

Saint Pauls Cathedral, Melbourne
Bible Study, Sunday 29th November 2020

THE EPISTLE OF EPHESIANS



AN OVERVIEW OF EPHESIANS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y71r-T98E2Q>

METHOD OF STUDY

Observe → What does it say?

Interpret → What does it mean?

Apply → How do I respond?

AN INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

Author: The apostle Paul around 61-63 A.D. from prison in Rome.

The Recipients: Christians at Ephesus and churches in the area surrounding Ephesus.

Paul's Ministry In The Region: Paul first came to Ephesus for a short visit toward the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21).

On his third missionary journey Paul made it back to Ephesus for an extended stay of three years. The end result is that the gospel spread from Ephesus throughout Asia Minor (Acts 19:9-10). A riot by some of the local idol makers finally forced Paul to leave Ephesus (Acts 19:23-20:1).

At the end of his third journey, in Miletus, Paul met with and bid a tearful farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. (Acts 20:17-38).

Purpose Of The Epistle: To encourage the Ephesus believers by addressed great themes of their position in Christ and how to "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Eph. 4:1)

SYMMETRY OF EPHESIANS

EPHESIANS 1-3	EPHESIANS 4-6
Theology	Practice
Identity - Our Heritage In Christ	Responsibility - Our Life In Christ
The Position of the Believer	The Practice of the Believer
Privilege / Blessings	Conduct
Belief	Behaviour
Knowing our Spiritual Wealth	Living out our Spiritual Walk

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANSⁱ

INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

1. DOCTRINE: OUR RICHES IN CHRIST (1:3-3:21)

1.1 Our Spiritual Possessions In Christ (1:3-14)

1.2 Our Spiritual Position In Christ (2:1-22)

2. PRACTICE: OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHRIST (4:1-6:20)

2.1 A Call To Walk In Unity (4:1-16)

2.2 A Call To Walk In Purity (4:17-5:21)

2.3 A Call To Walk In Harmony (5:22-6:9)

2.4 A Call To Walk In Victory (6:10-20)

CONCLUSION (6:21-24)

Ephesians 4:1-16 - A Call To Walk In Unity

THE MESSAGE

4¹⁻³ In light of all this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

4-6 You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.

7-13 But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift. The text for this is: He climbed the high mountain, He captured the enemy and seized the booty, He handed it all out in gifts to the people.

Is it not true that the One who climbed up also climbed down, down to the valley of earth? And the One who climbed down is the One who climbed back up, up to highest heaven. He handed out gifts above and below, filled heaven with his gifts, filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.

14-16 No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.

NRSV

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷ But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people."

⁹ (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴ We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Be diligent to preserve the unity of the body (4:1-6)

(Remember, 3:2-21 is a parenthesis of 3:1 and 4:1)

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- What does “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called” mean? (v.1)
- What does verse two and three look like in real life?
- Give some examples of how they can preserve unity.
- What is the reason for unity in the church?
- What word is repeated again and again in verses 4-6? What is its importance?

Spiritual gifts and their purpose (7-11)

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- What does verse 7 mean? How should we respond to it?
- What do verses 8-10
- Do the gifts of verse 11 still exist?

Purpose of spiritual gifts (12-16)

¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

¹⁴ We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

- What is God's purpose in giving these gifts? (v.12-13)
- What should we all be? (v.14-15)
- What is the end goal for the believers in the church? (V.16)
* *Note the unity and individuality of the members of God's church working in tandem.*
- How does a church grow?

ⁱ adapted from The Bible Exposition Commentary, Vol. 2, Warren W. Wiersbe, p.7