

# REVIVE CHURCH- PREDESTINED FOR ADOPTION

## EPHESIANS SERIES #2

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When we look into the word of God we see things not only as they should be but as they will be . Jesus will fulfill His word, it will not return void, it will accomplish its purpose (Is. 55).

I want to spend some time in the book of Ephesians and be intentional about slowing down and allow the richness of the word of God to saturate our souls.

**The Apostle Paul was writing to the church of Ephesus while imprisoned in Rome, confined, and awaiting trial.** Acts 19:8-10 tells us that he ministered there for over 2 years. He was an Apostolic Father to them.

We have read and understood in part the theology, picked up information and have loved the devotional aspects of the book of Ephesians and these things are all profitable for our growth and understanding. We must however, be careful we don't miss the incarnational, and powerful truth revealed, Christ's plan to bring revelation of Himself to the world through a yielded bride, We must bring into focus the believer's ministry in Christ. Paul is writing to a church that had experienced spiritual breakthrough that not only penetrated intense pagan darkness but spread to impact a wide geographic region. I believe Ephesians also gives us the blueprint from God which reveals His intent for His church globally.

Ephesus –

- Strongest church in the NT (Acts 19)
- 300,000-500,000 people which would have been the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in the world at that time.
- The city was famous for the Temple of Diana or Artemis
- Diana's temple was massive and attracted people from all over the Empire
- **Ephesus was a hub for pagan religion, a center for the occult** (witchcraft and scorcery) Ephesus was a dark place with many demonic strongholds. In the ancient world if you wanted to cast a spell on someone or be delivered from evil spirits from a witch you would go to Ephesus.

**Ephesus would have been a tough place to plant a church.** It was in this dark place that God would choose to illuminate His light that would touch a city and a region.

- **In Acts 19 Paul and his friends came to Ephesus, ministered in the synagogue for three months, started a church and remained there for two years discipling the new converts.** During those two years the entire city of Ephesus was evangelized. Close to a half million people heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **An awakening happened that transformed the entire city through the equipped church.** The economy was disrupted by the power of God. One of the major industries was idol making. *Businesses would make and sell idols of Diana (Artemis) to people coming and going as well as residents. By the end of Paul's two year ministry so many people were turning to Jesus that no one was buying idols anymore.* Idol makers protested and rioted because their business was failing.
- By the time Paul put young Timothy in place as the leader in AD 62 it is thought the Ephesian church could have had around 100,000 Christian's throughout the city. This speaks of the power that the church was known for that was being released outside the walls.

- About 50 years after Paul's visit to Ephesus a secular Roman Writer 'Pliny' wrote these words "*Temples to heathen gods are almost totally forsaken and Christians are everywhere a multitude*".
- Some attempted to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons and they were beaten severely by a demonized man who said Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you? The demonized man stripped them and beat them severely. *Word got out and fear filled the occult community so much so that they brought forward their books of magic and started a bonfire (Acts 19:19) The value would have been in the millions of dollars.*

The church at Ephesus had been used to absolutely transform the territory. These Jesus People uprooted the evil strongholds and released the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

More than any other New Testament book, Ephesians holds the key to teaching and advancing the mission of the local church. The true Spirit formed and led church manifests the life of Jesus.

**Ephesians 1:1-6** 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.

**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, **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, **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.

**Paul's greeting as an Apostolic Father to the Ephesian church immediately points out the identity that is given to those who are in Christ Jesus.**

1. Those who are in Christ are recipients of both His Grace and His peace.
2. Believers are declared saints (holy ones) by reason of the justifying power of Jesus finished work on the cross and by grace are given the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit to enter into His finished work. We are to no longer go by our old identities and no longer live in the absence of His grace and peace.
3. **We need to not only see ourselves as saints through the blood of Jesus, but also view one another through this lens.** We must always look through the blood of Jesus when looking at one another. We are recipients of this grace and also empowered to give this grace to one another.

**It is important that we agree with what God says about us because this shapes our identity and belief system.** People tend to become what others think they are. Our Father calls us saints, His holy ones. No person or institution can make you saintly or holy. Only the love of The Father through Jesus Christ can bestow not only the title but the reality. **Sainthood is not an accomplished perfection but an established position that we have been given in Jesus Christ.** *We like the church in Ephesus or anywhere else are still in the process of growing up and maturing in the faith.*

- Living as a saint, living in holiness means we have been separated from the world and consecrated to worship and service of God. We need to not take this gift of grace and identity found in Christ lightly. We want to live consecrated lives, set apart for His glory and allow the word of God and the Spirit of God to sanctify us through and through.

**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, **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, **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.

