



# **The Call of Grace**

**An Overview on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians**

**Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief**

# ***The Call Of Grace***

**An Overview on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians**

**Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief**

# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Author's Preface</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. The Blessings of Grace</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. The Greatness of Grace</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3. The Mystery of Grace</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4. The Call of Grace</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>5. Walk in Unity</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6. Walk in Holiness</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>7. Walk in Love</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>8. Walk in Light</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>9. Walk in Wisdom</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>10. Walk in Harmony</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>11. Walk in Victory</b>	<b>89</b>

# **Acknowledgments**

**This book is dedicated to**

**Mernda / Whittlesea Presbyterian Church.**

I wish to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to Dr Jean Ely for her helpful suggestions and her labour in correcting and editing this book. Her work, love and zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ are always remembered with great appreciation.

My thanks are owed to Rev. Dr. John P. Wilson, the Moderator of the Parish, who introduced this book and for his encouragement and his great work in relation to all my ministry at Mernda/Whittlesea Presbyterian Church.

Many thanks to my co-workers in the Lord's service, all members of the Board of Whittlesea/Mernda Parish.

Also I must not fail to acknowledge the invaluable help of my wife Beta, who consistently supports my ministry with her prayers and encouragement, which are indeed my constant joy. I am indebted to her love, moral and spiritual support.

May God be praised and His name highly exalted for all good things that come from Him and to Him and for Him!

**Botros**

## **Introduction**

Many want to be rich, but for most people this means money, property and other assets. However, none of these riches satisfies us in this life and all of it we leave behind when we die.

The Letter called “Ephesians”, or, more properly: “Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians” is all about becoming rich – but ... it’s about spiritual riches. To be specific: the Riches of God’s Grace.

The book of Ephesians is about the riches, fullness, and inheritance that a believer has in Christ. Because of that, some have called Ephesians the treasure house of the Bible. God’s Grace is boundless and always available to his children. The book of Ephesians will teach you who you are, how rich you are, and how you should use those riches for Christ's glory.

Dr Botros is a faithful and loving pastor who serves Christ in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, especially in the Mernda and Whittlesea areas. This book comes from a pastor’s heart and is designed to be a blessing to all who read and especially God’s people who gather within the ministry of Mernda / Whittlesea Presbyterian Parish.

**John P Wilson**

**(Moderator of the Parish)**

## **Preface**

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the most encouraging, instructive and inspiring books in the Bible. The passages which describe God's great plan of salvation reach to the highest places in heaven, and the passages which instruct us on how we are to live godly lives address in great detail our lives here on earth.

Where Christians have a man-centred doctrine of salvation, this letter will bring correction, where there are national or class divisions among Christians, this letter will bring unity, and where there is confusion with regard to day to day holy living, this letter will bring light and hope.

### **Q1: Why this letter was written?**

**There are four main reasons why Paul wrote this letter:**

1. He wanted us to understand that our salvation is something that God planned from eternity and that he planned it in such a way that it would show the glory of his mercy and grace.
2. He wanted to teach us that as the saved people of God we were greatly blessed and he wanted to remind us of some of the great blessings we received when we came to salvation in Christ.
3. He wanted to remind us that in Christ the wall between the Jews and the Gentiles had been brought down, so that now in Christ there is no racial or national distinction.

4. He wanted to encourage us to live our lives worthy of the calling we had received. He wanted to show us that those who are saved must now begin to live distinctive lives here on earth. In this letter, therefore, Paul gives very specific teaching on how we are to live our lives in the local church, in the world and in the home.

## **Q2: When and where the letter was written?**

Apostle Paul wrote the four letters of “*Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*” during his imprisonment at Rome, around **61-63 A.D.** They are called “*The Prison Letters*”(cf. Acts 28:16, 30-31; 31:1; 4:1; 6:20.)

It is possible that Paul sent the Ephesians letter to other churches in Asia, so they too could read it. There are some indications in the letters to the Colossians, Philemon and the Ephesians that they were carried to their destination by Tychicus and Onesimus (6:21-22; Co 4:7-9; Philemon 10-12).

## **Q3: What is the theme of this Letter?**

The letter to the Ephesians is divided into two sections. First is *the teaching part* Chapters 1-3. It mainly teaches us about “*Our spiritual blessings and our position in Christ*”. It consists primarily of doctrinal teaching on how God planned our salvation from before the foundation of the world and some of the consequences of this plan. Therefore Paul writes to remind Christians of “*Their place in Christ*”.

Then in chapters 4-6 *the practical part* teaches us about “*The behaviour of the believers in the world*”. Paul applies the doctrinal teaching by giving very detailed and specific applications on how we are to live as the people of God.

Paul gives us seven practical instructions or 7 kinds of walks on how we are to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. *So, the Call of Grace is calling us to;*

- 1. Walk in unity (4:1-16)**
- 2. Walk in holiness (4:17-32)**
- 3. Walk in love (5:1-2)**
- 4. Walk in light (5:3-14)**
- 5. Walk in wisdom (5:15-21)**
- 6. Walk in harmony (5:21-6:9)**
- 7. Walk in victory (6:10-24)**

If we study this great letter carefully, we will find great benefit for our own soul, and when we share its message with others we will feed them the rich food of God's word. Let us then study this letter.

## Chapter One

### The Blessings of Grace Our Spiritual Possessions

Following a brief salutation (1-2), Paul begins this letter with a doxology of praise to God for the spiritual blessings that are in Christ (3).

**In this doxology**, Paul names only 7 blessings that make up our spiritual wealth which comes from the Triune God. **It shows that; salvation of every Christian involves all three persons of The Godhead.**

It is composed of three sections each ends with praises to the Triune God for His glorious grace (6, 12, 14).

The first section describes those blessings related to the Father, how He has chosen us in Christ, predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself (4-6).

The second section focuses on those blessings in relation to the Son, e.g., redemption through His blood, forgiveness of sins, the revelation of His will concerning Jesus Christ, and the inheritance we have obtained, as predestined according to God's will (7-12).

The third section describes blessings related to the Holy Spirit, how we are sealed with the Spirit of promise, and how the Holy Spirit of God serves as a "guarantee" (or deposit) of our inheritance (13-14).

The key phrase throughout this section is "*in Him*" or "*in Whom*" which stresses the point that all spiritual blessings come through Jesus Christ and are enjoyed by those who are "**in**" Him (cf. 1:1, 3).

Let us have a look at these 7 blessing one by one as it is shown in this magnificence doxology.



## **The Blessings of God the Father**

*Two blessings from God the Father (1: 3-6)*

### **(1) The Blessing of Election.**

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, for He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (1:3-4)*

The heavenly places refer to an area that we cannot see or touch. In that area, there are beings that we cannot see. These beings are both good and evil. The good beings serve God and the evil beings serve Satan. The evil beings try to rule society

and the lives of people. Paul uses the words ‘heavenly places’ five times in this letter. If we are Christians, we live now in the heavenly places. This is true even now whilst we live on earth. It refers to any place where Christ rules over all. His people rule with him too (1:20; 2:6).

This is the marvelous doctrine of election, a doctrine that has confused some and annoyed others. God the Father has chosen us in Christ! Remarkable, isn't it?

**God chose us in Christ, not in ourselves.** He chose us before time began; before the foundations of the world were laid, God had already chosen us to be His very own. He elected us from eternity. In doing this, He did not elect the rest for an eternity in hell, as our logic would suggest. If a person does go to hell, it is completely his own fault. It is not because God predetermined him to go there. So why some will be saved while others will not?

The cause of our election is God's wisdom based on Jesus' work of salvation. It has nothing to do with us, but we are chosen purely out of God's pleasure and will. Think of how students receive academic and athletes receive honors for their outstanding performances. Sales professionals receive special bonuses after achieving certain sale quotas. The choosing in these cases is due to some ability or quality displayed by the individual receiving the reward.

How different it is with God choosing us to enjoy eternal life with Him! No human achievements; no special quality of any kind played a part in God electing us for eternity. Our Lord Jesus said: “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John15:16). His saving grace comes to us, and then leads us to believe in Jesus as our Saviour. The lost sinner, left

to his own ways, does not seek God; but God in His love seeks the sinner.

***Q: Does the sinner respond to God's grace against his own will?***

No, he responds because God's grace makes him willing to respond. All of us as sinners are the objects of God's wrath, deserving eternal death. BUT God in His mercy and His wonderful grace has chosen us nonetheless!

**God chose us in Christ for a purpose: to be holy and without blame.** It is a privilege that carries a great responsibility. The mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility will never be solved in this life. Both are taught in the Bible (John 6:37). Both are true, both are essential.

## **(2) The Blessing of Adoption**

***“In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace which He has made us accepted in the Beloved” (vv. 4-5).***

Adoption is the act of God by which He gives His “born ones” an adult standing in the family. He does this so that we might to enjoy our spiritual inheritance and spiritual wealth.

**The word for *predestine* here gives us a vivid picture of a fence (or boundary) built around someone's property.** So when we speak of God predestining us for life in Heaven, we can think of our loving Father putting a protective fence around us before ever entering our mother's womb. This fence says, “***Hands off***” to the devil, whose only desire it is to have us fenced in with him in Hell.

Because of God's grace in Christ, we are accepted before Him. Grace is the gift of God that we cannot buy. Neither can we work to earn it (2:8-9).

*"In Christ Jesus"* is used 27 times in this letter, and 7 times in this song of redemption. It describes the spiritual position of the believer: he is identified with Christ, he is in Christ, and therefore is able to draw upon the wealth of Christ for his own daily living.

## **Blessings from God the Son**

*Three blessings from God the Son* (Ephesians 1:7-12)

### **(1) The Blessing of Redemption**

*"In Him we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins" (v.7)*

To redeem means **"to purchase and set free a prisoner or a slave by payment of a ransom."**

There were six million slaves in the Roman Empire, and often they were bought and sold like pieces of furniture. But a man could purchase a slave and set him free, and this is what our Lord Jesus did for us. The price was His own blood *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed ... but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect"* (1 Peter 1:18).

By His death and resurrection, our Lord Jesus has redeemed us from three things; *"the curse of the law, the power of Satan, and the power of sin"*.

The curse of the law: *“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (James 2:10) “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree” (Gal 3:13) Our Lord on His cross met the holy demands of God’s Law.*

The power of Satan: Satan seeks to accuse us and imprison us because he knows we are guilty of breaking God’s Law. But the ransom has been paid on the Cross, and through faith in Christ, we have been set free *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Col 1:13-14)*

The power of sin: *“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace ... and now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God’s righteousness, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” (Rom 6:13, 22-23).* If we were slaves, we would be poor, but because we are sons, we are rich!

***Redemption includes the forgiveness of sins.*** Redemption and forgiveness go together *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”* The word “forgive” means “to send away” or “to cancel a debt”.

This reminds us of the ritual on the Jewish Day of Atonement when the high priest sent the scapegoat into the wilderness (Lev 16). First the priest killed one of the two goats and sprinkled its blood before God on the mercy seat. Then he confessed Israel’s sins over the live goat, and had the

goat taken into the wilderness to be lost. Christ died to carry away our sins so they might never again be seen. John the Baptize said about Jesus “*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29).

In Ps 103:12 we read “*as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*” Thanks be to God our Redeemer, no written accusation stands against us because our sins have been taken away! Sin made us poor, but grace makes us rich.

## **(2) The Blessing of Revealing of God’s will.**

**The Son has revealed God’s will to us** “*He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ*” (1:8-10)

This letter has much to say about God’s plan for His people, a mystery that was not fully understood even in Paul’s day.

The word “mystery” means a “sacred secret, once hidden but now revealed to God’s people”. What is the secret that God has revealed to us?

God will one day unite everything in Christ. We the Gentiles believers are heirs with Israeli believers. We are members together of the body “*This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus*”. (3:6).

