

Passage: Ephesians 1:1-2

Title: Resting in God's Love

Summary: We can rest in God's Love.... Because God is resting in His Love for us! Our passage today brings that straight from the heart of God.

Quick Overview of the Book of Ephesians

Today we start another great adventure as we begin this study through the Book of Ephesians, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, and sometimes word-by-word.

The Book of Ephesians has a prebuilt outline to it:

- Doctrine (chapters 1-3)
- Duty (chapter 4-6)

Doctrine - is, "who is God", "what has He done for us", and "what does He think of us".

Duty - is "what does He want us to do", and "what can I ask of Him to do it (for He doesn't ask us to do anything that He will not help us, empower us, to accomplish it". Along with that will come, "what we need to be on guard of".

Ephesians has a most interesting and wonderful order to it in verb tenses such as, seated, walking, and being steadfast.

- Chapter 2 – We are "Seated" with Christ in heaven
- Chapter 4 – We are called to "Walk" worthy of the calling
- Chapter 6 – We are called to "Stand" against the enemy and his ways.

Ephesians 2:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV) ¹ I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Ephesians 6:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

This outline is nothing new to us, as every time we open this Bible here at CCAAC, we always ask these same 5 question. And..... apply what we learn, and what the Lord speaks to our heart as we study this treasure....

The Word of God in Our Hand Today

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So – Sit/Walk/Stand

So, doctrine and duty. Seated, walking, standing fast.

I think many of us, if not all of us, at some time, maybe even all the time, we have that mindset spiritually. We are so ready to get into the duty part, the moving part, of our spiritual life that we don't simply just "sit" and

establish and solidify our position in Christ, that we run off into duty, before we have sat in the doctrine (our position in Christ). The resultant for many people then becomes a work-oriented Christian life, a legalistic ministry mentality, a requirement “to do” rather than “I get to do”. Duty becomes a demand, rather than a delight.

And yes I am talking more so than so-called ministry to the lost and dying world, or ministry inside the church walls, but I am talking about husbands loving their wives, and wives respecting their husbands, and children obeying their parents, and/or Christian workers serving their employer. Once we sit at His feet, fully bask in where we are seated, what our position “in Him” is, then walking the walk takes on a whole new power, a whole new peace, and a whole new joy.

Beloved..... The divine design of Ephesians is first to sit with Christ in the heavenlies (2:6), then to walk worthy of the vocation to which we’re called (4:1), and finally to stand fast (6:13). All too often, we reverse the order. We think if we stand fast and hold our ground, then we can start walking, and maybe one day we’ll sit in the heavenlies. In grace-oriented theology, the order is to first sit with Christ in the heavenlies, then to walk with Him responsively, and finally to stand fast in Him securely. That’s why I’m looking forward to this study immensely....

Let’s pray and see what the Lord has for us today.

Today’s Study

Ephesians 1:1–2 (NKJV) 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.

Title: Person, Position, and Promise

So as we study our passage today we will see three things, that will continually emerge throughout our study through all six chapters.... Person, Position, and Promise.

- Person – whether it is Paul or you, the epistle has a personal message to a person. This is not some lofty theological dissertations, but a personal letter written by God to the people He loves (that is you and that is me). You know when people say, “hey don’t take this personal”.... Well God says to you regarding this passage, this Epistle, this whole Bible for that matter.... “take this personal”, it is personally for you. Perfect Love has written this letter to you... today, tomorrow, and forever!
- Position – again, and throughout, our position in Christ. Again, not some lofty theological dissertation, but it is an epistle that reaches heights and depths of theology (study of God), but written real simple that we might all understand it (regardless how old in the Lord you may be), so that the ultimate and indisputable fact we be made to us, our position and security “in Christ Jesus”. Which by the way if you want a sweet time of Bible study, go through this epistle and underline how many times you see written “In Him”, In Christ”, and the likes of phrases that declare who we are as His sons and daughters.
- Promises – the position we have, are all promises, and all His promises are secured and indisputable, and given to us to lay hold of today, tomorrow, and forever.
 - ‘When Alexander the Great, distributing the spoils of war, allotted to one of his generals a valuable prize, some one standing by remarked, “Those cities are too great a gift for Parmenio to receive.” “They may be too great for him to receive,” replied the king, “but they are not too great for Alexander to give.” Alexander was a great king and he gave according to his greatness. He gave “according to the estate of the king” (Esther 2:18). If so, what may we not expect from the King of kings?’

Today in our verses, the person is Paul (and you and I), our position (saints), and the promise besides being saints is “grace and peace” to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

The Person - Paul

So written by the apostle Paul, about 60AD, some 30 years since Jesus ascended into heaven and was/is seated at the right hand of God, living to make intercession for Paul, for you, and for me.

