

IN HIM...WE ARE

FOR WE ARE HIS
WORSHIPERS



ROOTED AND GROUNDED
IN LOVE

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING
THE CORNERSTONE

EPHESIANS



Frisco Bible Church
a redeemed community




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The statue of Arete, the personification of virtue is one of four statues in the library of Celsus



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 Frisco Bible Church

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The theater seats up to 25,000 people

.introduction

As we seek to recognize just how deeply and richly we are blessed in Christ and respond by glorifying God, it seems wise to get a big-picture view of Ephesians.

Here are some key points to think and pray over:

For almost 2000 years, this letter of Paul's to Ephesus has been called the "queen of the Epistles" because it tells us very plainly who we are as a church (chapters 1-3) and how we should live (chapters 4-6).

The letter is about love. "...of the 107 times Paul used the verb or noun 'love' (agapao or agape), 19 are in Ephesians. Thus more than 1/6 of his references to 'love' appear in this small epistle to the Ephesians." – Harold Hoehner

The letter is about unity. "Ephesians is all about the doctrine of the unity of mankind in Christ and the purpose of God for the world through the Church." – J.A. Robinson

The letter is about grace. "Charis" or grace appears often in the letter, by far the most occurrences outside the much-longer letters of Romans and 2 Corinthians. While not suggesting any diminishment of love and unity as the hallmarks of the epistle, it seems clear the Lord wants us to remember that all love and unity occurs by His grace.

The letter is about living out who we are in a difficult world. The world was a rough place for Christians in 60 A.D. Forces in Ephesus and around the world were arrayed against the young churches of Jesus. Surely, they needed this reminder of love and unity and purpose, just as we today need to be reminded and transformed while living in an increasingly hostile world of Islamic hatred, anti-Christian policy, and dedicated hedonism reminiscent of the Ephesian brothel.

.we are saints

.overview Paul writes a circular letter addressed originally to the church at Ephesus. He describes them as saints, specifically noting their faith. Paul also introduces the critical concept of being “in Christ,” something he’ll refer to 8 more times in the next 12 verses. He then blesses them with grace and peace from the Father and Son. Thus, the church of Jesus is greeted in its core concepts: as saints, in Jesus, recipients of grace and peace.

.read Ephesians 1:1-2

- .ask**
1. In verse 1, Paul is submissive to God, filling his calling of Apostle by God’s will. Could such a verse be written of me?
 2. Paul is not just calling certain special people “saints”; that title clearly applies to all believers. That would include me. Am I living like a “saint”?
 3. Look at the description of God in these verses. What attributes do I see here? (E.g., He is the giver of grace.)
 4. Look at the description of Christians here. What does God say about who we are? (E.g., we are recipients of grace.)

.pray Lord, thank you for telling me so clearly who you are and who I am in you. Change me by your Word such that I live out who I am – a saint called according to Your will.



A miniature reconstruction of the temple and statue of Artemis



The Celsus Library

2 . w e a r e c h o s e n

.overview Paul describes the exalted and heavenly nature of our choosing and blessing. Doing so, he describes the doctrines of predestination and adoption while declaring all this as a praise unto the glory of God's grace.

.read Ephesians 1:1-2

- .ask**
1. Paul sees all of life as crafted to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Do I see everything in such packaging? Is all of my life viewed as a hymn of praise to God's grace?
 2. Paul says that all our blessings have come "in Christ." What does it mean to be "in Christ?"
 3. The power of elective grace has Paul very excited. What does it do in your soul when you recognize that God chose you before He even began creation?
 4. The purpose for elective grace is that we should be blameless in love. (Dr. Braudrick thinks the artificial period in verse 4 interrupts the flow & causes us to misread 4-5.) Does that mean I am to abuse my gracious position in Christ? If not, then what does it mean?

.pray Lord, thank You, thank You, thank You that I am chosen by You! It is obviously not by my merit, but Your grace; and so I praise You! Further, I pray that I will live by that grace as a blameless person in love.