There are some Incredible Biblical Truths that we are meant to experience - **We are predestined , we are adopted as sons! God the Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.** The Greek word **pnumatikos** is translated as **spiritual blessing** but is translated as **spiritual gifts in 1Corinthians 14:1.** *The word is an umbrella term that includes the power, gifts and resources given to us in heavenly places as a spiritual people.*

**Predestination**-A Biblical teaching that has been what I believe to be very misunderstood. There are denominations that believe God has predestined some to hell and some to heaven, that God has made up His sovereign choice beforehand. I don't believe Biblically that this position can stand.

*Jack Hayford commentary- Predestination is the Biblical teaching that declares the sovereignty of God over human beings in such a way that the freedom of the human will is also preserved. God's predestination of human events does not eliminate human choice. A thorough understanding of how God can maintain His sovereignty and still allow human freedoms seems to be reserved for His infinite mind alone.*

**God chose to establish a people of His own.**

1. He **chose to create a group through whom He can work out His eternal plan.**
2. **Paul focuses on the plural "us" in this text hinting at the fact that individual election is not the issue here.** God takes pleasure in enabling everyone to have the opportunity to enter into the elect community of God's people by faith. This is such an important aspect of the Gospel when sharing with unbelievers..
3. The point of being the chosen ones is to be holy and blameless. **God excludes no one from the opportunity to believe.** *2Peter 3:9- The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*
4. **Some refer to the elect or chosen as if God has pre-selected some to be saved and some to be damned.** The Bible here is referring to God's gracious choice to have a group of people through whom the message and ministry of salvation may come. The individual is not in view. God calls the church the chosen ones!

**Adoption**-Another spiritual reality that we are meant not just to know but to experience. I have seen more people get breakthrough when receiving this revelation over anything else in the formation of their identity. Don't quickly pass by this reality and think you understand if you aren't living daily in this spiritual reality.

**We must move from thinking like a slave or orphan, to thinking like sons/daughters who have been chosen, adopted and are heirs of Jesus Christ with an incredible inheritance (every spiritual blessing!)** You don't work for an inheritance, you receive it by faith. The son or daughter becomes the heir of what the Father possesses.

**Galatians 4:6-7** (NKJV) 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

**Romans 8:14-17** (NKJV) 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him,] that we may also be glorified together.

**1 John 3:1-2** (NKJV) 1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

God's kingdom is beautifully defined by the relationship we have with the Father through Jesus Christ. We were slaves, sinners and far from God. He chose us for adoption and made us His own children. **Now what was only available to Jesus is given to us as heirs as our inheritance.**

The 'orphan spirit' refers to a spiritual condition in which some Christians profess outwardly to know God as Father, but experience an internal contradiction to that belief. **Deep down they struggle to comprehend that God loves them.** They may harbour feelings of abandonment, fear, unworthiness or rejection. This may be due to unhealed hurts from painful past experiences.

Before any of us can move into the beauties of our inheritance in Christ we must not only grasp this concept of sonship but experience the realities.

Eph. 1:6b He made us accepted.

**Is literally translated -He has graced us with grace.** We can claim no merit before the Father. Grace is found only in the Beloved Son through faith. **We stand only in the merits and finished work of Jesus. We were saved by grace, we are sustained by grace and we will enter into His glory only through the avenue of grace.** God willed to bring us into His family and the moment we said yes we were adopted and are predestined for glory. **God does not impose His will, He invites us, He chooses us but we must say yes!**

## Home groups

- Why is it essential as believers that we read the Bible in order to be transformed rather than to just grow in knowledge?
- Discuss the difficulties that a church would face in Ephesus? Is it much different that our current culture? Do you have Hope for the infiltration of the Gospel in our region?
- Discuss-It is important that we agree with what God says about us because this shapes our identity and belief system. People tend to become what others think they are. **Our Father calls us saints, His holy ones. No person or institution can make you saintly or holy. Only the love of The Father through Jesus Christ can bestow not only the title but the reality.** Sainthood is not an accomplished perfection but an established position that we have been given in Jesus Christ.
- Discuss-***Jack Hayford commentary-** Predestination is the Biblical teaching that declares the sovereignty of God over human beings in such a way that the freedom of the human will is also preserved. God's predestination of human events does not eliminate human choice. A thorough understanding of how God can maintain His sovereignty and still allow human freedoms seems to be reserved for His infinite mind alone.*
- Discuss-God's kingdom is beautifully defined by the relationship we have with the Father through Jesus Christ. We were slaves, sinners and far from God. He chose us for adoption and made us His own children. Now what was only available to Jesus is given to us as heirs as our inheritance. **Have you experienced the transformation that comes through sonship or are you living like an orphan? Take time to share and pray.**