

Ephesians 1:7-4:14

- I want to focus on Chapter 4, but it is built on Chapters 1-3, so let's start with an overview of what foundation Paul is laying in the first 3 chapters.
 - First half of Ephesians 1, he praised the Lord for spiritual blessings:
 - **[Eph 1:7-10 ESV] 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**
 - This is the good news! We've been redeemed by the blood of the lamb
 - Our sins have been forgiven (removed), according to his grace, which has been lavished upon us
 - Remember that grace is getting a good thing you don't deserve
 - How much more underserving are we to have it LAVISHED upon us?
 - Beyond that, he did it in ALL WISDOM and INSIGHT
 - He knew what he was doing!
 - He had full view of my sin, of my wickedness, of my brokenness, of the cesspool that is the human heart.
 - In doing this, he let us in on his plan to eventually unite all things in Christ
 - **[Phl 2:9-11 ESV] 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**
 - Remember that we're talking about the spiritual blessings that Paul is giving thanks for in the first half of Ephesians 1. He continues:
 - **[Eph 1:13-14 ESV] 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**
 - Scott talked about this last week.
 - Another huge blessing for all believers is that God has seal us with his own Spirit. He has marked us, he has claimed us, he has made a down payment for us
 - When he comes back to get us, we are guaranteed an inheritance
 - This is overwhelming to me.
 - **[Jhn 1:16 ESV] 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.**
 - Price is Right?
 - God is holding nothing back. His unmerited favor flows over us like the waves in the ocean
 - Paul gave thanks for spiritual blessings, then in the second half of chapter 1, he prayed for believers
 - **[Eph 1:16-21 ESV] 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and**

what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

- He is praying for believers to have their spiritual eyes opened to the breadth of all that Christ did for us, and all that we have in Him.
- How many Christians today are spiritually blind because they do not:
 - **Vs. 18** – “know the hope in which he has called us”
 - “know the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints”
 - **Vs. 19** – “know the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe”
- Remember what Scott said last week?
 - “Satan wants your soul, but he will settle for your mind”
 - Paul’s prayer is that believers will grasp the truth of
 - What Christ has done for all believers
 - Who we are in Him
 - And what we have in Him
- So that’s chapter 1
- Chapter 2 goes into salvation
 - The first 3 verses speak to the wretched condition we were in apart from Christ, then...
 - **[Eph 2:4-7 ESV] 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**
 - God is rich in mercy (different from grace because this is withholding something bad that we do deserve)
 - Not only did he make us alive with Christ out of the death of our sin
 - He raised us up and seated us with Jesus in the heavenly places **IN CHRIST JESUS**
 - Why?
 - So he can show his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus in the ages to come.
- Next, Paul clarifies how we are saved
 - **[Eph 2:8-10 ESV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**
 - How much more incredible is it that our salvation is not something we earn?
 - We simply receive it as a gift from God
 - We are not saved **BY** works, but we are saved **TO** works.
- Last part of Ch. 2, Paul discusses the mystery of Jews and Gentiles becoming one in Christ:
 - **[Eph 2:11-16 ESV] 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- 12 remember that you were at that time separated from**

Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility **15** by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, **16** and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

- God brought together the Jews, who were his chosen people, with the Gentiles, who represented the rest of the world, IN CHRIST.
- Notice how God is bringing a myriad of people together who would otherwise never associate with one another
 - And he's giving them something that they have in common
 - Jesus unites the Jew and Gentile together despite different traditions, food, culture, prejudices
 - **v.14** he has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,
 - He has become their peace (as opposed to hostility)
 - He has made them ONE in Christ
 - Notice the 2-way reconciliation that occurred here
 - In Christ, we are reconciled to one another
 - And we are also reconcile to God (**v.16**)
- Chapter 3 starts out with Paul explaining the mystery of the church.
 - Keep in mind that he is talking to Gentiles:
 - **[Eph 3:4-6 ESV] 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**
 - At the end of Chapter 2, he explained how Christ reconciled the Jew and Gentile, and here he is underscoring the significance of us being fellow heirs, and equals in Christ.
- Paul continues in Ch. 3 to talk about the role he has been called to play in his ministry
- Then, in v. 14 he offers a prayer for believers:
 - **[Eph 3:14-21 ESV] 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**
 - **V.17** "dwell in your hearts through faith" means to be at home
 - As believers, we all have the indwelling Holy Spirit
 - But, there are believers whose hearts Christ does not feel at home in
 - There are seasons when my heart is not a welcoming place