That in Christ the wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles had been brought down, so that now in Christ there are no racial or tribal distinctions (ch2) “*In Christ Jesus*

*you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3: 26-29)*

Ever since sin came into the world, things have been falling apart. First, man was separated from God (Gen 3). Then man was separated from man as Cain killed Abel (Gen 4). People tried to maintain a kind of unity by building the Tower of Babel (Gen 11), but they failed!

There was a difference between the Jew and the Gentile, a difference that was maintained until Christ's death on the cross. Sin is tearing everything apart, but in Christ, God will gather everything together in the end of the ages.

Apostle John has seen a vision of that great plan of God “*a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7: 9-17).*

### **(3) The Blessing of Inheritance**

*“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, to the praise of His glory” (1:11-12).*

In Christ we have a wonderful inheritance as Peter says; *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5).*

Also in Christ we are an inheritance. We are valuable to Him. Think of the price God paid to purchase us and make us part of His inheritance! God the Son is the Father's love gift to us; and we are the Father's love gift to His Son. We note in John 17 how Christ calls us "*those whom You have given Me.*"

Christ's future inheritance is wrapped up in His Church. The Church is Christ's body, his temple and his bride. According to Romans 8:17; We are "joint-heirs with Christ", "*Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory*", which means that He cannot claim His inheritance apart from us!

In Christ, you and I have '**the things money can't buy**' and these spiritual blessings open up to us all the wealth of God's vast creation. We enjoy the gifts because we know and love the Giver.

By faith we can claim God's promises and draw upon His limitless wealth to meet every need we may face.

## **Blessing from God the Holy Spirit**

*Two blessings from God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)*

- (1) The Seal of Salvation**
- (2) The Deposit of the Holy Spirit**

*"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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory"(13-14)*

The Holy Spirit has sealed us with the blessing of salvation. Apostle Paul states in Ephesians 2:8-9 that salvation is the gift of God by his grace to us “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.*”

*The grace of God* is the power that saves us from sin. By love for us who are undeserving of any good, God gave his only begotten Son to die on Calvary that we should not have to die. *And faith* is the hand that lays hold of the grace of God, which is like a lifeline out on the sea of life. Whoever takes hold of that line has hope of salvation. The Ephesians heard the Gospel of salvation and believed. The Gospel is still good news! The divine plan of salvation is an unchanging message.

The blessing of salvation is **the story of our life** from the moment we have believed to the moment of our departure from this world. **It is accomplished in three stages or tenses:** past, present, and future. It may be termed as: ***Justification, Sanctification and Glorification.***

Justification is a backward look; sanctification is an inward look; glorification is a forward look.

(1) ***Justification*** – explains Salvation of man's spirit. The Christian is freed from the penalty of sin. Jesus Christ pays for the penalty of sin. In justification, "God has given us *new birth.*" (1 P.1:3) We are getting into such a relation with God in which our past sins no longer condemn us (Romans 8:1).

(2) ***Sanctification*** – explains Salvation of man's soul. The Christian is freed from the power of sin. Here the work of the Holy Spirit who frees believers from the power of sin. *In Sanctification* we are getting into such a relation with God in

which we set free from the dominion of sin. The bible says: "for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your soul" (1 Peter 1:9 & Romans 12:2)

After justification, there begins a second work of grace – a growth in the new life. We are to “follow after holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). This involves bearing the fruits of righteousness. *We do not grow into sanctification at some specific moment, but grow in sanctification every day of our lives and never reach perfection in this life.*

(3) **Glorification** – explains Salvation of man's body. It is the final stage when we shall rescue from the presence of sin when our Lord Jesus Christ comes from heaven to take us to our eternal home. "Salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5) The Christian finally perfected in the image of his Lord and shall be saved from the presence of sin.

Apostle John writes that “when Jesus shall appear we shall be like him (1 John 3:2). Paul confirmed this and said; “For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality ... we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet” (1 Cor 15:51-53).

In glorification we are getting into such a relation with God in which sin no longer is present in us (Jude 24; 1 John 3:2). If we were born again, and have lived the life that presses toward the mark, we can be certain of our glorification when the time comes. Let us, therefore, as many as have named the name of Jesus, press on in hope, knowing that God will be with us always

### **Q: *What is the Seal of Spirit?***

The seal of Spirit is a promise or guarantee of the Christian's future, eternal inheritance with Jesus Christ. When the Ephesians first believed, God marks them with a seal of His Holy Spirit. Paul says to them *“In Him you 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 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession, to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1: 13-14).

We receive the Spirit of God in our hearts immediately upon trusting Christ as our Saviour and Lord. Paul confirms this in Romans 5:5 *“God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us”*.

The Holy Spirit is referred to as the **“seal,”** and **“deposit”** in the hearts of Christians. The word **“seal”** means **“to confirm, to protect, to guarantee – to pledge.”**

#### **1. Seal of the Spirit means ownership**

The Holy Spirit is God’s seal on His people, His claim on us as His very own. In Paul’s days, a seal was a person’s own sign. It was a stamp or mark. It showed that he was the owner. He used it when he sent something important to another person. He would use this on a letter. It showed that everything was true and not false. It was a sure promise that no one can change.

The Holy Spirit is the seal for the Christian. The Holy Spirit in him is a proof to himself of his faith. The Holy Spirit

makes the Christian certain that he has salvation. God has put his seal upon us because he has purchased us to be his own. In 2 Corinthian 1:22 we read “**Now it is God who makes both you and us stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come**” (4:30).

2. **The seal means security and protection.** The Romans sealed on the tomb of Jesus carried this meaning (Matt 27:62-66). So the believer belongs to God and is safe and protected because, the Holy Spirit abides with the believers forever and ever (John 14:16, 17).

This seal now becomes a very powerful, spiritual bond between God and us. It keeps us safe. No one can break the seal. No one can break into our life. To the end, we will be safe with the Lord Jesus. It is a promise to all those who believe in him. This will be completely to God’s glory.

3. **Seal of the Spirit also means “Deposit or Earnest”-** in Arabic and Greek is *arrhabōn* which means “a pledge,” **the down payment to guarantee the final purchase of property.”** That is, part of the purchase money given in advance as security for the rest. When you bought something, you paid some money as deposit. This was only a part of the whole price. You made a promise to the seller. You promised that later you would pay the rest of the price.

The gift of the Spirit to us is a down payment on our heavenly inheritance, which Christ has promised us and secured for us at the cross. It is because the Spirit has sealed us that we are assured of our salvation. No one can break the seal of God. The Holy Spirit is God's FIRST INSTALMENT

to guarantee to his children that he will finish his work and bring us to glory. The Bible says: “God has **sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit.**” “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were **sealed for the day of redemption**” (2 Cor 1:21; Eph 4:30)

Redemption of the purchased possession refers to our bodies at the return of Christ. This Redemption is experienced in three stages:

- Our spirits have been redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7)
- Our souls are being redeemed as the Spirit of God works in our lives to make us more like Christ (Rom 8: 1-4).
- Our bodies shall be redeemed when Christ returns and we will become like him.

4. **Seal of the Spirit finally means "Engagement ring"**: Our Lord Jesus Christ is the bridegroom and his church is his bride. He gives his Spirit as the engagement ring to his church. What a Great Assurance!!! What more do we want?

What a great blessing we have; the Spirit of God is in us. We are God's house. It is God's plan to dwell with us for eternity, as John states in Rev. 21:1-4 “*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea and I heard a loud voice saying: “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*”

Because God grants us His Holy Spirit, we can live joyfully; confident of our sure glorious place in heaven. Thank God, we are His forever and shall be saved in the last day. Yes friends, our hope is in what God has done and not what we have done or will do. So the sealing of the Spirit is our hope, our security – for God himself has stamped us, and there is no one greater than God. Therefore we are secure, and can be sure that all these blessings are ours in Christ. For it is by the Holy Spirit that we will be enabled to do what God requires of us, so what else do we require, for if God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)? *Let us thank God for the greatest gift of all, the gift of the indwelling Spirit.* Let us walk then in that Spirit which we have been sealed with; to the praise of His glorious grace.

The last half of this chapter contains Paul's first of two prayers that are in this epistle. The prayer in this chapter is for their "enlightenment" that their knowledge and understanding might increase. Paul especially desires that Christian in Ephesus might know God more fully, what is the hope of His calling, that are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the great power of God toward those who believe (15-19).

Regarding this "power", it is the same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead and seat Him at His right hand. The exalted position now enjoyed by Christ includes authority over all things, especially the church which is described as "His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (20-23).

## Chapter Two

### The Greatness of Grace Our Spiritual Position In Christ

After describing our wonderful blessings God has given us in Christ in Chapter one, Paul turns in Chapter two to describe what God has done for us by His rich mercy and His great grace. **This chapter describes the Greatness of the Saving Grace.**

God has made us Alive, Raised, and Seated us up with Christ (2:4-7). God has Saved Us (2:8-10). God Reconciled us (2:13-18). God Unified us into one great family as One Body and Holy Temple (2:19-22). **That is our spiritual position in Christ.**

But to appreciate God's grace and His mercy toward us in Christ, Apostle Paul reminds us first of our past state without Christ; and then he explains our state with Christ.

#### I. Our Problem without Christ

Paul described four picture of our terrible spiritual condition without Christ; “dead in sin, ruled by Satan, were doomed” (vv.1-3), and we were separated from God and His covenants (2:11-13)

##### 1. We were dead in sins.

“You were dead in {through} your transgressions and sins”. Life without God – is death. This is moral spiritual death not physical death. We were dead not insensibility, for we feel; not inactivity, for we act. We were DEAD to God but

alive to SIN. By nature sinners but we also choose to sin. We lived our life uninterested in God; because we possess no spiritual life, and we can do nothing of ourselves to please God. We were unable to understand and appreciate or respond to spiritual things of God.

Just as a person physically dead does not hear, has no appetite for food or drink; he feels no pain; so it is so with the man who is spiritually dead. He is not sick; he is dead! Our Lord Jesus described the state of men without God “They seeing see not, and hearing they hear not” (Matt13:13).

The cause of this spiritual death is transgressions and sins “*You were dead in your transgressions and sins*”. A dead person does not need *revival*; he needs *resurrection*.

## **2. We were ruled by Satan**

*“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,<sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts.*”

**Satan ruled us by using two forces** which caused us to disobey God- **the flesh**, and **the world**. The Devil, the flesh and the world are the three great enemies of God.

*The flesh* does not mean our body, because of itself, the body is not sinful. The flesh refers to the fallen nature that we were born with, that wants to control the body and the mind and make us to disobey God. Man cannot change his own nature; he needs God who is able to do so.

The world does not mean the earth and its beautiful nature or people, but it means the world system and its values and attitudes of this world that puts pressure upon us to get us to conform and ignore God and His Word (Romans 12:2)

Satan, who used to rule us, is “the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience” (Eph 6:11-12), and through his demonic associates over the world system (John 12:31), Satan influences the lives of men who do not know God’s love. He seeks to influence us to disobey God’s will.

We used to please the “desires of the flesh and the wishes of the mind”. Our actions were sinful because our appetites were sinful. Perhaps we did good things to others but we were incapable of doing anything to please God to merit His salvation or meet the high standards of God’s holiness.

### **3. We were doomed.**

By nature, children of wrath! By deed, children of disobedience! We were the object of God’s wrath. We were condemned already (John 3:18). We were not able to save ourselves. But thanks be to God, who in his rich mercy and grace steps in to make salvation possible and change our past state.

### **4. We were Separated from God (2:11-13)**

“**Without**” is the one word that best describes how poor and separate we were. **Verse 12** describes our former situation as Gentiles in five ways “*Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world*”.