. w e a r e r e d e e m e d

.overview Paul introduces some major themes of theology as he completes this fantastic sentence. (The sentence that is 3-14 can be subdivided by the recurring phrase “to the praise of the [His] glory.”) Covering these last two sections we are introduced to the concepts of redemption, dispensational revelation, the preeminence of Christ who alone is worthy of hope and belief, and the Holy Spirit as sealer and pledge of the saints’ inheritance.

.read Ephesians 1:7-14

- .ask**
1. In Jesus, Christians have redemption. This loaded term means a great deal. Begin by looking at the attendant concepts in the text. What does the context tell me about redemption? (E.g., it involves grace lavished upon us.)
 2. According to verse 8, what is God’s great plan?
 3. Verses 11-12 seems to be addressed to Jewish believers while 13-14 are addressed to Gentile Christians. In each case, this redemption is “for the praise of His glory.” How does my redemption display God’s glory?
 4. The Holy Spirit is described as a “seal” and a “deposit.” These indicate security, authentication, and ownership. How can I better base my thoughts and feelings on the truth that I am sealed with God’s own Spirit?

.pray Lord, thank you for telling me so clearly who you are and who I am in you. Change me by your Word such that I live out who I am – a saint called according to Your will.

4 . we are the body of Christ

.overview Paul launches into a passionate prayer for God's people. The statement of gratitude in verses 15-16 is a customary part of Greek letters, while the prayer begins in earnest in verse 17. Notice the things for which he prays – wisdom, revelation, and knowledge of the Father; enlightenment to know God's hope, riches, and power; strength of the supremacy of the resurrected Christ; the church made into the beautiful body of Christ filled with the fullness of Jesus.

.read Ephesians 1:15-23

- .ask**
1. Ephesus (like all the cities who received this letter in 60 A.D.) was full of idolatry, sophistry, and other false wisdoms. By contrast, God desires that we receive real wisdom in the Father. What are the false "wisdoms" of our day?
 2. The Bible and God's creation are both held up for us as revelations of God. Do I do my part to study these and thus "get to know Him better?" Do I pray for the things Paul does?
 3. Do I grasp the incomparable power of the resurrected Christ? How is such power at work in my life?
 4. Do I realize the beauty of the church – that it's the body of Christ? If not, what distracts me? (E.g., leaders, foolish people, etc.)

.pray Lord, thank you for yoking me together with my brethren in the body of Christ. Help me to appreciate it more fully.

.we are children of wrath

.overview Paul walks us through our past position as a contrast to our present blessed appointment. Once again, the description of who we are (and were) is woven among the beautiful and heavy threads of God's character and action.

.read Ephesians 2:1-7

- .ask**
1. We were dead. Period. Is there any hint there that I somehow provide a part of my own justification? In other words, do I make myself right with God? Do I attempt to raise myself or position myself spiritually in heaven?
 2. There are three parts of our old dead trap – the course of this world, the prince of the power of the air (Satan & demons), and the lusts of our flesh. Now alive in Jesus, we're not bound by them! However, many passages make it clear that this side of heaven we still struggle against these enemies. Which of these am I most likely to allow continued sway over my soul?
 3. Who deserves all the praise for saving my soul? Verse 7 begins with the Greek word "hina." A hina clause tells a use for something. According to this, what is one of our uses for the future? Does this leave room to live as if life were all about me?
 4. Look at this statue from Ephesus. It is headless. How is that a great summary description of who we were before coming to faith in Jesus?

.pray Lord, thank you for the phrase "But God!"



The headless statue dates back to the Byzantine era and is dedicated to a woman doctor who offered great services to Ephesus

.we are God's workmanship

.overview Paul lays out the quintessential statement of God's grace and describes it's outworking in good works God prepared for us to perform.