Paul (formerly known as Saul) will come to faith after meeting Jesus personally on the Road to Damascus. Most scholars approximate that Paul came to salvation about 3-4 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Saul, means “desired”, and Saul just as you, God desires greatly to have a personal relationship with. And, regardless of where you have been, and what you have done. Saul is that example for every person today who will say God would never receive me, nor ever desire and want me, to which the person Saul tears down that lie. Saul was out and about making widows and orphans as he went about hunting down Christians to destroy them. But then God met him on the road to Damascus, and revealed Himself to Saul.

Acts 9:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

To anyone here today, have you had that personal encounter with Jesus Christ yourself. I would say to you, if you have never had “that moment” with God, that you can put your finger on and say that is the day (whether you remember the exact day is irrelevant, but that you remember the moment is), the moment where you were sure you entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That you saw your sin separated you from the Holy God, and let it be known the wages of sin is death, but God demonstrated His love for us in that Christ traded places with us, and our response (and there is a response – for it is a decision to be made), that we agree (confess) that we need a Savior, and Jesus is the Savior, and we ask Him to come into our life personally as Savior and Lord. Have you done that? If so when? If not, why not?

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:8–13 (NKJV) ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

What do You Want me to Do?

Paul did that, He received Jesus as Lord and Savior, and (Acts 9:6) he then asks the Lord....what do you want me to do. Beloved, have you done that? Have you today, or lately, asked the Lord.... What do You want me to do? See Paul’s response, as we will read the life of Paul, was Lord I am now Yours, now and forever, all the days of my life. Lord, your will.... Is not my life. Lord what is your will for me?

Paul – An Apostle

God’s will, Paul states, “an apostle of Jesus Christ”. Apostle means sent one. In the Gospels, we see we are all “sent ones”. Maybe not in the way of the early church apostolic position that established the foundation of the church, but surely in the term of being sent ones.

John 20:21–22 (NKJV) ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

We also studied, that Jesus’ mission statement therefore becomes all who are “sent out”

Luke 4:18–19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

Jesus’ Mission Statement (Our Mission Statement)

- To preach the gospel to the poor,
- To heal the brokenhearted,
- To proclaim liberty to the captives,
- To give recovery of sight to the blind,
- To set at liberty those who are oppressed,
- To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

God’s Will for Paul

So, God’s will for Paul was to be an apostle. To which we would all say, that is an awesome call, wow Paul. Well here is also God’s will for Paul, and important for us to seize hold of personally ourselves.

2 Corinthians 11:22–28 (NKJV) ²² *Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

God’s will for Paul was all these things, beatings, stoning’s, perils, and shipwreck. Yet he never turned back from the Gospel, from the hardships.

Philippians 3:4–11 (NKJV) ⁴ *though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Paul had all the greatness the world would offer, and he says I count it all loss, meaningless, rubbish, for the personal relationship I now have with Christ. See here.... All “SAUL” gloried in..... “PAUL” threw away. And once you see your position in Christ, seated, sealed, “HIS”, all the things this world parades as glorious, will fade away for the excellency of Christ.

By the way, as we read this glorious epistle that has been called by many the “Swiss Alps of the New Testament” because of the great heights it takes the believer..... was written by Paul from prison. Paul, by the will of God, ends in prison because of his proclamation of the gospel.

Ephesians 6:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ *and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

Acts 24:5–9 (NKJV) ⁵ *For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. ⁷ But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands, ⁸ commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.” ⁹ And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.*

So – Can You Rest in the Will of God?

So for all of us, can we rest in the will of God? Can we rest in where we are at in that? So often we miss all the blessings of today, because we are regretting the past, or wanting some future that is different from today. Can you settle in, Betty a homemaker by the will of God? Jimmy a mechanic by the will of God? Mike a pastor of an unknown/recognized church by the will of God? Barb, a student by the will of God? If you are married, by the will of God? If you are single, by the will of God?

Jesus a Carpenter for 30 Years / Whom I am Well Pleased

Jesus was a carpenter with his dad for the first 30 years of His life. Imagine the cuteness of Jesus with His little play set when He was a toddler, as every kid loves to imitate His dad. Jesus was a carpenter for 30 years, and then had a public ministry for 3.5 years, but I point out to you that when Jesus was baptized and the beginning of His public ministry, God the Father spoke and said, “this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”. The Greek structure reads this as, “this is My Beloved Son in whom I am already well pleased with.” Jesus hadn’t preached yet or done a miracle, but the Father said I am already pleased with Him. Jesus had fellowshiped with His Heavenly Father day in and day out in the carpenter shop and the Father was well pleased with Him.

Matthew 3:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Christian be settled in the will that God has for you today. If not, one of the reasons you won’t or can’t, is because you don’t know, haven’t settled on your position in Christ, and His promises to you. If we forget, or never come to the place that we are His, He holds us completely in Him, in His hand, if we forget, or don’t know all His promises, then we will come to a place that it is all up to us, that we go it alone, and then we will never rest in any situation or circumstance for we will be then trying to figure out we “we” have to do to change the situation or circumstance. But when we know our position, we can rest in that position, in whose hands hold us (God Himself), then we can rest we are in His perfect will.