## II. Our State with Christ.

Paul now turns to describes what God has done for us. God gave us life; God saved us and prepared good works for us to do (2:4-12). God reconciled us in Christ, and united us into one great family as one body and a holy temple (2:13-18)". **That is our position in Christ.**

**God loved us.** By nature God is love; but when this love is related to us as sinners, it becomes grace and mercy. God is "rich in mercy and in grace", and these riches make it possible for us to be saved.

**In His mercy, He does not give us what we do deserve; and in His grace he gives us what we do not deserve.** And all of this is made possible because of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. It was on the cross that God displayed His hatred for sin and His love for sinners (Rom 5.8; John 3: 16).

### 1. God gave us life.

V 5 reads "*He made us alive ... and raised us up together with Christ*". God accomplished this spiritual resurrection by the power of His Spirit, using His Word. Our Lord Jesus raised three people from the dead: the widow's son, Jairus daughter, and Lazarus (Luke 7, 8 and John 11). In each case, He spoke the Word and this gave life. These three physical resurrections are pictures of spiritual resurrection that comes to us when we hear the Word of God and believe (John 5:24).

But our spiritual resurrection is much greater because it puts us in union with Christ. God made us alive together with Christ, so as members of His body we are united to Him. We also share His resurrection life and power (Eph 1:19-20).

## **2. God saved us.**

*“By grace you have been saved... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. ”*

(vv 6, 8-9)

We are not raised from the dead and left in the graveyard of sin. But because we are united to Christ, we have been exalted with Him and we are sharing His throne in the heavens.

Our physical position may be on earth, but our spiritual position is “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Like Lazarus we have been called from the grave to sit with Christ and enjoy His fellowship (John 12:1-2).

### **God made us alive ... raised us up ... and seated us.**

These are historical events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ: His resurrection from the dead and enthronement at the right hand of God. But Paul teaches a union between Christ and those who come to trust Him, so that what is said of the Redeemer can also be said of the redeemed.

This is the greatness of God’s grace that saves us from our hopeless condition and brings us to sit in heavenly places with Christ. The ground of our salvation is God’s love, and its goal is that for all eternity the Church might glorify God’s grace and kindness.

**God prepared good works for us to do** *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”.*

Our conversion to Christ is not the end; it is the beginning. We are part of God’s new creation as the Bible says; “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ.” (2 Cor 5:17) God will continue to

work in us to make us what He wants us to be. The Bible says: “For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Phil. 2:13).

We are created in Christ Jesus to do good works. Of course we are not saved by good works, but we have been saved by the grace of God to do good works. John Calvin wrote: “It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone. We are not saved by faith plus good works, but by a faith that works. It is not enough to say that we have faith; we must demonstrate this faith by the good works that bring glory to God’s grace.

Our good works are good, not because we ourselves are good, but because we have a new nature from God, and because the Holy Spirit of God works in us and through us to produce these good works. Apostle Paul says:

*“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14).*

This is the gracious plan of a loving heavenly Father, who wills the very best for us. It is by His love and His grace we have been saved from Satan’s works against us and in us and through us. We have been made alive, raised and seated on the throne.

**Yes that is our Position with Christ.** We are “Saved, raised, seated in heavenly places”. Once you were dead, now

you are ALIVE; once you were earthbound – following the ways of this world, now you are RAISED to heaven; once you were “walking” and if you were even aware of God you were trying desperately to please him whilst all the time failing in sin, now you are “SEATED” with him! ie – rest and victory! Our spiritual position is now ABOVE the circumstances! Our Lord Jesus was UNITED IN OUR DEATH so we were UNITED IN HIS LIFE.

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”*  
**Let us practice our position in Christ. He has worked for us; now let us let Him work in us and through us that He might give us an exciting, creative life to the glory of His mercy and grace.**

## **God’s Great Family Eph 2:11-22**

Our Lord Jesus came to earth not only to break down the barrier between man and God, but also to break down the barrier between man and man, between group and group. He came to call together for himself a people from *every* tribe, language and nation, to create a unity out of the great diversity of humanity, to make those of us called by Him into *one* great family, His people.

**But to appreciate how God has showered us with these blessings, Paul first reminds us about our past state without Christ. Then he explains our state with Christ.**

In Chapter 2, Paul says to us as the family of God; do not forget your past state; remember your history without Christ. We were dead in sins (2:1); we were ruled by Satan who used

our sinful nature and the principles of the world that oppose God and His Word to control us (2:2-3). Also we were doomed, separated from God and his covenants (2:3, 11-13)

God is so gracious and merciful that He gave us a new position in Christ and has done great things to His family. “He made us alive, raised us with Christ, seated us with Him, and saved us by His grace! (2:8-10). He reconciled us to Himself, and unified us into *one* great family, one people, one body and a Holy temple (2:11-22)

In **verses 11 to 22**, Paul identifies the greatest problem we have, and how God in his grace solves that problem.

So; in **addition to the fact that each of us were dead in sins, ruled by Satan, and doomed, Paul reminds us as Gentiles of our former nick name “uncircumcised” and how poor and separate we were.** Paul in these verses is telling us to *remember* one thing, and to *know* two things.

- Remember what you were! (verses 11 and 12)
- Know what Christ did to change this! (verses 13-18)
- Know what you are now! (verses 19-22)

## **Remember What You Were!**

**“Without”** is the one word that best describes how poor and separate we were. Verse 12 describes our former situation as Gentiles in five ways:

**1. Without Christ:** The Jews, at least, had the promise and expectation of a deliverer, the Messiah. The Gentiles had none.

**2. Without citizenship:** We were estranged from the nation or commonwealth of Israel, aliens to the people of God. *Our*

citizenship was elsewhere; we were not included among God's people. So there's a gap, a wall, separating those who were descended from Israel from all other peoples.

**3. *Without covenants of promise.*** We had no covenant with God at all. God's covenant was not made with us as the Gentiles, but with the Israelites. God's promise to make a people for His own precious possession did not apply to the Gentile nations.

**4. *Without hope.*** A great cloud of hopelessness covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty; religions were powerless to help men face life problems or death. How sad, to have no hope. No promises to trust in. No hope of God's rescue or salvation or intervention. No long-term future.

**5. *Without God.*** The Gentiles worshiped many idols, they had no relationship with the true God. This also applies to those who deny God. Can you imagine what it must be like to be "without God"? Maybe you've felt like that before your conversion -- alone, all by yourself in a scary world.

This was one of the deepest separations ever to exist, the separation between Jew and Gentile. This was a major issue in the first century because many Gentiles were responding to the gospel. Jews and Gentiles, who never talked to each other, found themselves in the same church.

**But the alienation between Jew and Gentiles was never God's intention. God blessed Abraham to bless all nations. Abraham's descendants were called to be a light to the nations that God's salvation might come to the ends of the earth (Is 49:6).**

Israel completely missed this true call of God. The Jews considered the Gentiles as dogs, and believed the Gentiles were created for the fires of hell. **But thanks be to God, Christ our Redeemer fulfilled this purpose by bringing this blessing to the Gentiles.**

**In the Jewish Temple there was a physical wall which separated the Gentiles from the Jews. Also there was an unfriendly sign warning foreigners to not enter the temple court. Anyone caught doing so would be subject to penalty of death.** Instead of the Temple being a light for all nations, it was surrounded by a wall of hostility!

**So remember, how poor and separate we were.** We looked like this before. But Paul moves on to say how this changed. This is how you look now. It is like an Ad for diet.

### **Know What Christ Did to Change the Situation**

The Gentiles, who were excluded, without hope, now have hope! By what means? *The blood of Christ!* **Paul not only identifies the problem, but he explains what God, in his grace, has now done to bring peace and reconciliation. For Paul it is a spiritual problem which requires a spiritual solution. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God and to each other through the cross.**

The basis of God's acceptance is faith in Christ's blood, for both Jews and Gentiles. So Christ Himself is our peace -- Out of the two distinct groups of people -- Jew and Gentile -- Jesus makes one great family, one people, His people, the church.

Yes thanks be to God, *“in Christ”* He destroys the **"barrier of the dividing wall"** and the two groups, who used to be divided, are now made into one people, one *body*, and one new family. They need each other to function best, just as an eye needs a brain and a foot needs a leg.

Together, Jew and Gentile can glorify God more than either group could have separately. Jesus' message is to both groups -- the Jews who were near and the Gentiles who were far away. Both groups have access to the Father through Jesus, by the same Holy Spirit.

### **Know What You Are Now!**

Given these truths, Paul tells us Gentiles to focus on what Christ has accomplished for us: *“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit”*.

So while we are to remember what we were to keep us ever from boasting, because it is "By grace we have been saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God".

We are to know what Christ did for us and also know what we are now: We are citizens and family members of God's household, a holy temple in the Lord, in which we have both benefits and obligations.

Just as one person does not make a family, just as one brick does not create a temple, one person does not glorify God to the maximum without every other part of the body of Christ working also. All together, we reveal God's character in ways that we could not separately.

All who belong to Christ are one body. We are brothers and sisters, we are saved by the blood of Christ, and He will build us into His perfect temple, to the praise of His glorious grace. One of the great things about being a Christian is that you can meet a Christian from a different culture and immediately there is a recognition we are of the same family.

The central message of verses 11-22 is that *peace* is a *person*: Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, we have peace with God and peace with other believers; without Him, there is no peace. All roads to peace begin with Him.

We can rest in the fact that all Christians are saved only by Jesus' blood: Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female, everyone comes to God the same way. We can approach each other in humility and love -- regardless of the external differences among us.

In the Book of Revelation we are given glimpses of the future, when there will be peace and reconciliation across the world: And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy is the lamb who was slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." [Rev 5:9]

***Remember what you were! Know what Jesus did to change this! Know what we are now!*** A great family of God, a building intimately knit together, dependent on each other, filled with the Spirit, bringing glory to God.

## Chapter Three

### The Mystery of Grace

#### And The Purpose in Suffering

There are at least 7 kinds of suffering according to the Bible:

N	7 Kinds of Suffering	Bible Reference
1	Punishment	The Flood, God's judgement on Sodom and Gomorra, the 10 plagues on Egypt.
2	Consequential- we sow what we reap of our bad decisions.	Gal 6:7 "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap".
3	Demonic	Mark 9:14-29 "Lord: I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk. And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground".
4	Disciplinary	Heb 12:6 "For those whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son He receives".
5	Providential	Gen 50:19-20 "But Joseph said to them, do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, <i>but</i> God meant it for good in order to preserve many people alive".
6	Testimonial	The prophets and the Apostles life
7	Mysterious	We do not know in life why?

Suffering is anything which hurts or irritates whether small or big. It is a tool God uses to get our attention to accomplish His purposes in our lives. The Bible says: “*In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider*” (Eccl 7:14). There is a Chinese proverb which says, “The tree wants to be still, but the wind keeps on blowing”.

**Ephesians 3: 1-13** focuses on the testimonial suffering in the life of the apostle Paul.

1. **Paul’s understanding of suffering as God’s gift to us.**  
He says “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him” (Philippians 1:29)
2. Paul was suffering for the benefit of others (Eph 3:1-6)  
“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (2 Cor 1:3-4).
3. Paul was suffering for God’s glory to be revealed in the heavenly realm and in earth too (Eph 3: 7-13)

Paul was suffering for other’s good. As we finished up chapter two of the book of Ephesians, we were reminded that the loving God in his rich grace has made Jews and Gentiles one in Christ. At the beginning of chapter three, Paul pointed out that his ministry to bring the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles caused him to suffer. He says: “*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles*”, and in verse 13, says: “*I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory*”.

**It is important that we note two things with regards to Paul's circumstances.** Firstly, Paul's circumstances are difficult and he is suffering. At Philippi Jail, the beatings hurt, the discomfort was uncomfortable and the pain was unbearable (Acts 16: 23-40). During his first imprisonment in Rome, although he was under house arrest with some freedom, he was still chained (Acts 28).