- That is why **vs. 16** says, “he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **SO THAT**” Christ may be at home I your hearts through faith
 - This heart condition is what leads to the root of the prayer:
 - That they would have the strength to comprehend the love of Christ
 - We just rushed through the first 3 chapters, which is where Paul talked about doctrine
 - That was the introduction to today’s sermon
- The last 3 chapters are about applying that doctrine
 - **[Eph 4:1 ESV] 1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,**
 - THEREFORE – This is the whole reason for that big intro
 - In light of all of that...
 - Spiritual blessings – Tsunami of Grace
 - Prayer that their spiritual eyes would be opened to the enormity of what Christ has done for them
 - Salvation – Jesus did all of the work. God raised us up and seated us with Christ in the Heavenly places
 - Bringing together the Jew and Gentile together in Christ as the church
 - Prays that Christ would be at home in their hearts so that they would have the strength to comprehend the love of Christ
 - As a prisoner for the Lord... (I’ve got some street cred regarding following Jesus)
 - “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called”
 - God’s got a different calling on me than he does on you
 - This is about the manner in which we walk on that path
 - **[Eph 4:2-3 ESV] 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
 - These are all terms that describe how we walk with one another
 - Following Jesus is the what
 - This is the how... (with)
 - Humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
 - That is what Paul calls “walking in a manner worthy of your calling”
 - **[Eph 4:4-6 ESV] 4 There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**
 - There is one body – (Body of Christ)
 - One Spirit, which indwells each of us
 - One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all
 - He is over all of us, and through all of us, and in all of us
 - We are all equal and are in the same exact position before God
 - **[Eph 4:7-8, 11-14 ESV] 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." ... 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that**

we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- Notice that He gives different gifts to the believers
 - Purpose is to equip the saints for the work of ministry
 - And building up the body of Christ
- The goal is v.13-14
- We need each other to mature so that we won't be tossed to and fro by the deceitful schemes of Satan (wild doctrine / human cunning)
- This has been a really tough few weeks in our country
 - We've seen videos of alleged abuse by law enforcement
 - And the assassination of police officers
 - So much hatred, division, pain
 - It's the way of the world
 - Text Message
 - After police videos / very few details
 - Sent to friends and family telling them to be careful around police
 - It broke my heart because my brother in Christ was bearing a burden, which was very real to him that I was completely oblivious to.
 - Gal 6:2 tells us to bear one another's burdens
 - Only found out by accident
- Last few months, I've felt alone
 - Republican / Democrat
 - Razorback / Aggie
 - Capitalist / Socialist
 - Liberal / Conservative
 - Black / White
 - Blue collar / White collar / Gray collar / Pink collar / Green collar
 - Left / Right
 - Constitutionalist / Progressive
 - Non Denominational / Baptist
 - Hillary supporter / Bernie supporter
 - Trump supporter / Cruz supporter
 - Working class / Ruling class
 - Black lives matter / Blue lives matter / All lives matter
 - Stay at home moms / Working moms
 - American / Mexican
 - Jocks / Nerds
- All of these labels by nature have one thing in common:
 - They divide us up into smaller groups
- As believers, we are to look at the world through a different paradigm.
 - Before Jesus was arrested, he prayed fervently
 - John captured 2 verses in which Jesus prayed for you and me:
 - **[Jhn 17:20-21 ESV] 20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 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.**
 - Of all of the things that he could have prayed, he asked that you and I and the rest of his body be ONE

- He even told us why at the very end of verse 21 – “...so that the world may believe that you have sent me”
- Did you hear that? The advancement of the Gospel is at least somewhat dependent on there being Godly unity in the Body.
 - You and I bear some of that responsibility
 - No – Labels aren’t always bad, but what role do they play?
 - Do these help DESCRIBE us or DEFINE us?
- When you look at a person, do you see a brother or sister in Christ, first?
 - Or is it a political party, a gender, a race, or support for a particular presidential candidate
 - I don’t want my banner to be anything but Jesus

[Heb 13:1 ESV] 1 Let brotherly love continue.

[Phl 2:1-7 ESV] 1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.