

Not on your Bill

Ephesians 1

Pray

Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians by

- **telling us how wealthy we are in Christ Jesus.**

- He shows us what's in the bank account Spiritually.

the Ephesians had forgotten that as children of God, who they were & who they belonged to,

- And had forgotten what they had because they belonged to Christ.

- So he is reminding them of their great wealth

And it's easy to forget when you live in the world like we do. *We get distracted easily!*

- *We just lose sight of spiritual realities. So he's reminding them.*

I heard a story about a man who saved up all his money to go on a cruise.

- barely made enough to buy a ticket, bought a ticket, got on board, was so stoked.

- But he brought with him loaves of bread, and lots of peanut butter & Jelly

- Because he thought, I just have enough money for the ticket.

- I don't have enough money for anything else.

So he would go to his room and make a PB & J sandwich for breakfast, lunch & dinner

- And he did that every day for a few days until a porter came by

- who worked on the cruise ship and saw what this guy was doing

- and said, what are you doing? And the guy told him,

- I saved up all my money. I could only afford the ticket.

And the porter said, no, you didn't realize that when you buy the ticket,

- that includes all you can eat as well? Well, he was excited,

- but by the time he got the message, the cruise was almost over.

- So he had been walking by all those tables with beef and with crab and with lobster

- and just drooling every time, go to his room and have peanut butter and jelly.

Some of us are just eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches spiritually

- when God has steak and lobster for us.

- And so one of the things Paul will do in chapter 1,

- is pray for them that they realize what they have.

- He tells them what we have,

and prays that God would open up their eyes so that they could understand & enjoy it.

how many of you have ever seen the movie-- The Sound of Music?

- the opening scene in The Sound of Music shows an aerial view

- that kind of sweeps down on a girl, who's in a field.

- Around her are valleys and mountains beyond that.

- The view is heavenly. It's spectacular.

It's an incredible scene in Austria, which is a beautiful country.

- But the view that she has while she sings

- is the view we get of our salvation in the book of Ephesians.

- We will be taken by Paul to the heavenlies,

- where he will uncover for us our wealth,

- the riches that we have because we belong to Christ.
- You feel like you're on top of a mountain, looking at a beautiful view
- of God's redemptive history before us.

Now, a little background In the spring of 52AD.

- that is when we believe Paul the Apostle first visited the town of Ephesus.
 - He was there on his **second missionary journey**.

And He brings with him a wonderful couple that he had met in Corinth. Aquilla & Priscilla.

- They had been tentmakers with Paul

So they became close & heard the gospel & were saved because of Paul's ministry

when they went to Ephesus, They asked him to stay longer. But he couldn't,

- So He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus,
 - and a church was planted in Ephesus

Somebody else came to town, and Aquila and Priscilla got close to him.

- A guy by the name of Apollos. Apollos was a Jewish man.
 - He was mighty in word, mighty in the scriptures. He was quite intelligent.
 - He could prove that Jesus was the Christ.

But he only knew the gospel up to the baptism of John.

- So though he was powerful and mighty, he didn't quite have all the information.
 - So Aquila and Priscilla, who were mentored by Paul,
- took Apollos aside and trained him more completely/accurately in the ways of God.

we know that Paul comes back on **his third missionary** journey to Ephesus.

- And He meets with the disciples. There's not very many at that time,
 - only about 12 believers in Christ. He meets with them,
 - and he said to them-- Something was missing,

And so Paul said, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?

- They said, We haven't even heard that term.

And then Paul saw ministry opportunity in Ephesus,

- and he decided to stay there for between 2-3 years,
 - which he taught in the school of Tyrannis.
 - And He taught the scriptures every day!
- so that all of those who dwelt in Asia, heard the gospel.

So Ephesus sort of became Paul's headquarters, for about three years.

This is the first of the prison letters written by Paul to the church that he loved,

- Paul wrote the book of Ephesians to encourage the church at Ephesus
 - unlike many of other Paul's letters that were written to correct the church
 - this was a letter of encouragement for the church

Not only that, but the Lord Jesus Christ himself wrote a little letter to the church of Ephesus

- in Revelation chapter 2. In the seven letters, or I like to call them the seven postcards
 - because they're short & the first on the list is the church of Ephesus.

Ephesus was known for many things including an amphitheater,

- the largest in the world designed to hold somewhere around 50,000 spectators.