**The second thing to note is that his suffering was incredibly purposeful. Paul was a prisoner of Rome.** However, he did not consider himself a prisoner of Rome. He was a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Paul understands that he is imprisoned *because* of the gospel of Christ Jesus. His allegiance to Christ has led him to this prison cell from which he wrote four letters (Philippians, Colossians, Ephesus and Philemon).

Suffering often opens up doors for ministry we could never have imagined. Paul's imprisonment (chained daily to Roman soldiers in his own house) resulted in the spread of the gospel within the Roman soldiers who guarded him. The Apostle was undoubtedly continuing to rejoice in the Lord, but if he had been complaining and bitter, his witness would have been zero. **We suffer to broaden our ministries.** Yes suffering in Christ for other's good (cf Philippians 1:12-14 with 4:5-9).

**Paul's real passion and earnest desire was not to be "the apostle to the Gentiles."** He wanted to be a messenger of the gospel for the Jews. As you read through the book of Acts, you'll see that this was Paul's greatest desire. He wrote to the Romans, "I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Rom. 9:2-4).

In Rom. 10:1 he says: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation”. Paul wanted to be a minister to the Jews. ***But God gave him no success there, and sent Paul to the Gentiles instead.*** He had very little ministry to the Jews.

God's plans were different than Paul's. It was just like He declared through Isaiah: Isa. 55:8-9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

**Paul accepted service to the Gentiles and suffered for them joyfully when the Lord revealed to him the mystery of the church (3:4-7)** “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. They are qualified to be saved in Jesus Christ the same as the Jews are”. To the Jews and Gentiles of Paul's day, this was an amazing new teaching.

### **3. Suffering in Christ for the Glory of God in the heavenly realms as well as on earth through the church (3:7-13)**

Paul recognized that his preaching ministry was completely undeserved - it was only by God's grace. Paul knew that his ministry (and everyone else's!) was only by God's grace. He mentioned three reasons in 3:8-10 ***“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am the Least Of all God’s people, this grace was given me”.***

**First:** To preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

**Secondly:** To make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

**Thirdly:** In Christ through faith we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Peter said, 1Pet. 1:12 “These things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things into which angels long to look. Angels longed to look into these things, and now they watch the church on earth to learn them. That is so amazing! Even beyond that, it is really interesting to think that they're watching us all the time. Our Lord Jesus said, "I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

Paul understood that he was not a victim of circumstance or chance, but rather he belonged to Christ Jesus. Paul stood with an unshakable confidence that he was precisely where the Lord of the Universe had called him to be.

He said to the Roman Christian: “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:18 & 38-39)

To the Christians at Ephesus, he said “So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory”. Paul’s point is that his imprisonment and his

sufferings are worth it because the salvation of souls and the glorification of Christ Jesus is his highest aim.

These two principles are foundational for all believers. You and I were saved by the sheer grace and mercy of God demonstrated and extended in and through the gospel of Christ Jesus. And this must have an effect on the way that we live. We are recipients and we are stewards of his glorious grace which saves our souls. Yes **this grace is given for a purpose that we might pass it on.**

All of us, with Paul, are called to be stewards of God's grace and ambassadors for the sake of the gospel. Each of us has received grace that we might proclaim, empowered by grace, the glorious truth of the gospel of his glorious grace.

You and I are vessels of grace, we are called to go and to show forth this glorious grace which has saved our souls and is transforming us day-by-day.

We are called to go, we are called to tell and we are called to live out the gospel implications daily in our lives.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” ( 2 Cor 4: 16-18).

## What Will You Pray About Today

### Ephesians 3:14-21

It is natural to ask God that our pain would stop and that our circumstances would improve. Sometimes we ask God: “Lord, this hurts. Make it stop.” Or we may ask God to change the difficult circumstances, “Lord, I don’t like this. Change it, please.” No one likes pain and no one enjoys difficult circumstances. It’s natural to pray

Yet Paul teaches us to focus on asking God for spiritual strength in the inner man. Paul was in prison in Rome chained at all times to two Roman guards. Yet his request is not, “Lord Get me out of here,” but rather he asks the believers (Ch 6) to “Pray that He will be bold for Christ even though He is in chains.”

With gratitude in his heart for the glorious grace of God toward the Gentiles, Paul "For this reason" prays that God might “strengthen the believers in Ephesus with power through the Holy Spirit in the inner being.” Let us read his prayer together:

*“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

This is the second prayer in this letter. The first prayer occurs in Ephesians 1, where he prays that the eyes of the heart might be opened so that we might know God better. It is prayer for enlightenment, or knowledge. This second prayer is for spiritual strength in the inner man. That “inner man” is the control room of life where every great decision is made. This is the place where we need the most help. Paul asks God to strengthen his people in their hearts.

The key to this basic request is found in verse 13, just before the prayer begins: “I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.” The phrase “not to be discouraged” can be translated “not to lose heart” or “not to give up.” This is relevant to us today. Because so many things sap our strength: discouraging circumstances, physical weakness, unfinished responsibilities, and unresolved conflicts.

When we are weak, we need strength. And strength is the exact opposite of “losing heart” in verse 13. To be “strengthened with power” means to be made powerfully strong so that you can overcome the obstacles set before you. When you are made strong in the inner man by the Holy Spirit, there will be power to overcome despair, and power to keep going when you would rather quit. Note that this power is put to work in the “inner self”, the “inner man”, or simply in our hearts.

**Why does Paul pray for strengthening by the Spirit in the inner man?** Because our greatest need is for spiritual power on the inside. So the prayer is not, “Lord, take away my burdens,” but rather “Lord, give me stronger shoulders to carry the load.” It is a prayer for spiritual strength to do our

daily tasks with joy and to endure any kinds of sufferings gladly. “This is my path, Lord, the path you have chosen for me. Make me powerfully strong in the inner man to walk where you are leading.” That’s the heart of this magnificent prayer.

**Three results come to us as we are strengthened by the Spirit on the inside. Christ Dwelling in Our Hearts by Faith, growing Comprehension of the Love of Christ and Fullness of God in Your Life**

**The first great result is found in verse 17a: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”** The prayer is that Christ might be “down home” in our heart. It’s the picture of a man at home in his own house.

It is very possible for Christ to be “in” our heart but not “at home” there. Let me illustrate. Suppose you go to visit a very nice home. The lady of the house says, “Friend, make yourself at home.” But because there is a limit for your time to be there, so you do not feel that you are at home.

There is little booklet called *My Heart, Christ’s Home* written by Robert Boyd Munger. In it he imagines the believer’s heart as a home with many rooms. The heart has a living room, a dining room, a bedroom, a kitchen, a computer room, a TV room, and many closets. Too many believers keep Christ in the entryway, as if to say, “Jesus, I’ve got you in the door. Now stay there and don’t bother the rest of my life.” But the Lord wants to enter every room. He wants to enter your kitchen, your bedroom, your library, your TV room, your computer room, and he wants access to every closet and every place of your heart. As long as you keep the doors locked, he can never be “at home” in your heart. And you will never be happy as a Christian.

The question is not, “How much of the Lord do I have?” but rather, “How much of me does the Lord have?” Let our prayer always: “O Christ, come in and purify our mind, guide our lips, and direct our path”. The result is: that **our Lord is not just watching us, he’s with us. He’s not just with us, he’s in us. He’s not just a visitor; he’s at home in our heart.** This is the first result of being strengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit.

**The second great result of being strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man is that you will have a growing comprehension of the love of Christ.** “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge” (Ephesians 3:17b-19a).

**The early church took this as a sign of the cross.** The “wide and long” stood for the crossbar on which the arms of Christ were nailed. The “high and deep” stood for the vertical piece to which his legs were nailed. It is a fitting image because nowhere is the love of Christ more clearly seen than at the cross where Jesus died for us. In John 3:16 we see “God’s love in four dimensions” **“For God so loved the world” – wide “He included you”. “That he gave ... his Son” – Long “He sent Jesus to die for you”. “Should not perish” – Deep “He reached down for you”. “Have everlasting life” – High “He lifts you up to heaven”**

**Christ’s love is broader than the universe, longer than time, higher than hope, deeper than death. As we are strengthened by the Spirit on the inside, we will come to a greater understanding of his love for us.**

**The third great result of being strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man is that** “That you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19b).

**This is the whole goal of the Christian life.** The word for “filled” has the idea of being dominated by something. This is an amazing thought—to be filled up with all the fullness of God. As believers we have been created to be the containers of God. He desires to pour his life into ours and to fill us until we’re full.

If we believe Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (and we do), then we may believe that in our lives this week the fullness of God, the beauty of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God, the holiness of God, the kindness of God, all that God is may fill us and drive out the evil—the impatience, unbelief, critical spirit, and every work of our old sinful nature (Gal 5). As the Holy Spirit changes us, the perfection of God is reflected in us.

When we are strengthened inside by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will spring from the inside. **This is the end result.** That brings us to the magnificent doxology that concludes this prayer: “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

There are no limits to what God can do. When you are weak, pray to be strengthened in the inner man. This is a prayer God will always answer. And as you pray this prayer, ask God for these three things as a result: **1) Christ might be at home in your heart, 2) A growing comprehension of the love of Christ, and 3) The fullness of God in your life.**

Our greatest need is lack of strength—so pray this prayer. Our greatest temptation is to make excuses or to seek better circumstances—so pray this prayer.

Pray boldly! Pray this big prayer to the big God. You **are coming to a King. Large petitions with you bring.** Think on him. “Ponder anew what the Almighty can do, if with his love he befriend you.”

**God is able to strengthen us when we are weak. He is able to answer far more than we ask. He is able to lift our burdens in the time of crisis.**

**God is able to guide us when we have lost our way. He is able to save us for, he sent Jesus to die for us. He is able to forgive us, for the price for our sins has already been paid. He is able to take us to heaven, because Jesus took our punishment when he died in our place. He is able to give us eternal life, because Jesus rose from the dead.**

Yes “God is able to save completely those who come to God through His Son our Lord Jesus” (Hebrews 7:25). God wants us to pray, he invites us to pray, he waits for us to call upon him. He is able to hear us and to answer us. If we do our part, God cannot fail to do his.

## Chapter Four

### The Call of Grace

*“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Eph.4:1).*

All of Paul’s letters contain a beautiful balance between doctrine and duty, and Ephesians is the perfect example. The first three chapters deal with the blessings we have in Christ, our possessions and our position in Christ. The last three chapters explain our duty in Christ.

So, it’s within this context, the context of heavenly blessings resulting in earthly conduct that we come to see how our earthly conduct should be.

Apostle Paul admonished us to walk worthy of God’s calling to us. **The following chart sum up the 7 kinds of walks which Paul mentioned in the last three chapters of the Ephesians letter;**

<b>N</b>	<b>The Christian’s Seven Walks</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Walk in Unity</b>	<b>Eph 4:1-16</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Walk in Holiness</b>	<b>Eph 4:17-32</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Walk in Love</b>	<b>Eph 5:1-2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Walk in Light</b>	<b>Eph 5:3-14</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Walk in Wisdom</b>	<b>Eph 5:15-21</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Walk in Harmony</b>	<b>Eph 5:22-6:9</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Walk in Victory</b>	<b>Eph 6:10-24</b>

# 1. Walk In Unity

## Ephesians 4: 1-16

Apostle Paul admonished us to walk worthy of God's calling to us. Here the first walk that we should start with, the walk in unity (4:1-16).

**Q 1: What is God's Calling to us? (Eph 1-3)**

**Q 2: How can we walk in unity? (Eph 4:1-3)**

**Q 3: Why should we walk in unity? (Eph 4: 4-6)**

**Q 4: What are the means to achieve unity? (Eph 4:7-11)**

**Q 5: What is the goal of our unity? (Eph 4:12-16)**

The command "*Walk Worthy*" occurs four times in Paul's letter. We see it in Philippians 1:27 "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ"; also in Colossians 1:10-14 "live a life worthy of the Lord"; then, we see it again in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 "live lives worthy of God".

