, women and children, for all practical purposes, were nothing but slaves or possessions. Now here comes both Jesus and Paul turning all this upside down. In this verse he has even stated that Christian masters had a duty toward their Christian slaves. Such a teaching was unheard of at the time.

We are to remember that all of us will have the same Master in Heaven.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Verses 10 and 11 tell us that we are in a war and must be prepared to fight against the Satan. You can fight him only one way and that is with the power of God. We are puny compared to Satan and can do absolutely nothing against him outside the power of God. You can resist the devil and he will flee from you but that ability to resist comes from God. Those foolish people who go around saying things like "get away from me Satan". are fooling themselves. You cannot make yourself strong. God must give you His strength.

Next we can take verses twelve through eighteen together.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

The main area of influence for Satan is religion. Remember that Satan is the god of this world and he fights with all the means at his disposal to defeat the purposes of God. Since we are the Body of Christ we are in this fight and in it continuously. There was an invisible war at Calvary and there is an invisible war going on right now. Think of all the resistance from the devil going on right now in both our own and the nearby churches we know of.

I am thinking of the recent flood many of our local churches had, our own included, as well as the bitter fights going on at xxxxx nearby and at brother xxxx's in Arkansas. All of these things are of the devil. As spiritual soldiers we need to be very aware of the spiritual war going on around us. Keep in mind that the name Jesus Christ causes fear in unclean spirits. Finally, in that list of spiritual armor that we are to wear there is one piece missing. The Roman soldiers armor included a piece that went from the knees to the ankle over the shins. These were called greaves. We don't need that piece of protection since our knees are protected if we are on our knees in prayer.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

This is ironic. Paul is an ambassador of our risen Lord, the creator of the universe, and here he is in chains and in prison.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Tychicus is the one carrying this letter to the Ephesians and will add other things concerning Paul's circumstances and condition.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that the full title is given at the end of this verse. Lord speaks of his deity, Jesus speaks of his humanity and Christ indicates he is our Saviour.

Peace is Christ's gift and one of the fruits of the Spirit. The love spoken of is both love of God and love of the brethren.

**24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.
Amen.**

No Christian should be ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel.

Boldness for the Lord Jesus is evidence of filling by the Holy Spirit.