

Ephesians Series – Part 3 - Already and Not Yet

Ephesians 4: 1-16

July 18, 2021

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- I. A month ago, I preached in a church in Pittsburgh area. Due to Covid, people have been attending church in their cars – [slide #1] Show pictures – a drive-in movie sermon



- II. Review
- a. Chapter 1 – God is still transforming lives, adopting children, and empowering his church.
 - b. Chapters 2 & 3 – What is inside us is more important than the outside.
 - i. God is redesigning us to be his house of love.
 - ii. We're being built together to reveal the full character of God.

iii. God has no plan outside his Church.



III. Chapter 4 – **Become as a little child, because this is really a big picture**

a. **III – Teaching 4th grade SS on the risen Jesus – they got it!**

b. Through first 3 chapters, Paul tries to put into words the revelations he has received from the risen Jesus.

i. On the Damascus Road – tells his story 3x in the Book of Acts.

1. **[Slide #2] Acts 9:3 “a light from heaven flashed around him”**

2. Acts 22:6 “suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me”

3. Acts 26:13 “I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me”

ii. **[Slide #2] Acts 22:17, 18** In Jerusalem, after Damascus: – “I was praying at the temple, **I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking”**

iii. **[Slide #2] 2 Corinthians 12: 2 – “I know a man in Christ who was caught up to the third heaven . . . to paradise. He heard inexpressible things . . .”**

iv. **[Slide #2] Galatians 1:11, 12 – “I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.”**

v. Think of Ezekiel 1-3 or John in Revelation – a struggle to find words!

vi. **For Paul, the veil is very thin between heaven and earth.** He has seen into the other realm and is trying to put words to the amazing revelation he has received from the risen Jesus himself.

1. “The heavenly realm...” appears 5 times in this letter!

2. He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world.

3. In Him we are chosen.

4. He showed Paul the **mystery of God’s eternal will in Christ**

5. **We read these words and ask: “Are we there yet, Daddy?” – No, we are on the way to be completed perfectly in Christ. We’re in the “already and not yet” stage of the God’s plan for His children. Paul was shown into the heavenly realm and eternal purposes of God, fulfilled in Christ and operational by the Spirit.**

IV. **Paul the Rabbi and his worldview** and how his world was flipped.

- a. Self-identification: Pharisee, Hebrew of the Hebrews, zealous for law, tribe of Benjamin, from the *Diaspora* – a Greek-speaking Jew.
- b. Studied under Gamaliel – his rabbinic worldview.
 - i. **All Israel would be saved first – and then the gentiles (Peter’s vision)**
 - ii. Pharisee’s understanding of angels and the supernatural.
 - iii. Deep knowledge and memorization of the Scriptures, especially Torah.

V. The Greatest Mystery: All believers in unity in Christ – The Bible has 2 categories: **Israel and the Nations.**

- a. Moving from all-Jewish community to the diverse “church” of Jews, gentiles, slave, free, men, women, barbarians, pagans, prostitutes, swindlers, political zealots, workers of dark arts, etc.
- b. [slide #3] Eph 3:6 **“This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promises in Christ Jesus.”**
- c. [slide #4 – fill in the blank #1] **Christian existence is not merely on an earthly plane; It receives its meaning and significance from heaven, where Christ is exalted at the right hand of God.**

VI. **Chapter 4 – Unity in the Body of Christ**

- a. **V 1 “As a prisoner . . . I exhort you”**
 - i. V 2 Attitude: [Slide #5] **Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
 - ii. V 4-6 [Slide #6] **The SEVEN ONES** (built in warnings as well)
 - 1. **One body** (all must be in Christ to be part of the Body)
 - 2. **One Spirit** (there are lots of spirits but only one Holy Spirit)
 - 3. **One hope** (Christ our ONLY hope)
 - 4. **One Lord** (there are imitations out there)
 - 5. **One faith** (the faith in Christ)
 - 6. **One baptism** (where we die and are raised with Christ)
 - 7. **One God and Father of all who is over all and in all** (no false gods)
 - iii. The Gifts which Christ “apportions” to each of us by grace
 - 1. [Slide #7] **Ps 68:1 “Let God arise and his enemies be scattered, may his foes flee before him” -- Paul quotes verse 18: “when he ascended on high he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men”**
 - 2. Paul is “stringing pearls” – he is thinking of Jesus going down to the lowest reaches of earth (see Rev 12:9 where Satan and his rebels were thrown to earth) and going up to the highest heavens - and reaches back to Psalm 68 - **for the purpose of**
 - a. **Putting down every enemy of God**
 - b. **Clearing the way to bring gifts to His Bride**