We can summarise God's Calling that cover the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians in this way; "**The Merciful Loving God has called us by His grace— both Jews and Gentiles- to be His children, He saved, and blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, and brought us into a new position in Christ, reconciling us to Himself in Christ to be one Body, a Temple in which He dwells in it by His Spirit (Ch 1 to 3).**"

To Paul, joining the body of Christ is our highest calling, and because there are expectations associated with our calling, Paul begins in verse 1 by urging the Christians to “*walk worthy of God’s calling*”, He says: “*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received*”.

“*Walk worthy of God’s calling*” means we conduct ourselves to keep our responsibility of God’s calling even if it means imprisonment for our faith. Paul was facing imprisonment when he wrote this. His imprisonment for keeping his responsibility to God is **why** he calls himself, “*the prisoner of the Lord*” in verse 1.

### ***Q1: How can we walk in Unity?***

In verses 2-3 Paul gives us five ingredients or virtues that all Christians must exhibit to walk in unity in a manner worthy of God’s calling to us in Christ “*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*” (Eph.4:2-3). All these virtues deal with interpersonal relationships.

#### **1. Christians are to walk in humility (4:2)**

“**Humility**” is the first ingredient. Humility, addresses the ego. It means not to think more highly of ourselves. Humility involves seeing ourselves as we really are in comparison to Christ. In practical terms, our humility is putting Christ first; others second and self last, as Paul puts it in Philippians 2:3, regarding “one another as more important than yourselves.”

## **2. Christians are to walk in gentleness (4:2)**

“**Gentleness**” is the second ingredient. Gentleness or meekness is not weakness. It is power under control. The word used for a powerful horse, yet tamed and under control. Gentleness is considered as halfway between excessive anger and indifference. The gentle person could be angry at the right time and submissive at the right time. Gentleness includes true humility that does not consider itself too good or too exalted for humble tasks.

Our Lord Jesus was “meek and lowly in heart” (Matt11:29), yet He drove the money changers from the temple. Gentleness describes the way people approach each other. Gentleness, first of all, keeps problems from happening, but second, gentleness keeps problems from getting worse: A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)

## **3. We are called to be patient with one another (Eph 4:2)**

“**Patience**” is the third ingredient. Patience describes the virtue of overlooking offenses and shortcomings. Patience is closely tied in with “gentleness” as it also involves self-control.

Patience is demonstrated when we do not give in to our immediate reactions when someone does us wrong. Gentleness is how we respond outwardly to trouble, but patience is how we respond inwardly.

Patience and gentleness are both fruits of the Holy Spirit, and we need to let the fruit of the Spirit grow through our life. Some people are looking for ways to be offended, but the

Bible tells us that overlooking an offense is glorious! “A man’s carefulness makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a offense.” (Proverbs 19:11)

#### **4. We are called to bear with one another in love (Eph 4:2)**

“**Showing tolerance for one another in love**” is the fourth ingredient. “Tolerance in love” describes the ability to put up with others and their differences. It’s not always easy to accept everyone within the body.

Sometimes we get impatient with our fellow Christians when they have differing viewpoints. But even though we don’t always see things the same, we’re one body made of many parts, each part with its own purpose (I Cor. 12:12-27).

Therefore as God’s people we need to recognize this, and we are to walk in tolerant love and we are to put up with those with whom he disagrees. But tolerance doesn’t mean we put up with deliberate or planned sin. We are to tolerate differences, but those who live in sin are to be removed from fellowship (I Cor. 5:11).

Paul admonishes us to treat those brethren with “love.” This is Christ’s love that treats others better than they deserve and seeks their highest good.

#### **5. We are called to be eager to keep unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3)**

“*Keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” is the fifth and final necessary ingredient. Here Paul is showing us that we need to work hard (i.e. be “diligent”) to maintain

“the unity of the Spirit” (i.e. being unified by having the “Spirit” of Christ, as mentioned in Romans 8:9).

Paul notes that this is done through “the bond of peace.” The word “bond” here has to do with something that holds the greater parts of a whole together like super glue. Hence what Paul is telling us here is that “peace” is the super glue which holds the spiritual body of Christ, the church, together. “Peace” helps maintain unity even when we disagree, since our desire for “peace” supersedes our personal differences.

*“Humility”, “gentleness”, “patience”, “showing tolerance for one another in love” and “keeping the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”* are the five virtues that we must show to live life worthy according to God’s calling that we have received.

Oh Father, in the name of our Lord and Saviour your Son Jesus Christ, we humbly ask you to strengthen us by the power of your Spirit in the inner man, in our hearts, that we may be able to think the right things, biblical things, about relationships. And may we bring our actions in line with what is true and right, not through our own power but through Jesus Christ.

Father, help us to live lives worth of the calling we've received, and may we do so in the way we love one other. In The name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, we pray, Amen.

### **Why should we walk in Unity?**

In the first three verses of chapter 4, Paul urges us to walk in unity in light of God’s calling to us. That we must be humble, gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love and

making every effort to keep the unity God has established through the bond of peace.

In order to reinforce that truth, Paul returns to the basis of our unity, telling us why we should walk in unity worthy of God's calling. Let us read what he says; "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received .... There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (*Eph.4:1-6*).

Seven times Paul uses the word "*one*" to emphasize the unity we have. This passage is urging us to make every effort to keep the unity God has established through the bond of peace.

Paul names here the seven basic spiritual realities that unite all true Christians.

### ***One body***

Paul begins with the focus on the spiritual truth of the Church in the sight of God - the church is one, the body of Christ is unified, it cannot be divided. There is one body. **But** the problem of division, of disunity in the body of Christ is nothing new. It is a problem which confronts the Church of Christ from its beginning until now.

The difficulty with the church is that those whom God has called to be His are made up of people from so many backgrounds that division seems likely. For that reason, Paul instructs all Christians to better understand the unity they have in Christ and how that unity is to be lived out in our daily experience.

In Ephesians 1:22-23 Paul laid out our organic unity when he said that the Father placed the Son to be "head over everything for the church, which is his body." It is in this body, Paul points out in 2:16, that God reconciles Jews and Gentiles to Himself through Christ's work on the Cross.

In three of his letters, Paul gave emphasis to the church as a body; and in each of these passages, he brought out the same three truths: unity, diversity, and maturity. The following chart makes this clear.

	Unity	Diversity	Maturity
1 Corinthians	12:1-13	12:14-31	13:1-13
Romans	12:1-5	12:6-8	12:9-21
Ephesians	4:1-6	4:7-12	4:13-16

*“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many” (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor12:12-31).*

The very nature of a body means that although there is a diversity of parts though different, they belong to one another. It is based on this understanding that while the church may appear divided throughout the world; while it is true the church through the ages will speak different languages; worship with different music; and serve in different ways – the Church is essentially one. This is what we confessed in the

words of the Nicene Creed: "*We believe in one universal and apostolic church.*"

If we are elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, sealed by the Spirit, we are united together in a Church which has no walls, which is not limited by time or space. Christ is our head and we are a part of the body.

### *One Holy Spirit*

We are united through the Holy Spirit. As there is one body, so there is one Spirit, which is the life of that body and dwells in all its members. Whether one is Pentecostal or Presbyterian, the same Holy Spirit binds us together.

How does God do it? He not only sent His Son to die for us to save us from the penalty of sin, but He then sent His Spirit to indwell us in order to make us one.

### *One Hope*

What does this common body joined together by the Holy Spirit mean? It means we have a common goal, a unified hope. What joins us together is the anticipation of a glorious inheritance reserved for us in heaven. We have one hope before us.

While this one hope of heaven is meant to unite, while the glory which awaits should thrill us one and all, our attention is often diverted to that which divides. Some Christians will spend too much time attempting to figure out what Christ's return will look like rather than what that return means for all eternity. But no matter what we think of details, we profess, this one hope we must have in common.

While there is diversity in our unity, while there is variety in God's gifts, we must always see ourselves working toward a common goal.

### ***One Lord***

We are united through the Lord Jesus Christ. The title "Lord" in the New Testament is reserved for God the Son. That title points to His authority to rule over us as His subjects. This authority is determined not only by His rights as the one through whom God the Father created this world, but as The Son through whom our redemption is secured. The focus with this term as well as with all the others constantly directs our attention away from ourselves, and forces us to realize that it is God who is makes us His own.

### ***One Faith***

This term focuses on the objective nature of faith. One faith is the common creed which we all must profess. Jude 3 reminds us that there is one faith once for all entrusted to the saints. It is for this reason we recite the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. The Church rests on what God has done for us in Christ. We all recognize and worship the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. We all trust to His blood for redemption and to His Spirit for sanctification.

### ***One Baptism***

The focus here is not on the mode or the age of baptism, but one baptism points to the remarkable nature of our salvation, that God, by His grace, takes us from whatever allegiances we had before and places us in Christ; we belong to Him alone.

In Romans 6 Paul describes our belonging completely to Christ when he says that we were all baptized into Christ when we were baptized into His death. This same idea is expressed in Galatians 3: 27-28.

### ***One God and Father***

We come now to the head of our unity. We are united through God the Father. The basis of our unity is found in the God we worship. Paul brings us back to the uniqueness of the Christian faith, rephrasing the great Jewish prayer, the Shema: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

This daily affirmation is to be a part of our life as well. The oneness of God means we too must be one. We must always be mindful of our essential unity which God created. God is Father of all who are His. Those for whom Christ died are all equally sons and daughters of the Father; all are bound together by the Spirit. The unity we have with our Christian's brothers and sisters is not that which we create through common interests, common culture, and common backgrounds. Rather our connection to our Christians brothers and sisters – the Church of God- exists through the Triune God who as three Persons, each distinct, are of one essence, one substance, without division.

We belong to each other, we affect each other, and we need each other, because we are children in the same family. We pray together the "Lord's Prayer" that begins with "***Our Father***" not "My Father." We are Members of the same body. We are Branches of the same Vine. We are living stones built into the same temple. We are a flock of the same sheepfold. We Are Soldiers In The Same Army. We are the Bride of Christ.

# The Gifts of Grace

**(Ephesians 4:7-11)**

In Ephesians 4:7-11, we see more gift-giving from God to us! These are the gifts of grace to achieve unity within the body of Christ. *“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. So Christ himself gave some, apostles; and some, prophet; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”*

Paul is saying that Christ our Lord not only gave gifts to individual Christians, but he also gave gifts to the whole body of the Church.

But before Paul gets into that, he stops and he does a little Scripture exposition on Psalm 68:18. It was a prophecy of Jesus Christ describing His great victory over Satan, sin, death and hell.

When Christ went to the cross, he captured a great multitude of people, and he delivered them out of Satan's domain. That includes all the Old and the New Testament believers as well as all of us who would believe too. He won us that day even though we weren't yet saved. Yes He won us on that day.

Verse 8 says "*Christ gave gifts to men.*" Like any good conqueror, when he conquered the nation, he passed out the spoils. Christ did the same and gave gifts to men.

There are three lists of spiritual gifts In the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; Romans 12:3-8; and here in Ephesians 4:11. Since these lists are not identical, it may be that Paul has not intended to name all the gifts that are available. He just wrote that some gifts are more important than others, but all believers are needed if the Body of Christ is to function normally.

In Ephesians 4 Paul listed just a sampling of gifted men, Christ has given and placed them in His Church, and there are four of them "*The apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers*".

**The first three exercised leadership broader than a local church. The last two, pastors and teachers, are referring to those who care for their "flock" in a local church.**

We're indebted to the apostles and the prophets of the New Testament. Yes! We wouldn't have a New Testament without them. They're the ones that wrote the New Testament.