Ephesus was also the location of one of the seven known wonders of the world,

- a temple dedicated to the false goddess of fertility whose name was Diana,
 - And people would travel from every direction to come to Ephesus to worship

Ephesus was a prime location for evangelism & the gospel went out in every direction.

During Paul's stay there, there were tremendous miracles that occurred.

- Even his handkerchiefs and aprons touched people and healed their sicknesses,
 - He cast out demons. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus,

And many new believers that got saved in Ephesus took all of their magic arts,

- they brought their books and they burned them in front of everyone.
 - In fact, the total value of these books of sorcery that they destroyed
 - was 50,000 pieces of silver.

People were just turning their back on idolatry and witchcraft

- and beginning to worship the true and living God. People were getting saved.
 - This city was being turned right side up. That's my prayer for this city.

Paul's ministry was so effective that it affected the economy of Ephesus.

- Sales on idols went way down. Silversmiths got touched in the sensitive place
 - of their pocketbook and they were not having it.

And suddenly **this revival turned riot** and Paul was forced to leave the city,

Now, the book of Ephesians has six chapters. It's a short book

- but it is typical Paul style writing,
 - after he gives greetings, he begins laying the foundation, with doctrine.

So chapter one, two, and three are **doctrinal**.

- The second half of the book-- four, five, and six-- are **applicative**.

Here's what u need to know about your wealth, who you are & what God has done,

- Now this is what you are to do with it.

Paul frontloads his letters with doctrine & backloads them with application.

- we see the calling & Conduct of the church in chapters 4-6

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

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

at one time, Paul was not an apostle of Jesus. Paul was an opponent of Jesus.

- he saw Christianity as something lethal that should be stopped at all costs.
 - So he got special permission from the high priest in Jerusalem
 - to find believers and imprison them.
 - But Now he is an apostle of Jesus Christ.
 - How did it change?

in Acts chapter 9 Paul went to Damascus to arrest Christians but he himself was arrested

- to become a Christian and so we see God truly has a sense of humor

the word Apostle is used 81 times in the New Testament simply means a messenger

- a sent out one

I believe it's God's will that we're all sent out ones

- that we're all Messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - because that is the will of God
- It's important that you discover what the will of God is for your life,
 - that you don't wander through life aimlessly,
 - b/c God has a plan & purpose for your life
 - to build up the body of Christ in some way,
 - and evangelize the lost.

now, you might think, this letter doesn't have much to do with me

- because he's writing **to saints**.
 - But the truth is you are a saint if you are a believer in Jesus!

A saint means someone separated for the purposes of God. somebody who loves Jesus, there's really only 2 kinds of people —your either a saint or you ain't.

- if you're saved, you're a saint.

You can put the word saint in front of your name, St. Ryan. I like St. Bernard,

Hes not just talking to people in Ephesus. He's broadening this out to a wider audience.

- You who are the faithful in Christ Jesus, this letter is for you.

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

Paul uses this common greeting, **grace and peace** & He says this in most of his letters,

They are often referred to as the Siamese twins of the New Testament

- always in this order because You need to understand God's grace
 - before you can experience God's peace.
 - Once you experience the grace of God,
 - that unmerited favor that you do not deserve
 - it brings tremendous peace within your heart,

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 3:24 says we were justified freely by His grace

Ephesians 2:14 says Jesus is our peace, He is the prince of peace

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

no matter what we're going through because of Jesus Christ we can have peace & rest

- B/c we know God's on the throne & Jesus is Lord and we're going to see in verse 11 he's working all things according to the Council of his will

if you look at verses 3- 14 in the Greek manuscript, it is one long run-on sentence.

- It just starts and he doesn't let up. Probably the longest run-on sentence in existence
 - and filled with such powerful words
 - that you could spend years considering, which we won't.
- it's as if Paul can't even stop and take a breath as he writes this out
 - that's how pumped up & excited he is about this information!

And on this trail, there's some of the most important doctrinal words and the greatest truths

- regarding what God has done for us!
 - so it's really important that you grab a hold of these truths.
 - It'll change your life.

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,

Paul starts off by letting us know God loves to bless us & He is the author of these blessings.

The Bible says in **James 1:17**, every good and perfect gift is from above and comes down from the father of lights

Do you ever just take time and just think about and ponder on and praise God

- for the blessings that you have?

Matthew 7:11 says, if you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask?