3. Ill: Jesus saying from the Cross: “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” Ps 22: a picture of crucifixion prophetically 1000 years earlier. To recite the first line of the psalm is to say it all!
 4. A psalm about God vanquishing his enemies and ruling over all.
 5. Jesus’s Ascension into heaven: having died and been raised: his victory is complete. He “captures” the spiritual enemies – death and Satan – It signifies the beginning of his High Priesthood, his coronation as King, his home-going – so that he can intercede for his Bride the church and distribute gifts she will need to execute her role in the power of the Spirit.
 6. **Ill: Story of Yigal Shiloh at City of David dig in Jerusalem**
 7. Eph 2:6 – “And God raised us up WITH CHRIST and seated us WITH HIM in the heavenly realms”!!
 8. Jesus has conquered - all the enemies of God are under his feet and ours. The victory is ours; we are in the mopping up exercises. Example: First Gulf War in early 90s, my son was sent by the Army to clean up the tanks. Kuwait had been liberated from Saddam Hussein’s attack, but there was still work to do. They were a mopping up operation. That’s us. In the last chapter of Ephesians, Paul describes the armor we need for this operation.
 9. Jesus is the Head of the Church and does not leave us without the equipment we need to complete the work yet to be done on earth:
 10. There is an order and strategy: five-fold gifts
 - a. Apostles
 - b. Prophets
 - c. Evangelists
 - d. Pastors
 - e. Teachers
 11. To what purpose? To do all the work??? NO **[Slide #8 and fill in blank] The Five-fold ministries are to prepare and equip all the Body to do the works of service.**
 12. Eph 4: 12, 13 – To what end?
- b. The purposes for the gifts: **(Ill: relay race – we need the whole team)**
- c. **[Slide #9 Fill in the blank] The Church is a team effort.**
- i. To equip the saints for the work of ministry; NIV - to prepare God’s people for the works of service.
 - ii. So that the body of Messiah may be built up.
 - iii. Until we all reach unity in the faith in the knowledge of the Son of God.
 - iv. That we all become mature.
 - v. That we all attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
 - vi. This is the **“Already and not yet”** that we await with the return of Jesus.

- d. **WHAT is your gift?**
 - i. Ill: Theresa is “connective tissue” – a prophetic word.
- e. The results and a loving warning – [Slide # 10] “Then we will no longer be infants.”
 - i. We will no longer be children.
 - ii. We won’t be tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by:
 1. **Ill: getting caught by a wave at the beach.**
 2. Every wind of doctrine.
 3. All human cunning.
 4. Craftiness in deceitful schemes.
- f. The Antidote
 - i. Speak the truth in love.
 - ii. Grow up in every way into Him who is the head, Jesus himself.
- g. Is this possible?!
 - i. Yes, because we are a whole body WHEN
 1. We are joined together by every joint (by all those equipping gifts)
 2. Each part is working properly.
 3. THEN the body will grow up and will build itself up IN LOVE.
 4. Ephesians 4:2 – “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love”
- h. John 17: 21: Jesus’ prayer for unity of believers.
- i. Let us say together this word from our Head, Jesus: [Slide #11]

“Father, I do not ask for these only [the apostles], but also for those who will believe in me through their word [us!].
That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us,
So that the world may believe that you have sent me.
The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be ONE even as we are ONE.”

Prayer of Blessing: Lord Jesus, thank you for doing all the hard work, for giving yourself entirely to us, your Body, your Bride. we don’t want to be whiny babies. We want to obey you. Send your Holy Spirit to the body here at Petra. Help us to help each other to identify the gifts you have paid so dearly to bring us. Give us a “team spirit” to pull together, to speak truth in love to each other, to be healed of our inferiority or superiority feelings that keep us from counting each other better than ourselves. We want to bring you Glory, O Lord. Make us ONE as you have prayed!