

## EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET 4



### **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).

**Verses 11-22** of chapter 2 offer us an interesting parallel with the first 10 verses:

- In verses 1-3 – we were alienated from God
- In verses 11-12 – we were alienated from each other
  
- In verses 4-10 - Christ intervened and has given us peace with God
- In verses 13-18 – Christ has intervened to bring peace between us and our fellow men

From this section (11-22) we can see three things:

**Remember the PAST:**

The Apostle highlights the hostility that existed between the Jew and the Gentile (11-12) – stating as a ‘double whammy’ that Gentiles were not only condemned along with everyone else in verses 1-3; but here in 12-13, are also Christless, Stateless, hopeless and Godless – as those who had not received the original covenant promise given to Israel (Gen 12, 15, 17). This all said, this hostility should only now be a memory – as In Christ, they have been reconciled – but this amazing fact should cause them to:

**Remember the COST:**

Verses 13-18 highlight the great cost and method employed by Almighty God in securing our peace with one another and our fellow man; namely through the ‘blood of Christ’ (13). Christ’s sacrifice has broken down the ‘wall of hostility’ (14) and has made the ceremonial laws obsolete (15), at the same time creating a single new society (‘one man’ – 15) with everyone ‘reconciled to God’ (16). Such a reflection should cause us to view one another in a different light – not highlighting our differences, but focussing on our ‘agreement’ in Christ (13). Such a people, called together to worship God, must therefore: *Be Serious about Fellowship* and

**Remember their PRIVILEGES and RESPONSIBILITIES: 19-22:**

Whilst in verse 12, we were considered ‘excluded from citizenship’ – Christ’s reconciling act on the cross has now given us three amazing privileges:

- We are members of God’s Kingdom (19)
- Members of God’s Family (19)
- A Holy Temple (21)

We can say that in Christ we are:

- The Kingdom where God rules
- The Family who God loves
- The Temple where He is happy to dwell

The temple of God’s people today is built upon the sure foundation of God’s Word (20) with Christ as the solid Cornerstone (20). With such a foundation, the resultant ‘temple’ will be one of both unity and growth (21).

With such privileges – we need to ensure that we behave in a manner worthy of our calling and position and also that we model the Gospel to a watching world.

### **Further Study:**

- The Jews hostility to Gentiles entering the temple – Acts 21:27-30
- The Lord's anger at the Jews 'hiding' behind the religiosity of the temple – Jeremiah 7:1-11
- The people of God today being God's Holy Temple – Ephesians 2:21, 1 Corinthians 3:10-16
- True worship outside of a physical temple – John 4:19-24
- Christ as a shadow of the Law – Hebrews 7-9
- Christ abolishing the ceremonial law – Ephesians 2:15f
- The fulfilment of the Moral law – Matthew 5:17
- The futility of the law to save – Galatians 3
- The way to peace with God – Romans 3, Ephesians 2:13-18, John 14:6

### **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*
- *God's Ultimate Plan – 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**