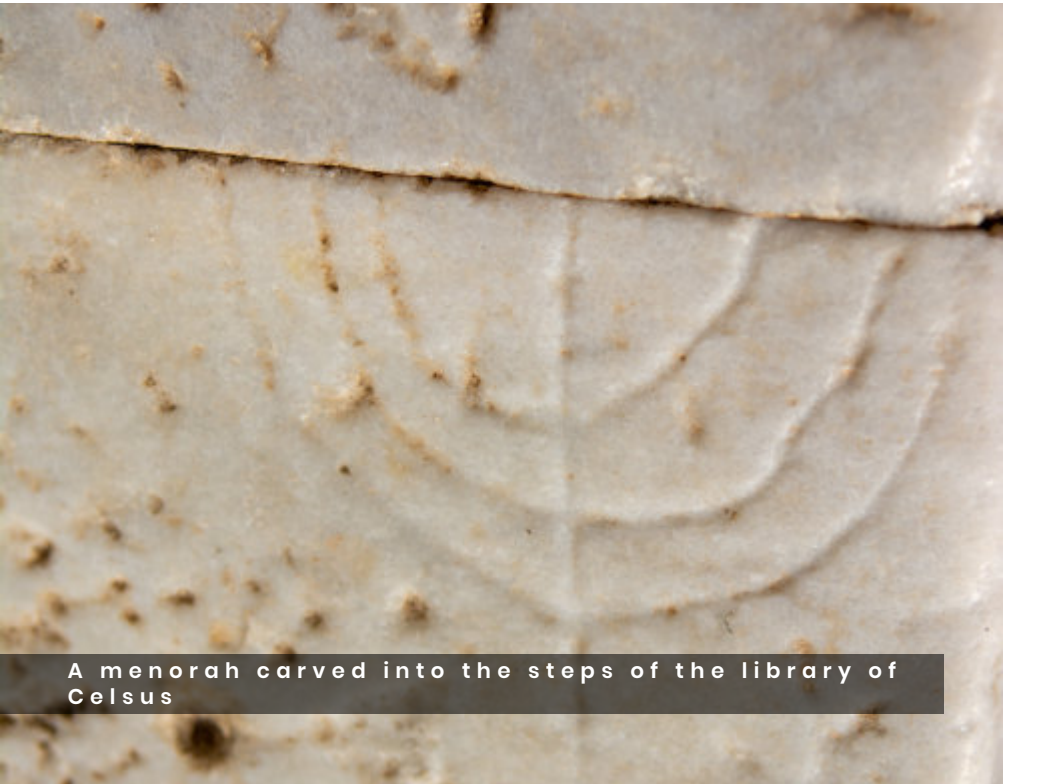
.read Ephesians 2:8-10

- .ask**
1. Based on what I see here, how would I define grace?
 2. God's grace operates in my life through faith. When have I trusted God and seen His grace operate in me?
 3. Why do people warp God's grace and pretend it's gained by good works, when Paul says the exact opposite? Are there thought patterns of mine that tend toward that same nonsense?
 4. Verse 10 uses craftsmanship language to describe how we are God's personally crafted tools, set aside to accomplish His predestined good works. Do I see my life that way? What might change if I did?

.pray Lord, thank you for saving me and all my brethren by Your grace and for Your glory! I beg You to expose the ways in which I keep trying to live my good works and not grace. At the same time, please guide me in gratitude such that I willingly walk in the good works You have prepared for me.

A photograph of three ancient stone pillars in Ephesus, Turkey. The pillars are made of weathered stone and feature Corinthian capitals. They are part of a larger structure, with a stone wall visible in the background. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Pillars in Ephesus

A close-up photograph of a stone surface, likely a step of the library of Celsus. The stone is light-colored and shows signs of weathering and discoloration. A faint, circular carving is visible, which is a menorah. The carving is simple and appears to be a relief.

A menorah carved into the steps of the library of Celsus



The temple of Hadrian is one of the most famous monuments in Ephesus

.we are God's temple

.overview Paul uses the image of a building, showing how the church is continually growing into a “place” where God dwells and is worshipped. Of course, place is figurative, as the whole idea is that humans are themselves the building.

.read Ephesians 2:11-22

- .ask**
1. As original building materials, we were separate and hopeless. How does that describe me before I became a Christian? How does that still describe me when I neglect unity in Christ?
 2. Through Jesus' sacrifice, God changed us into useful materials for Him. Looking at that enmity that existed between Jew & Gentile before Jesus became our peace and united us, I am struck by the horrible separation of human categories. Whom do I categorize and wall off? Democrats? Other races? Poor people? The wealthy? Charismatics?
 3. In Jesus, all saints belong. We are of the same household and citizenship. How does that change my relationships in church?
 4. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-17, where God shows how we partner with Him in the building process. What does this teach me about the Holy Spirit? About unity?