- He loves to bless. What does he bless us with?
 - Well, every spiritual blessing, not every material blessing.
 - Sometimes material blessings can be a curse.
 - People get so wrapped up in it, they can't see beyond it.
 - It consumes them. It's all they think about it.

what are some of those spiritual blessings he is talking about? He tells us.

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,

Here we see Blessing number one-- God chose us. God picked us.

Jesus went to his disciples one day, who had chosen to follow Jesus, in **John 15:16**

- and said, boys. You didn't choose Me. But I chose you. And I've ordained you that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.

That should spark within you such gratitude, such thankfulness

- that God would actually want us to be a part of his family
 - and to spend eternity with us. He loves us.

⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

why did he choose you? it was according to the good pleasure of his will b/c he wanted to he adopt you as a son or a daughter into his family because he loves you

Romans 8:15 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."

It was his pleasure to adopt us. He desired to do it. Reminds me of Chic-fil-a My Pleasure!

- Its Amazing to consider, but that's not all. there's more.

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

- God accepts you in his family.

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,

The price was paid, not by you, but by Jesus on the cross

- so that you and I who were enslaved to sin, could be set free.
 - We have been redeemed, set free, by Him paying the price.

The Bible says in **acts 20:28**, Jesus purchased us with his own blood

Romans 5:20 where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

in him, only in jesus christ we have redemption and in nowhere else!

- there is no possible redemption outside of jesus and his shed blood for us!
 - Jesus paid the price for us to be bought out from sin, death and Hell

I love that old hymn what can wash away my sin nothing but the blood of Jesus

- what can make me whole again nothing but the blood of Jesus
 - oh precious is the flow that makes me white as snow

no other Fount I know nothing but the blood of Jesus

1 Peter 1:18-19 says we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Corinthians 6:20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according

to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Here it says we have inheritance that is incorruptible,

- Maybe you don't have any material inheritance here on earth,
 - but you have a glorious eternal inheritance that nobody can tax
 - and nobody can take away. It's reserved and it lasts forever in heaven!

¹³ In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Here's another blessing right here is you're sealed with the Holy Spirit.

- He's got you. You're his. When you believed,
 - when you believed the spirit of God sealed you.
 - The seal that is spoken of, speaks of ownership.

In the old days your seal was usually on your ring,

- You would put it in ink or wax and then you'd press it on the thing that was yours
 - and it belonged to whoever was upon the seal.
 - And the Holy Spirit has been placed in us,
 - We belong to the Lord

Now, when you meet people, can they easily tell who you belong to?

- What impression do you leave with them? If God put His seal on you, do you leave that impression on people when they come in contact with you?
 - Oh, that person is really into God, a lot! That's all that person can talk about!
 - That's a good sign if the fruit of the Spirit is pouring out of your life!

Now we will see several things that Paul prays for.

¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

when Paul heard of the faith and the love of the Ephesians

- all he could do is pray for them and give thanks for them
 - that's because their faith and their love was evident

typically we reserve our prayers for people who are really doing bad.

- And that's good to do that.

But how about praying for those people who are doing good!

- You now why you need to pray for them. They're a target.
 - They're a bull's eye for the enemy.

Paul was pleased not just by their faith but also their love for other people.

- That is something that they were known for.

the Bible says you can have faith to move mountains, but if you don't have love, it really doesn't do you any good. You can be loaded down with truth,

- but if you don't have any love or any grace along with that,
 - it's really not going to help anybody out.

Jesus said, that the world knows that we're his disciples by the love that we have.

- one of the identifiable marks of a Christian should be love. Like wheres wondo?

Jesus said, love one another as I have loved you.

Jesus was asked, what's the greatest commandment? Jesus said, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, all your strength. He said, the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, loving God and loving people.

I want people to know Water Brooks Church, upholds the truth of the word of God

- and we don't compromise with it. That we are solid in the faith.

That is something that I would love to be known for. That we preach the Bible.

- I hope everybody knows that's what we're about. We teach God's word.
 - That's what changes lives.

But In addition to that, I want people to know that we love

- And that this is a loving environment and that we want to see people saved.

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

Paul prays that they'll know God and get insight and wisdom into knowing God better

- that They'll grow in an intimate relationship with Him.