When the early church met in Acts 2:42 it says that "*they studied the teaching of the apostles*". The Bible tells us "*They were for the foundation of the church*" (Ephesians 2:20). They gave us the treasure of the word of God; they founded for us the basis of the church.

We are indebted too to the evangelists who were also messengers, bearing the Gospel message in particular, and often travelling to spread that news. Yes thanks be to God

who gave to his church, the early *evangelists* and pastor-teachers, who lead His Church in these times.

What Paul is saying in all of Chapter 4 is this; we have to walk worthy of God's calling, Number 1 "you start out with humility". And secondly he says here, "in order to live it, you have got to realize where the resources are. They're in your spiritual gift and they're in the gifted men God has given his church." In others words, the means to walk worthy of God's calling is to appreciate what God has given us "Written Word and the Taught Word" that came to us through "*The apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers*".

We are really indebted to our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given his church, gifted men throughout the years who have been evangelists and pastors and teachers.

In our generation too, we are indebted to some who have preached and our life has been blessed. Some have taught us the Word of God. Others have written books and we have studied their writings and listened to their tapes. God has given many gifted men as a blessing to His Church.

No wonder the Bible tells us in Hebrews 13 "Remember your leaders who taught you the Word of God". We're to follow them; we're to pattern our lives after them, because they were the gifts of Christ to his church.

Christ has given us wonderful gifts. The apostle Paul is saying, you want to walk the worthy walk of God's calling to us. It's a walk of humility. It's a walk of unity. And it's a walk where you recognize the resources that are in the Written Word of God, the taught Word of God, in your own spiritual gifts, and the ministries of gifted men.

# The Goal of Our Unity In Christ

## Ephesians 4:11-16

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Apostle Paul summarizes the goal of our unity as the body of Christ according to God's plan is to bring His Church to Maturity. Here we see God's view of His Church, the Body of Christ, made up of all true Christians, growing gradually until it reaches spiritual maturity, "*attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*" (4:13).

But Satan wants to stop that goal by two ways;

1. To make the Church lose focus of the ministry that God has given her, and
2. To keep the believers in a state of childhood, diverted and distracted from the truth.

Thanks be to God who has given us, His Written and Taught Word to equip us to do the work of ministry to each other, growing together to spiritual maturity, avoiding false teaching, by holding, speaking and displaying the Truth in love.

The members of the Church grow by feeding on the Word of God and ministering to each other. "*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming*" (Eph 4:14).

But we need to ask; doesn't our Lord tell us to be like children? Yes, indeed, for He says unless we "become like children, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) So are we to be like children, or unlike children?

Our Lord says we must have the faith of a little child, a simple faith, a genuine belief in Him. Little children can completely trust their parents, and we are to trust God with a similar faith. Also, we must have the humility of a little child, knowing that we are weak but our Father is strong. These are desirable qualities for Christians; we should imitate little children in these ways.

**But children also have undesirable qualities** in addition to these desirable qualities. Here are some of the undesirable attributes of children:

*(1) Children tend to follow the crowd.*

*(2) Children are easily diverted and distracted*

*(3) Children are easily deceived*

Children tend to follow their peers in negative ways. And we as Christians sometimes do the same, following the latest "new" teaching. Paul calls this being "carried about by every wind of doctrine," every new teaching that comes along.

Paul is very explicit about the dangers here, saying the leaders must equip the believers so that they are not taken in "by the trickery of men, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming." Satan is subtle, appearing even as an angel of light, and he tries his best to deceive us. Satan always tries to twist the truth of the Bible in subtle ways.

We only avoid these problems if we know the Word and live it out in our lives. When the written and the taught Word of God are used properly, the church is protected from any false teaching. If we are not built up by the Word of God, we are easily distracted from its truths and our specific calling.

So we are to have the simple faith of a young child. Also we need to meditate on the written and taught Word of God again and again, let its truths fill our hearts and we need to live out these truths. If we do so, we will not be like children who tend to follow the crowd. We will not easily be diverted and distracted from the truth of God's Word. We will not easily be deceived. The Word of God will keep us from being "tossed here and there by waves." The Word of God will keep us from being distracted, and will keep us from losing our focus.

The Written Word and Taught Word of God protects the church from errors and *builds up* the church, causing us to move from immaturity to full maturity "*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become a mature man, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. .. but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love*" (Eph 4:13-16).

**This is the great result of our spiritual maturity, a church that** grows in Christlikeness in the body. The Church as the body of Christ, is to become like one mature man; to reach the measure of the fullness of Christ, becoming more and more like him; we are to grow up into him.

**So this is the picture of the mature church.** Wouldn't you like to be part of the mature church?

A church that is equipping its members through teaching the word of God verbally and by example, where each person is thus being built up, where false teaching is unknown, where

each person is then contributing to the building up of every other through playing his part in the body.

Wouldn't it be exciting to be a part of such a church?

Well, guess what? You are in such a church! We love God's Word. We teach it and by the grace of God we want to live out its truths.. You are in the body of Christ, the church, if you are a Christian:

**“You are the body of Christ, and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27).**

There is only one body of Christ, and everyone saved by the blood of Jesus is a part of it. Since all of you who know Jesus as Lord are a part of this mature church, I want to close by raising two issues;

First regarding the Word of God: Are you feeding on the word, letting it infuse you, meditating on it daily? Is your delight in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2)? Are you keeping these words on your heart (Deuteronomy 6:6)? Are you letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16)? Are you taking advantage of the teaching you receive here, taking notes, asking questions about things you don't understand, figuring out how to apply this Word to your life?

**Second issue regarding your important role to minister the body of Christ:** Are you building others up through playing your unique role in the body? You can't do this effectively unless you answered YES to the first set of questions. You are not equipped for ministry unless you are feeding on the word, and apply its truth in your life.

But if you are, know that you are uniquely gifted, uniquely qualified to help the body of Christ grow until all are perfected and summed up in Christ

God's unfailing promise is that He will bring his church to perfection in Christ. The Bible says that

*“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph 5: 25-27)*

And YOU, my brother, and YOU, my sister, have a part to play in that glorious process. So devote yourself to His Word; apply the teaching you receive; step out in faith by the power of God to exercise your gift.

We are to display the fruit of the Spirit so fully displayed by Christ: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

All parts of the body are to work in harmony under the headship of Christ. We don't have one foot going one way and the other foot trying to go the other way. Rather, with "the proper working of each individual part," the body grows and builds itself up in love.

Father God, help us to minister to each other, and may we walk the worthy walk; the walk of humility, the walk of unity based on diversity. We're one because we're each different, ministering to that very need that only we could supply. Make us your body in truth as we are in theology. Help us to grow to maturity in Jesus' name, Amen

## 2. Walk In Holiness

### Ephesians 4: 17-32

We saw in the first half of Ephesians chapter four (1-16) our duty to "***Walk together in unity***" in response to God's calling to us. The second half of chapter four emphasizes our "***Walk in holiness***" (17-32). Apostle Paul is urging us as Christians: "***Do not live your life as you used to***". He contrasts two ways of life; two ways of walk. Old walk – Gentiles Walk- before we become Christians and the new walk since we became Christians.

Paul looked at the evil in the world and concluded that its ***futile mind*** leads to "***Ignorance***" of the spiritual truth about God and his salvation. That in turn leads to an ***insensitivity to sin*** and shameless behaviour, which then leads to "***greediness***" for things that belong to others (4:17-19).

We are all born with a natural inability to understand the things of God. Our mind was futile and our understanding was darkened. We were in spiritual darkness. But thank God who redeemed us and freed us from the power of sin. **In Christ, we have been given a new life**, a new will, mind, heart, power, knowledge, understanding, and new desire, to do what is pleasing to the Lord. That is why Apostle Paul is urging us;

*“You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. Because of the ignorance that is in them they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. But You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on*

*the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (4:20-24).*

However, that raises two questions: One; *if I'm such a new creation, how come I still sin? The second is; what to do to overcome sins in our life?*

Christians continue to sin because their new nature is encased in a smelly old coat known as the flesh, the main source of sins. This is called *the old nature* or *old man* or *old self*. Paul says, *"It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me ... that is, in my flesh"* (Rom 7:17-20, see also James 4:1). When I sin it is not my new nature that sins, but the "sin that dwells in me", because the old self is at war with the new self. That why the Bible says: *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish”* (Gal 5:16-17 see also Romans 7:14-25).

**Because we know who we are, then we know what to do.** Our identity as Christians determines our activity. It allows us to change how we think, how we act, and what we desire. **What we need to do is to get rid of that coat.** We are to *put off our old self and put on the new self.*

Q: How can we put off the old self, and put on the new self? **Apostle Paul mentioned five practical things that we put into practice in our day-today living.**

### **1. The new self walks in truth rather than falsehood**

*“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (4:25).*

We often fail to speak the truth, because we fear confrontation, or because we don't want to cause trouble. But because we are the body of Christ, we affect each other, we need each other. For healing and correction to take place, there must be truthful communication. We must learn to speak the truth so that conflicts can be resolved within the body of Christ.

## **2. The new self walks in controlled anger and forgiveness rather than sinful anger**

*“In your anger do not sin”*: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (4:26-27). Anger, like any other emotion, is God-given. But look at what's written: “Be angry, and yet do not sin.”

**Our Lord** physically assaulted the money-changers with a whip and turned over their tables. Scripture says of Him, “Zeal for your house consumes Me” (Jn. 2:15-17).

**Peter** cut off the man's ear on the night Jesus was arrested, he was rebuked by Jesus for his violence (Jn. 18:10-11).

What are the differences here? Both of them displayed their anger with violence, the Lord was angered, because the worship of God turned to the business of men; it was righteous anger. Peter was selfishly trying to keep Christ from drinking the cup given Him by the Father, this is selfish anger. (Mt. 26:39).

But we have to be careful with anger in relationships. It's easy to cross the line from righteous anger to selfish anger and thus to sin. But notice the next very important command: “do not let the sun go down on your anger.” Be angry, but don't sin. Be angry, but don't hold onto it.

### **3. The new self replaces selfishness with giving (4:28).**

Two lifestyles; one lifestyle is about taking; the other lifestyle is about giving! *“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor and share with the one who has need”* (4:28). The old self looks out only for its own comfort and satisfaction, but the child of God gives as freely as he receives and brings glory to God.

### **4. The new self replaces destructive speech with constructive speech (4:29).**

*“Do not let any harmful talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”* (4:29)

*“Harmful talk”* includes: mockery, gossip, slander, blaming, and destructive criticism. Words whose purpose is to wound, not heal, must be put away. We are not just to hold our tongue, but we are to speak kind words that build up the other person at his point of need; and not because he deserves it, but because our God is gracious, and thus we are to be gracious in our speech.

### **5. The new self lives after The Spirit of God and gets rid of all evil – Eph 4: 30-32**

*“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, clamor and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”* (4:31-32).

Behaviours such as; *bitterness, wrath, clamor, slander, and malice*; are not acceptable to the Spirit of Christ who lives in us, and **we must put them off**:

*Bitterness* is about self, my pain, and my hurt, what he/she did to me. Bitterness kills our spirit; it kills our relationship with God and men. Bitterness will keep us from the joy of the Lord, bitterness only hurts us.

*Wrath or rage* refers to any attitude, often with the purpose of revenge. Proper anger attacks the problem, not the person. We need to get rid of any sinful anger.

*Clamor* means fighting with loud words, yelling, screaming or crying.

*Slander* means speaking against someone to another, trying to damage the person's reputation.

*Malice* is hatred that leads to revenge and the desire to see him/her brought down.

We must **put off** all these actions of the old self that grieve the Holy Spirit and in their place, **we put on** the behaviours of the new self that reflect God's kindness, compassion and forgiveness. God has forgiven us in Christ, so we are to forgive other people, and one another. Let us follow His example.