.pray Lord, help me to preserve the unity You have established in Your temple. Help me to build wisely and well even as you use me in Your building.

.we are in unity

.overview Paul builds on his earlier references to unity, laying out one of the great mysterion (Greek for mysteries) of the New Testament – that Jews & Gentiles are in one body in Jesus. Revelation and new dispensation (“Stewardship” is the Greek oikonomos, which means economy or dispensation.) are again connected, as this unity is a new thing revealed by the Lord.


.read Ephesians 3:1-6

.ask

1. Paul is highlighting this heavenly revelation. Whenever God changes the economy for how He will specifically relate to people, He grants special revelation. For example, God spoke to Adam after the garden and laid out the new modus operandi for relating with God. Similarly, Jesus declared “a new covenant.” What huge new God-mankind relationship issue is Paul dealing with here?
2. How we engage with this new economy of Jews/ Gentiles in the church appears to be a stewardship issue. How am I doing? Do I treat Jews as my equal in the church? Do I pray for Jews? Make Jewish friends? (Depending on your heritage, you can substitute Gentiles for Jews.)
3. According to this passage, is unity more of a fact or a goal?
4. Read Galatians 3:26-28. What does this add to my understanding of unity in the church despite our diversity?

.pray

Lord, help me to actively delight in the unity of Your body. While never pretending all are literally the same, may I value our oneness in Christ Jesus.

A photograph showing the interior of a Roman villa. The walls are covered in frescoes, including a prominent frieze with several panels. The ceiling is made of brickwork. The overall color palette is warm, with earthy tones and some faded colors from the frescoes.

The Terrace Houses consists of six luxury Roman villas dating from the first century BC through the 7th century AD.



Roman craftsmanship

.we are privy to the unfathomable riches of Christ

.overview Verses 7-9 are beautiful summations of what has been taught so far. Verses 10-13 contain some deeply comforting conclusions drawn from those previous truths – that we have the inside track, even past what angels (& demons) know about salvation; that God planned for us to be bold in our access to Him; that we do not lose heart in the face of troubles.

.read Ephesians 3:7-13

- .ask**
1. According to verse 10, it is through us that the unseen spiritual powers learn about God’s wisdom. Is that because we are smart in ourselves? How do I feel, knowing I am on the “inside track” with God?
 2. The Wesley brothers wrote a powerful hymn called “And Can It Be,” a song that declares “bold I approach the eternal throne.” From what verse did they draw that idea? How would life be different if I were to “boldly approach?” What is holding me back?
 3. What kinds of troubles make me lose heart?
 4. What does it mean that Paul’s tribulations were for the Ephesians’ glory? If I serve Jesus, how could my own sufferings be a glory to the rest of the body of Christ?

.pray Lord, I praise You for our “insider” status and the boldness we can have in approaching You. Forgive me for not better accessing such a precious privilege. Help me not to lose heart and to serve You and Your people for their glory.



A first century Roman road leads the way to the library



Roman arches and pillars have been carefully reconstructed

10

.we are being rooted and grounded in love

.overview Paul uses garden imagery to depict our calling to love and our progress in the “fullness of God.” This beautiful prayer is powerfully Trinitarian and convicting in its revelation of our unloving lives. His benediction comforts us, reminding us that the pressure’s off as we rest in the soil wherein our Gardener has planted us.

.read Ephesians 3:14-21

.ask

1. Do I live as if God really is my Father? If not, what needs to change for that to happen?
2. Am I being strengthened with the Holy Spirit in the inner man? Is that the strength of my life? If not, what needs to change for that to occur?
3. Is Christ dwelling in my heart through faith? Do I approach each day’s struggles trusting Jesus? If not, what needs to change for that to be the case?
4. Am I being rooted and grounded in love? Is that the fullness that fills me, or am I more absorbed with other things?

.pray

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Lord, please reduce me to love.



Many Roman roads have been excavated



.ephesians

