

EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET 3



About the Author:

- Prior to his coming to Christ – Paul was a Pharisee (Phil 3:5);
- He was a persecutor of Christians;
- Educated in Tarsus – this gave him dual citizenship – he was both a Jew and a Roman;
- May not have been the best looking guy! (1 Cor 2:3, 2 Cor 10:10)
- His conversion was dramatic – and thus is mentioned in three places (Acts 9,22,26);
- He was befriended into the church by Barnabus – yet even early on in his faith – he received death threats (Acts 9:28-20);
- Paul had a heart for mission and we see three of his missionary journeys recorded in Acts (13-20) – these started around AD46 and continued up to his initial arrest and first Roman imprisonment around AD58-60 (Acts 23-26);
- Although not recorded - it is thought the Apostle underwent one further missionary journey prior to his final re-arrest and execution at the hands of Nero in AD67
- Out of the 27 New Testament books – 13 are through the Holy Spirit inspired pen of the Apostle.

Ephesians – Its Message:

Up to now we have seen the Apostle remind us that everything we have, are and hope to be – starts with God. He loved us and chose us ‘in Him’ before the foundation of the world. Our efforts and activities now can only ever be in response to what He has already done.

Chapter One:

In chapter one we saw two major sections:

Verses 1-14 – Doxology and Praise – Paul praising God for what He has done – it is ‘all of Him’ and ‘all to the praise of His glory’. God has predestined us, chosen us in Him, adopted us, redeemed us and sealed us by His Spirit – guaranteeing our future ‘In Christ’. In Week one - we saw that God is so serious about us that He has:

SOUGHT us
SAVED us
SEALED us

Such a discovery can only lead to a response of praise!

Verses 15-23 (week 2) lead us naturally from praise to prayer – with our challenge being that we need to “*Be Serious about Prayer*”.

Our prayer comes out of what we **know and discover about God** – after reminding us of the amazing lengths God has gone to – Paul can then say, ‘For this reason..’ (vs 15). Paul goes on to pray that the Ephesians will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God (the Spirit of Truth – John 14:26) – and that the ‘eyes of their hearts’ (inner selves) will be opened to grasp these amazing truths. Yet prior to prayer – Paul states what he has ‘heard’ about the Ephesian believers, that they have demonstrated the two-fold qualities of ‘faith’ in Christ Jesus and ‘love’ for the saints. **Faith** and **love** are the critical platform for any praying fellowship or believer.

Paul then gives us a model prayer in which he shows us that:

Prayer is PERSISTENT
Prayer is PURPOSEFUL
Prayer is POWERFUL

Busy activity is no replacement for prayer – without which, nothing happens.

Chapter Two:

Where chapter one reveals to us the amazing purposes of God in bringing ‘*all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ*’ (Eph 1:10) – chapter two commences by showing us the steps God will take to bring it to fulfilment – commencing with the salvation of individuals (Eph 2:1-10). Whilst praising and praying should be a natural response to the ‘heights’ of our privileges in chapter one – chapter two is a stark reminder and comparison of the depths from which we came from – if chapter one is the highest point of praise, ‘in the heavenlies’; the first three verses of chapter two shows man at his lowest (Eph 2:1-3). Thus we need to ‘*Be serious about transformation*’ or moreover, our ‘need’ for transformation. Religious activity and ‘playing church’ is no substitute.

In the first 10 verses of chapter 2, we are encouraged to remember that like Christ, we too have been raised from death (a spiritual death). Whilst God was able to show His power in raising Christ, in raising us, He demonstrates His amazing grace.

The first 3 verses encourage us to have a realistic view of what we were ‘pre-Christ’ (or are if not in Christ) – revealing three appalling truths about our pre-Christ state – that we were:

- **Dead** – 2:1
- **Enslaved** to the world, the flesh and the devil – 2:3
- **Condemned** under God’s wrath (His Divine opposition to all that is evil) – 2:3

Yet gloriously, verses 4-10 reveal the amazing intervention of God, beginning, 'but God....' (vs 4) or 'but because of His great love for us, God..'. Paul reminds us of **what God has done and why He has done it** – all out of His amazing:

- **Mercy & Love** - vs 4
- **Grace** – vs 5&8
- **Kindness** – vs 7

The amazing blessing continues, as we see that God has not finished with us yet – we are a 'work in progress' (vs 8-10) – 'created in Christ Jesus to do good works' (vs 10).

Further Study:

Sin: “Any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude or nature” – Grudem, Systematic Theology, p490

- Entered the world through Adam (Rom 5:12, 18-19) and is inherent;
- The 'fool' has no regard and is reckless about it (Proverbs 10:23, 12:15, 14:7, 16);
- Every part of our fallen nature is affected (Rom 7:18);
- Sin can be spoken of in the terms 'transgression' and 'sin'. Those direct rebellious acts of disobedience, plus the sins of omission – man in his fallen state can be described as both a rebel and a failure (Eph 2:1);
- Even our best 'works' are filthy rags before a Holy God (Isaiah 64:6);
- This applies to all of us (Romans 1-3, Ephesians 2:1-3, Psalm 14:3, Psalm 143:2, 1 Kings 8:46);
- The punishment or 'wages' of sin is death – eternal separation from God and an eternity of punishment in Hell (Matt 25, Rom 6:23);
- Yet one man's 'obedience' (Christ) remedies this (Rom 5:19);
- Christ was the propitiation (a sacrifice that bears God's wrath against sin and turns His wrath to favour) - (Rom 3:25)
- God's righteousness demands the punishment for sin that He might be glorified in the universe He has created (Jer 9:24, Rom 3:25-26) – basically a good judge consistently punishes transgression and law breaking – demonstrating a 'right' character.

Further Reading/Bibliography – My thanks go to!

- *The Holy Bible* – (first of course!)
- *Chosen for Good* – Lewis, Clements, Haslam – Kingsway, 1986
- *The Message of Ephesians* – Stott – IVP, 1979
- *God's Ultimate Purpose* – Lloyd Jones – Banner, 2004
- *Systematic Theology* – Grudem – Zondervan, 1994
- *Systematic Theology* – Berkhof – Banner, 1994
- *Epistle to the Ephesians* – Hodge – Banner, 1964
- *Ephesians* – Wilson – Banner, 1978
- *Ephesians* – Foulkes – IVP, 1963
- *All the prayers of the Bible* – Lockyer – Pickering/Zondervan – 1959
- *New Bible Dictionary* – Ed Derek Williams – IVP - 1989

**“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word”
Psalm 119:18**