True forgiveness is like God's forgiveness -- it chooses to forget and not to ever bring it up again. That is what our God does with our sins. He tosses them into the sea of forgetfulness. Let us always ask the question "WWJD?" "What would Jesus do? Focussing on what He has done for

us, then we will be able to walk worthy of His calling, walking in holiness and righteousness.

People who display the ‘P’ plate on their cars are already qualified drivers; they have already passed their driving test, but are not experienced drivers; they still have a lot to learn and are learning to be what they already are, qualified drivers. As Christians always wear ‘P’ plate. We wear it until the day of the coming of the Lord. None of us is perfect: we all need things to learn every day.

We must put off the old self, and put on the new self that make us look like Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Be like God, be holy as the Lord our God is holy. Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

### **3. Walk in Love**

#### **Ephesians 5:1-17**

Ephesians can be viewed as two half sections. Chapters 1-3 describe what God has done for us in Christ. Chapters 4-6 describe what we are to do in response to what God has done for us.

Paul continues to exhort Christians to walk in a manner worthy of their calling (cf. 4:1). Having described the need to walk in unity and in purity, **he now urges us to walk in love and imitate God** *“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Eph 5:1-2)*

Walking in love is the basis of our Christian life. Because we are children of God, we ought to imitate our Father. God our Father is love.

**The walk in love should be evident in three areas of our lives; love for God and imitation of God, love for His Church and love for the lost.**

*1. We walk in love for God, imitate Him and obey His commands.*

*“Be imitators of God”*. Be like God. I love the simplicity of this verse. But to imitating God is unthinkable. He is holy, He is perfect! How could we imitate God?

Apostle Paul said “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). He is telling us “Look to Jesus, and you will see God the Father and imitate your Father”. We imitate God’s characters, as revealed in His beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ. And we do this by walking in love *as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God* (v. 2).

How Jesus the Son Loved His Father? Paul compares Christ’s sacrifice on the cross to the Old Testament “sweet-smelling aroma” sacrifices that were presented at the altar before the Lord (Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:9).

The idea behind *“sweet-smelling aroma”* is simply that the sacrifice is well-pleasing to God. Christ is seen as a pleasing sacrifice unto the Lord. At His baptism, God the Father said, *“This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased”* (Matt 3:17). Our Lord Jesus said: *“I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me”* (John 14:31).

We look to Jesus as *the burnt offering* that pictures His complete devotion and obedience to God, and walk in love to God by obeying His commands.

Our Lord Jesus said *“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love”* (John 14:23-24; 15: 10)

## ***2. We walk in love to the Church by following Jesus’s Example.***

*“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless”* (Eph 5:25-27)

We walk in love by giving ourselves up to God for the church — becoming sacrifices to God “a sweet-smelling aroma”. Our Lord Jesus said: *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command”* (John 15:12-14)

Apostle John said: We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death (1 John 3:14). “If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? “ (1 John 4:20)

### ***3. We walk in love to the Lost by following Jesus's Example.***

We look to Jesus as *the peace offering* that pictures Him making peace between sinners and God through His death. "For He Himself is our peace ... making peace through His blood shed on the cross" (Eph. 2:14 & Col 1:20)

Look to Jesus as He spoke with the Samaritan women. The Samaritan woman said to him, "*You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?*" For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.*"

Our Lord Jesus broke the barrier between Jews and Gentiles and brought peace to her and all of her town. The people of Samaria said to the woman, "*We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world*" (John 4).

The ability to love this way is not natural, but it is the supernatural work of God in us! Friends this is our hope in God, that the Holy Spirit puts this love in our hearts as the Bible says: "*And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us*" (Romans 5:5)

So let us walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour, following in His steps and obeying God's command. Let us love His Church, and pray and reach out for the lost to come to enjoy the grace of God as we do.

## 4. Walk in Light

*“Walking in the light”* is to follow our Lord Jesus, who said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (John 8:12). The Bible says in Isaiah 2:5 *“O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.”*

*“Walking in the light”* also indicates progress, growing in holiness and maturing in the faith as we follow our Lord who is *“The true light that gives light to every man”* (John 1:9). The apostle John says, *“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7)

1. **The walk in light is calling us to remember our state without Christ and our state now with Christ.**

**Before coming to Christ, we were once in "darkness".** *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light”* (Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5).

Yes we were in darkness, but now we are in the light. As Christians, we experienced the radical transformation of the Holy Spirit of God, who saves us out of sin and enables us to walk in the light of Christ’s new life. God has given us a new nature, and we are to live and walk as children of light.

When we walk in the light, we cannot walk in darkness. Sin is left in the shadows as we let our light “shine before men” (Matt 5:16).

We walk in the light, because the grace of God our Father who “*qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*” (Col 1: 12-14).

## **2. The walk in light is calling us to be living testimonies to others.**

It is God’s plan for us to become more like Christ and become living prove of the light of God (1 Thessalonians 4:3). **Benjamin Franklin** writes in his autobiography about his efforts to convince the citizens of Philadelphia to light the streets at night. His words didn’t work. He bought an attractive lamp and placed it on a long bracket the front of his house. Each evening as darkness descended, he switched on the light. His neighbours and passersby soon found the light helped them walking at night on the street. Soon others placed light in front of their homes, and eventually the city council recognized the need for having well-lighted streets.

But, it is not just enough to walk in the light; we are light. Our Lord said: “I am the Light of the World”, and “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt 5:14-16).

Imagine yourself like **a mobile living light post**. What a difference that would make on our streets, in our homes, at school, and in church. When we walk as light, we point others to Christ. We are to live out the Light of God's truth in every moment of life!

### 3. **The walk in light is calling us to expose the darkness.**

Light makes manifest whatever is in the darkness. We don't have to go on a campaign against darkness. All we must do is let our light shine! By shining the light of God's righteousness, goodness, and truth into the darkness

"Goodness, righteousness and truth" are the "fruit" expected from us as "children of light" Eph 5:9. When we walk in the light, we not only produce such fruit, but also find out what is acceptable to the Lord. We put every thought, word, and action to the test? (Ep 5:10; cf Ro 12:1-2).

Our life as Christians should always be preaching a sermon, should always be exposing the surrounding darkness, and should always be extending this invitation to the world around us: ***“Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light”*** (Eph 5:14).

This is the voice of light speaking to those who are sleeping in darkness and lying in spiritual death. The light calls them to life. If they answer the invitation, Christ will shine on them and give them light and will be a light for others as well.

What do others see in our life? Is it a life that reflects the light of Christ and His glorious Gospel? Sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where everything seems to be against us. We look to ourselves and we wonder how we can shine as children of light to others? We may think that we are not able to be light to the world? This is the word of the Lord to each one of us: ***“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, ’ says the LORD Almighty”*** (Zech 4:6)

In spite of all odds, we can be like David before Goliath. Goliath depended on his strength and his weapons, but David trusted the Lord. David was a living testimony to the light of God, and that was crystal clear when he said to Goliath;

*“You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”* (1 Sam 17)

We may ask; how can we be sure to carry out our role as "the children of light"? This is where the "walk in wisdom" comes in.

## **5. Walk in wisdom**

### **Eph 5:15-21**

*“Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise”*

Here is a call for believers to walk with their eyes open. It is to live in the light of our position as God’s children. **We need to look down to see where we are putting our feet, and look ahead to see where our paths are leading us.**

**The walk of wisdom is calling us to do three things;**

1. To redeem the time (5:16)
2. To understand God’s will and obey it (5:17)
3. To be filled with the Spirit of God (5:18-21)

To "*redeem the time*" is to make use of every opportunity that God has given us to do what is pleasing to Him, "*Making the best use of the time, because the days are evil*". Life is short and how we use our time matters, because "*The days are evil*". Satan wants to control the whole world under his dominion, and leads people away from the knowledge of God and his love. As Christians we must use every opportunity to bring the good news of God's love to people around us. The day of Grace will soon close, the coming of the Lord is near, Let us redeem our time and serve God as we have the light of the day (John 9).

Paul goes on to say "*Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is*". The walk of wisdom is calling us to discern God's will and obeying it. Wisdom is found in knowing God's will and obey it. Wisdom isn't knowledge; it's the correct application of knowledge. Wisdom will keep us out of trouble, help us avoid danger, and will help us make the right decisions in life (Remember the wise and foolish builders –Matt 7:24-29)

**The walk of wisdom is calling us to be filled with the Spirit** "*Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to wickedness. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*"

"*Be filled with the Spirit*" is God's command and He expects us to obey. What is "the filling of the Spirit"? There are four ministries of the Spirit of God which we experienced once and for all when we became Christians.

N	The Ministries of the Spirit	The Definition and Significance
1	The Baptism of the Spirit	This is the work of the Spirit which incorporates the believer in the Body of Christ ( 1 Cor 12:13)
2	The Indwelling of and the seal of the Spirit	This is the seal of the Spirit, when He takes His residence in us when we believed in Jesus as our saviour and Lord (Eph 1:13-14)
3	The Anointing of the Spirit	The Spirit Himself is the anointing, who reminds and teaches us the things of the Lord (1 John 2:27 ; John 14)
4	The Deposit of the Spirit	The Spirit in us is the deposit that God has given us to guarantee our glorious inheritance in Christ (Eph 1:14)

Everyone who is in Christ automatically has the baptism, the seal of the Spirit, the indwelling, the anointing and the earnest. But “*the filling of the Spirit*” is different. It is an experience we should enjoy every day. It has nothing to do with contents or quantity, as though we are empty vessels that need a required amount of spiritual fuel to keep going.

**Paul is urging us to be filled with the Spirit instead of being drunk with wine. The Bible does not condemn** the use of wine, but it does condemn its abuse. The use of wine as a medicine is recommended (Prov 31:6; 1 Tim 5:23). But the abuse of wine is forbidden under the following circumstances; One when it leads to excess (Prov 23: 29-35); and two when it hurts a Christian’s testimony in the community (1 Cor 10:31).

When we compare and contrast the two states, we see why the Apostle Paul links them in this way. **First, there are two similarities.** In both conditions, the person is under a power

outside himself. In the case of wine, the power of intoxicating liquor; in the other case the power of the Spirit of God. In the both conditions, the person is enthusiastic. On the Day of Pentecost, the fervency produced by the Spirit of God was mistaken for that produced by a new wine (Acts 2: 13).

**Secondly, there are two contrasts.** In the case of drunkenness, the moral behaviour is affected and evil things might happen. The Spirit's filling never produces such things. In the case of drunkenness, there is loss of self control. But the fruit of the Spirit's filling is self control (Gal 5:23).

In the Bible "*Filled*" means "*controlled by*". "They ... were filled with wrath" (Luke 4:28) means were "*controlled by wrath*" and for that reason tried to kill Jesus. "*They were filled with envy*" means that they were controlled by envy and opposed the ministry of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:45). To be "*filled with the Spirit*" means to be controlled by the Spirit in our minds, wills and emotions.

**Q: How then can a believer be filled with the Spirit?** "*Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is*". The walk of wisdom is calling us to discern God's will and obey it. Wisdom is found in knowing God's will and obeying it. When the Word of God dwells in us richly (Col 3:16), we obey it, and putting off our old self, yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, surrendering our will to Him. We will be filled with the Spirit.

Apostle Paul describes three kinds of evidence of being filled with the Spirit (5:18-21);

1. One indication is singing praises.
2. Another indication is giving thanks.

3. A third indication is submitting to one another in the fear of God

Paul said nothing about miracles or tongues, or other special manifestations. He stated that if each Christian is controlled by the Spirit, he is joyful, thankful, and submissive. We should desire always to be filled with the Spirit, but only for the glory of God, not for our own glory.

Let us then hear God's call and walk in wisdom with our eyes open.

Let us **look down to see where we are putting our feet**, and look ahead to see where our paths are leading us.

