

Ephesians has often been called the Grand Canyon of scripture.

Paul mentions

- The Spirit 14 times,
- Jesus 21 times
- Lord 28 times
- God 32 times
- And Christ 46 times
- for a combined total of 141 times.

There are only a total of 154 verses in Ephesians.

In 2 Cor 12:2 Paul designated himself as “a man in Christ”

This is important for us to understand because it’s a reminder that we are no longer

- in sin, nor are we slaves to the world.

Ephesus was the capital of Asia Minor.

- a major trade routes
- from east to west and west to east.

It was a very rich city

- with about 500k living there
- at the time.

Paul spent about 3 years in Ephesus

he taught the scriptures in the school of Tyrannus.

- From Ephesus Paul would make his way to Jerusalem knowing
- that chains and persecution awaited him.
- He would make his way back toward Ephesus but was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. So he met with the elders of Ephesus on the shores of Miletus.

There in Miletus he met with the Elders of Ephesus and warned them.

Acts 20:29

29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

So Paul leaves Ephesus, leaving Timothy in charge of the church there in Ephesus.

(1 Tim 1:3)

The historian Eusebius wrote that John

- spent his last days in Ephesus
- defending the truth

- against false teachers.

So, the Ephesians had the best leaders in Paul, Timothy and John, yet by the 3rd century AD the church had been destroyed.

Paul wrote Philippians, Colossians and Philemon during his two year stint in prison.

If there was one consolation, he was allowed visitors while in chains.

Regarding savage wolves, within 25-30 years of leaving Ephesus the city began to decay. If Ephesians was written between 60 to 63 AD that would take us to about AD 93.

It was sometime around 95 AD that John began to pen the book of Revelation. There Jesus said to the Ephesian church:

Rev 2:4-5

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.

Pagan worship in Ephesus, Diana.

Chapters 1 - 3 are doctrinal and speak of what God has done for us in Christ.

Chapters 4-6 are then application

This morning as we begin our study in Ephesians I'll be speaking of our riches in Christ.

- The largest banks of Asia Minor were in Ephesus

Eph 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

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

Paul identifies himself first as an apostle:

1 Paul, an apostle (one who is sent out on a mission) of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul is writing to believers, to the saints.

A saint from the worlds perspective is someone perfect.

The truth is that we are both sinners and saints.

- We're either a saint or we're not!

We're either for Him or we're against Him!

A saint is also someone who is faithful.

Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit. Being Faithful really begins by having a reverent fear of the Lord.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (unmerited, underserved, unearned favor.)

(Grace) to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Lord happens to be the title of Jesus.

Jesus - His name
Christ - His mission,

Paul uses the common Greek greeting in this verse which is "Grace or to rejoice" then then a Jewish greeting "shalom" translated to Greek meaning "peace."

It's God's grace which ultimately leads to peace.

When Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians there was a wall, a wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile.

Paul may have had that very wall in mind when he wrote in chapter 2 speaking of God.

Eph 2:14-18

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

It's only at the cross that there will be lasting peace.

Redemption in Christ

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

God is in the business of blessing.

The word “places” is in italics.

- That means it was added later.

In this case the word “places” was added, seeming to imply

- things we’ve read in the past pertaining to heaven,

But here the idea is the dimension of heaven, meaning that

- it’s a place that we can step into
- anytime we want.
- We can have fellowship with the Lord any time we want.

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

(Spurgeon once said, it’s a good thing God chose me before I was born because He surely wouldn’t have chosen me afterwards.

I have to think that he was somewhat joking when he said that,

- because God has something we don’t have,
- and that’s called foreknowledge!.
- 1 Pet 1:2 mentions God’s foreknowledge.

The Lord wants you to know this morning that you are Holy in His sight and without blame.

Don’t allow Satan to hold you in bondage when you’ve already been set free.

Jude 24

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present *you* faultless (without blame)
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

When we stumble Jesus still presents us

- faultless before the Father.