Paul is praying that the Ephesians would receive the spirit of wisdom

- the word wisdom is used 52 times in the New Testament
 - simply means intelligence or using knowledge
 - we all understand the difference between wisdom and knowledge
 - knowledge is knowing something
 - wisdom is applying it = the application of knowledge

knowledge is identifying a skunk & knowing its capabilities & wisdom is running

- so it's applying what we know to be true

and the wisdom that Paul is praying for is spiritual wisdom

- now this becomes pretty significant for all of us because the Bible talks about
 - two kinds of wisdom there is heavenly wisdom and there's earthly wisdom

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

the second wisdom is wisdom from the earth & **James 3:15** says it sensual & demonic

in **1 Corinthians 3:19** Paul said that **the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God**

- in dealing with spiritual issues

now here's the good news if we lack wisdom **James 1:5** says **all we have to do is ask he who lacks wisdom let him ask of God who gives liberally without reproach**

This verse is all about the importance of knowing & learning of Jesus
jesus said in **Matthew 11:29** **learn of me**
in **Colossians 2:3** we're told **in Christ Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge** so the wisdom and revelation we need is in Christ

- and that is one reason why we place such great importance
 - on teaching the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation
- so that we can learn about Jesus

Jesus said in **Hebrews 10:7** **in the volume of the book it is written of me**

What was the greatest need for the church in Ephesus? To know more about Jesus.

- That's the greatest need of the church today.
 - To have a more true, accurate knowledge of the Lord,
 - a greater understanding of who Jesus is. what Jesus said & did.

and Paul you remember when he wrote to the Philippians, he said concerning himself

- that he saw this need in his own life. He said in **Phil. 3:8**, **I count all things lost for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things and I count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.**

What I want is Jesus. I want more of him. Wordly things are just so temporary,

- I want to press into more of Jesus. That's is what I want to know,

Prov. 9:10 says that **the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.**

The Bible says in **2 Timothy 3:16**, **all scripture is given by inspiration of God and it's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work**

- you want to grow? You can Through the word of God.
 - It's like water to a tree.

without water, the tree dies with water, the tree grows.

- You can't grow without the word of God.

¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

the word understanding means to comprehend & totally understand

- Paul is praying that their spiritual eyes would be opened
 - to all that God has for them so they could see spiritually & clearly

I love that song open the eyes of my heart Lord, open the eyes of my heart

- I want to see you

¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

paul says I want you to know the power of god

- And he gives us the ultimate demonstration of the power of god
 - and it's when he raised jesus christ from the dead & ascended him to heaven
 - and seated him at the right hand of god the father

the word power in the greek is Dunamis we get our english word dynamic or dynamite

- It speaks of capacity. You have a new capacity.
- With God's calling comes God's capacity. If God's called you to something,
 - God gives you the capacity to do it.

How much power? The same power that raised Jesus from the dead. That's pretty powerful.

- If you ever seen a space shuttle being launched into space,
 - the payload weight upon takeoff is 4.5 million pounds.

But they apply 7 million pounds of pressure of thrust to launch it into space. That's power.

- What kind of power does it take to raise a dead person back to life?
 - Much more power. And God is all-powerful.
 - And He displayed his power in the Resurrection from the dead.
- He prays they would realize the power of God they already have.

Jesus said in **acts 1:8** you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you

- to live the Christian life. He didn't want them to feel powerless
 - or to walk in defeat. Sadly, many Christians, we walk in defeat
 - because we fail to realize that there's power available.

We need the power of the Holy Spirit to be victorious in this life!

The question is, how do I tap into that power?

- You just ask God & He will help you & empower you!

Paul tell us in vs. 21 that even in the midst of a spiritual battle

- there's power to overcome that as well.

²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

sometimes we talk about Jesus being the head of the church & it's accurate & true

- Jesus is in charge & in control = He is the chief shepherd = Jesus is Lord

The Church is God's plan, the body of Christ,

Jesus said **Matt. 16:18** I will build my church & the gates of hell can't prevail against the church

Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:15, the church is the pillar and ground of all truth.

- Jesus is the head over all things to the church,
- You might feel like your over your head, but it's always under his feet. He's in control. God has a plan. He's working all things together for good. For those that love him,
- we can rest in that.

Pray & Share Gospel

God, thank you for the rich truth you showed us today.

- We got so much insight into, who we are, and what we have become in Christ Jesus.
 - Our bank account, spiritually speaking, is loaded.

We are sons and daughters of royalty. We are heaven bound. We are salvation crowned.

- So, Lord, I pray that You would strengthen the weak knees & arms that hang down
 - and help us to know You better & Your plan for us.
 - And may we be in touch with the power & new capacity,
 - to live up to the calling we have.

in Jesus name, Amen.