Position – a Saint

Verse 1 - To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: - yes.... It is clearly written, and it clearly means what it says.... Saints. The word saint means, “most holy thing”. Something “Holy” in all the places of the Bible means “set apart, dedicated to God”. That is what you are, you are set apart, you are dedicated to God. You are His! God defines what a saint is, and He defines it by saying a saint is Mine”. You Christian are a saint.

The world, the Catholic church, their definition of saint is not the definition that is God’s, it is theirs wholly made up by them, contrary to the Word of God. We just read what a saint is by definition of God. Here are a couple quick counterpoints to the Catholic church’s definition, and they say to be a saint you have to be dead, and you have to perform confirmed miracles (2 of them). Well God sure would have been wasting time writing this letter to dead people, now wouldn’t He? But here are 2 miracles that God that do make us saints, the resurrection and the ascension. The resurrection confirms the price of sin has been paid, and the ascension seats Christ in heaven living to make intercession for us. Believe Christ raised from dead for your sins, and you are made “holy”, and if Christ lives to make intercession for us, then who can condemn us? There is our perfection, and there are the two miracles

Romans 10:9 (NKJV) ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 8:31–35 (NKJV) ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Saints – Light Shines Through

A little boy attended a church that had beautiful stained-glass windows. He was told that the windows contained pictures of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, Saint John, Saint Paul, and other saints. One day he was asked, “What is a saint?” He replied, “A saint is a person whom the light shines through

*Michael P. Green. (2000). 1500 illustrations for biblical preaching (p. 310). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Substantival Adjective

The word for “saint” here is in the form that is called “substantival adjective”. We use an adjective to describe something, such as the apple is very good, and the word good describes the apple. The apple is the noun, the subject. But when using substantival adjectives, the adjective and the noun are one in the same. The adjective becomes the noun too. So being a saint doesn’t describe us (such as they are a saint – such a sweet person), saint describes not just what we are like, but at the same time, who we are. We are saints, holy, and set apart, unto God. It doesn’t just describe us, it is who we are!

Faithful means Trustworthy

Faithful in Christ Jesus – faithful means “trustworthy”. We have been found faithful because we have trusted Christ for salvation. And..... consider this..... God says to us, here is my greatest treasure, My Son, and I entrust Him to you, and you have been found trustworthy to give such a gift.

Ephesians 1:12 (NKJV) ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

I can look back over my 35 years of walking with the Lord, and all my faults and failings, but one thing..... my faith never failed, my faith in Him has never failed. And I think of Peter, all his faults and failings, but his faith never failed. And here you are today with all your faults and failings, but your faith remains:

Luke 22:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

Our Position

So we start off this book, with some many amazing proclamations and promises to us, but we start with this.... Our position as saints! You are a saint... in Christ Jesus. Halleluiah

Parents – Train Up Child in their Position

By the way, parents.... We are called to train up a child in the way they shall go. Part of that training is to make sure they fully know who they are in Christ, that they know their position in Christ, and their security in Christ. And let me add this too..... kind of a side, but not totally, when you correct your child (or here if you teach Sunday school or youth group, etc), when you correct them, tell them why you are. Have a Bible verse to support why you are correcting, or adjusting, and as often as you can tell them not just why they are not to do that, but confirm to them who they are in Christ, their position in Christ, and why they have a high calling. Don’t use it as a beat down, but as an elevator, to raise them up to be holy (saints – set apart – dedicated to God), and how precious and priceless they are to God. So take every so-called problem, and make it an opportunity, for that is the power we have because of Christ, that problems are opportunities to become more like Jesus.

Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Ephesus

So this is written to the church in Ephesus, which is in modern day Turkey, and we will be talking more about the culture and environment which they are living, but here are a few things that make this epistle and the people it was written to relevant to us.

- Ephesus was the 4th largest city in the known world
- Population of 300,000 which was huge in that day
- It was a religious center, but not so much a Christian center, but idol worship.
- They had many temples, and temple worship, some of the most well-known were the temple of Diana and the temple of Artimus.
- It was a great cultural center, political center, and very wealthy.
- Does this sound familiar to America or what?

Ephesians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Promises

Grace & Peace, it is not just a greeting to us from God, but a promise to us.

- Grace – God's Riches At Christ's Expense
- Peace – the war is over because the finished work of GRACE!

Grace always precedes peace in the epistles, because man can never have peace with God apart from God's grace, and man has to experience and receive God's grace as the entry way into peace.

Love Letter From

This love letter has the signature up front of who is writing it, not the end as we sign off today. God is declaring His promises..... for all of them are based on and sign and sealed upon, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You can rest, because God is resting, and He is resting in His Love for you:

Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

Conclusion

A most wonderful start to this Book, two verses filled with the heart of God to His people. A love letter indeed.

God Says Come

Today we come and are gifted this Word from God Himself, His very heart opened before us, the calling to come near, be drawn to Him.

Matthew 11:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study