Biblically speaking, we have the responsibility to respond to what God has revealed to us, including His call to believe the gospel (John 1:12; 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; Revelation 22:17).

The subject of pre-destination and free will

- is one of the most debated in the scriptures.
- Don't get caught up on this.

Someone once said "Try to explain election and you may lose your mind. But try to explain it away and you may lose your soul!"

Eph 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Since we've been adopted into the family of God, we should bear family resemblance.

Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr, speaking of sons!

Waiting to board a plane, on which he had a reservation, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., overheard the plea of a private (lowest ranking) at the ticket window: "I'm going overseas in three days. I want to see my Ma before I go. I can go home and back only if I travel by plane!" It was explained to him that every seat on the plane was taken.

Just then, Brigadier General Roosevelt stepped forward and said, "I'll surrender my seat to him!" "But," protested a fellow officer to the general, "this is a matter of rank!" "That's right," quickly replied General Roosevelt, "he's a son, I'm only a general!" God conferred the highest honor upon us when he called us sons!¹

God calls us "sons." He conferred the highest honor upon us when He called us sons!

Eph 1:7

7 In Him we have redemption (there were over 6 million slaves in the Roman empire who undoubtedly were in need of redemption.)

- Paul spoke of a permanent redemption.

Do you realize that last year alone there were more than 65 million people that died globally and everyone one of those were in need of redemption.

Redemptions comes at a cost to the redeemer.

- That redemption can come only thru the shed blood of Christ.

through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, (our forgiveness comes thru the finished work on the cross.)

¹ Tan, P.L. (1996) *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., p. 1201.

according to the riches of His grace

- God has grace in abundance.

You may think to yourself this morning, God's grace is sufficient!

He has an abundance of grace!

Paul said in Col 1:27 that the riches are Christ in us.

If we had nothing else in this life but Christ, that would be enough.

The Hebrews have a term for this, it's the term "Dayenu." It means, "it would have been enough."

The Hebrews have a song that is sung during the telling of the story of the Exodus at the Passover Seder.

The song consists of a series of lines of God's kindness for the Jewish people during and after the Exodus

- and concludes each with the word "Dayenu," meaning
- "It would have been enough."

The following are some of the lines from this song:

If He had taken us out of Egypt and not made judgements on them; [it would have been] enough for us..

If He had killed their firstborn and had not given us their money; [it would have been] enough for us..

If He had split the Sea for us and had not taken us through it on dry land; [it would have been] enough for us..

If He had taken us through it on dry land and had not pushed down our enemies in [the Sea]; [it would have been] enough for us..

If He had pushed down our enemies in [the Sea] and had not supplied our needs in the wilderness for forty years; [it would have been] enough for us.

If He had supplied our needs in the wilderness for forty years and had not fed us the manna; [it would have been] enough for us.

If He had brought us close to Mount Sinai and had not given us the Torah; [it would have been] enough for us.

If He had given us the Torah and had not brought us into the land of Israel; [it would have been] enough for us.

Jesus is enough for us!

Eph 1:3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

We are blessed with every spiritual blessing.
That's the theme of this letter to the Ephesians.

In the OT, Israel was blessed with a physical covenant by the Lord under the Mosaic covenant.

You and I are under the spiritual covenant.

What might some of those spiritual blessings be for us today?

- Sharing the word of God
- Praying with someone
- Discipling someone
- Having a personal relationship with the Lord

Paul says we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in:
Heavenly places: we have an open invitation:

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, (we love Him because He first loved us) that we should be holy and without blame (He finds no fault in us) before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons (no longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Eph 1:7

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, (God has showered upon us blessing after blessing) (the blessing of salvation has come from the Father/Son/Holy Spirit, verse 4, 7, & 13)

Eph 1:4

4 just as He (Father) chose us in Him (Son) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

Eph 1:7

7 In Him (Father) we have redemption through His (Son) blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Next week we'll see in verse 13 that we have the promised seal of the Holy Spirit!