Let us redeem the time, understand God's will, obey it and be filled with the Spirit of God, singing praises, giving thanks and submitting to one another in the fear of God. Amen.

## **6. Walk in Harmony**

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

In this section Apostle Paul admonished three groups of Christians about how they could have harmony in their relationships- *husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and employees*. Life in Christ is all about relationships, and **the key** to harmony in our relationships is learning to submit to one another in the LORD "*Submitting to one another in the fear of God*" (Eph 5: 21).

In our relationships as Christians; we must think about the good of the other person. In each relationship we submit to the Lord and demonstrate our obedience to Him. Everybody in

every relationship has a role of submission and corresponding responsibility.

Submission begins when I consider your situation before I deal with my own. It is yield to obey each other because we fear God. Fear of the Lord is hatred for sin and love for righteousness. Yielding to God and others means that;

***I. Husband love your wife, and wife follow your husband***  
*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:22-25)*

***II. Children obey your parents, and parents gently discipline your children***  
*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:1-4)*

***III. Employees serve your boss faithfully; employers seek welfare of your employees***  
*“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him” (Eph 6:5-9).*

## **Christ Teaches A Lesson on Relationships (5:25-32)**

Paul uses the relationship of Christ to the church as a model of our relationships to each other.

### **Q1: What is the relationship of Christ to the church?**

**First** of all, Christ loves the church unconditionally and fully submitted to her needs. **Second**, He redeemed the church at infinite cost to Him but as a free gift to us. **Thirdly**, Christ becomes our Head and one with us.

### **Q2: What is the church's relationship to Christ?**

**First**, the church's relationship to Christ is one of submission, because He is our Lord and the Head of his Church. **Second**, the church and Christ are to be one "*We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*" **Thirdly**, the body of Christ must reflect the love of God to one another. Our Lord Jesus said in John 13:34-35 to His disciples. He said, "I command you to love one another just as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples when you have this love one for another."

### **Q3: How did Jesus demonstrate submission in his own life?**

**Submission is certainly in conflict with our concept of greatness.** When you see Christ the Lord on his knees at the Last Supper washing the feet of his disciples, and as he is on his way to the cross, you are forced to step back and take another look at this idea of submission. It is no wonder that Paul uses God's submission to our needs and our submission to Christ as a backdrop and an example for our need to submit to one another. Let us see how?

1. ***The supreme head of the church is in total submission to the needs of his body.*** Christ is the supreme head of his body, which is his church. Christ is the saviour of the body. The head and saviour are one and the same and here lies the secret to submission. The head of the church is so caught up in the needs of his body that he loses sight of himself and his pain on the cross and cries out, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Now that is extreme submission in an effort to solving our relational problem with God!

It is God, the one who has the upper hand that chooses to fully submit to the needs of those with whom he has chosen to have a relationship.

2. ***God had to be totally submissive to our needs and deny himself, that He might totally meet his immeasurable need to extend His love, mercy and justice so that the relationship could flourish.*** For Christ to deny his love for us and refuse to submit himself to be crucified for us, would be deny his very nature and character; the very essence of his being. After all God is love.

3. ***It is in this profound mystery that God in Christ becomes one with us. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."*** God cannot be one with us without fully submitting himself to the needs of his people. As Paul speaks of the relationship of Christ and his church, he calls it a "***profound mystery.. Christ loved the Church***" (Eph 5:32)

Here is a true union between Christ and his people; it is no fiction or dream of a heated imagination. Sin separated us from God, but Christ joins us to himself in a union more real than any other in the whole world.

God has so totally given himself to us that Paul said, "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another-- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Rom 7:4) Paul sees us becoming one with Christ upon becoming a Christian.

It is in this relationship that we are encouraged to submit to one another just as Christ our Lord and our God submitted His very being to us.

***Q4: What do I do as Christian, when my boss, spouse, parent or child is not a Christian?***

This is the **BIG QUESTION**

Let us hear what Apostle Peter says to all Christians: ***“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority ... Show proper respect to everyone ... Servant-employees- in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters- employers- not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh ... To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps ... Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives ... Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers”*** (1 P 2: 13,18,21 & 3: 1-7)

In Christ we have a new attitude towards our husbands, wives and children, employers and employee. We no longer

serve out of fear; we no longer have a relationship that is based on the world or on our culture, but we have the love of Christ in our hearts that reflected in our relationships in the family, in the home, and in the work place, based on the relationship Christ has towards us and vice versa.

## 7. Walk In Victory

### 6:10-24

Apostle Paul is coming to the close of his letter to the Ephesians. He is us calling us as soldiers of Christ to "***walk in victory***". Christian life is not a playground, but a battlefield. Satan and his demonic forces are committed to hinder the work of Christ in us and through us. In our own strength we are no match for the devil. So Apostle Paul is calling us to **be strong in the LORD; put on the whole armour of God and know the strategy of the enemy**, that we may be able to stand against the devil's schemes.

#### **Q1: What is the strategy of Satan?**

The Bible describes Satan as a **Serpent, as a lion, as a ruler, and as the accuser**. If we know Satan's strategy against us, we will know how to deal with it. The Old Testament revealed to us about four persons who had a direct confrontation with Satan "***Eve, Job, David and Joshua the high priest***". From their experiences we see the targets Satan aims at in our life, the weapons he uses to attack us, the purposes that he wants to achieve; and the defences God has provided for us.

**As a serpent**, Satan's attacks aim at our mind as he did with **Eve**. Lies are the weapon he used. His purpose is to make us ignorant of God's Will and disobey it (Genesis 3). But our defence is using the Word of God as our Lord Jesus did.

**As a Lion**, Satan's attacks aim at our body as he did with **Job** (Job 1 & 2). Sufferings are the weapon he used. His purpose is to make us impatient with God's Will. But our defence is the imparted grace of God.

**As a Ruler** of this world, (The world is not the universe or peoples that God created but refers to the whole value-system which dominates society and is contrary to the ways of God), Satan's attacks aim at our will as he did with **King David**. Pride is the weapon he used. His purpose is to make us independent of God's Will (2 Chronicles 21:1-8, 14-19). But our defence is to rely on the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

**As the Accuser**, Satan's attacks aim at our conscience, as he did with **Joshua the high priest**. Accusations are the weapon he used. His purpose is to bring an indictment by God's Will (Zacharias 3.) But our defence is the interceding Son of God.

**Satan as a Serpent** his attacks do not always come in open and easily observed forms. They are usually subtle and crafty. He is the deceiver, a tempter, and the father of all lies. He did not approach Eve in his true nature; he used the serpent and disguises himself as an angle of light. He approached Eve and deceived her mind with his lies and made her to disobey

God's command. Apostle Paul warned us saying *"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ"* (2 Cor 11:3)

Let us go back to the Garden of Eden and notice the steps Satan took in getting Eve to believe his lie.

(1) He questioned God's Word. "Did God really say; you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" (2) He denied God's Word. "You will not surely die," (3) He substituted his own lie. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:1-5)

Satan tempted Eve with greater privilege: to be like God! Satan's lie "You will be like God" still motivates and controls much of our civilization today. Man is seeking to pull himself up by his own bootstraps.

Eve tempted with the desire to be like God and believed Satan's lies. She saw the penalty for disobedience God as presented by the Serpent did not seem as harsh, therefore, Eve could consider forsaking God's will and obeying Satan's will.

Satan attacks God's Word because God's Word reveals God's will. Always Satan attacks our mind to make us ignorant of God's will. If Satan can make us ignorant of God's will, he will rob us of all the glorious blessing God has planned for our life.

So what is our defense? Our wisdom is no match for Satan's cunning. Our only defense is the inspired Word of God. We must use God's Word. Our mind should become like a "spiritual computer." It should be so full with Scripture that when we face a decision or a temptation, we automatically remember the God's Word to relate that particular situation. If Satan uses the Bible to promote his own lies, as he did with our Lord Jesus in the wilderness, let us do what Jesus did. Use the Scripture saying IT IS WRITTEN.

Satan **as a lion**, he devours but as a serpent, he deceives. If we resist his deceit, then he will attack our bodies as he did with **Job**. By God's permission, Satan attacked Job's body and all that related to it. First, Satan attacked Job's body through the circumstances around him, and Job lost his ten children, his wealth, his health and the favour of his wife, friends, and neighbour.

When Job looked around he saw his situation was painful. When he looked in, it was more painful. And when he looked up, it seemed that God had forsaken him. But Job maintained his faith in God and was honoured at the end.

Satan uses sufferings as his weapon to make us impatient with God's will. James 5:11 says "*As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy*". This verse indicates that Satan's purpose was to try to get Job to be impatient and give up. Job did become impatient with himself

and his critical friends, but he never lost his faith in God. Although he did not understand what God was doing, Job knew that he could trust God and that God would vindicate him in the end.

*Q: What should we do when Satan attacks our bodies with suffering and tries to make us impatient with God's will?*

Job said: "Though He slays me, I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15). Remember what happened to Paul, when Satan attacked him with "thorn in the flesh" that buffeted him enough to make him pray three times for healing. God did not answer Paul's prayer, but God did meet Paul's need. "My Grace is sufficient for you". It is the imparted grace of God that gives us victory when Satan attacks the body with suffering. The imparted grace of God is the only weapon that can defeat Satan, and that grace can be found only in "the God of all grace".

**As a Ruler**, a prince of this world, Satan's goal is always to get to our will and control it as he did with King David. If we want to ask: "What was David sin? And what part did Satan play in it? The answer in 1 Chronicles 21: 1-19 "Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel".

David was feeling important when Satan approached him with the suggestion that he number the people. At that time King David won many victories, and Satan knew that David was feeling victorious and important, and he used these

victories to inflated David's ego with pride as his weapon to make him independent of God's will.

Pride means that we act independently of God. One of the most important lessons we need to learn is that we cannot be independent of God. We need God's provisions to sustain us physically, and we need God's will and God's Word to sustain us spiritually. Success, the praise of men, and even the blessing of God can so inflate the ego that we think we can get along without God.

Pride is such a strong weapon, and Satan is such a strong adversary, that only a stronger power can give us victory. That power comes from God Himself by His spirit when we humble ourselves before him and surrender ourselves to him that he may control our will and enable us to overcome Satan attacks. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

**As the Accuser**, Satan attacked Joshua's heart with accusations to bring an indictment by God's Will.

The prophet Zechariah had a vision of courtroom: where there God is the Judge, Joshua the high priest is the defendant, and Satan is the prosecutor trying to prove Joshua guilty. Satan appears to have a case, because Joshua is wearing filthy garments and the high priest was always to wear clean clothes. That vision was at a time when the nation of Israel had sinned against the Lord. This explains why Joshua's priestly garments were dirty. He represented the people before

God, and the people were sinful. Satan accused the high priest, as the one to blame.

Satan wants us to feel guilty and experience regret and remorse, to keep us focus our attention on ourselves and our sins. He does not want us to look at Our Saviour Jesus Christ and what he did for us.

A feeling of guilt and shame is a good thing if it comes from the Spirit of God. If we listen to the devil, it will only lead to regret and remorse and defeat. Satan wants us to feel guilty. Our Heavenly Father wants us to know that we are forgiven. Through the interceding Son of God and because of what he did on the cross we are forgiven. This was the message of that vision.

*We read “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebukes you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.” Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by”.*

We have now met the four persons in the Old Testament who had a personal confrontation with Satan. **How do we deal with the devil the stubborn adversary?**

## **The Bible says:-**

- 1. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**
- 2. Do not give the devil a foothold.**
- 3. Put on the full Armor of God.**

## **The Full Armour of God**

The Full Armor of God is our spiritual defence against attacks by Satan and his demonic forces. It consists of six pieces that seem invisible, but it's just as real, and when used properly and worn daily, it provides solid protection against the enemy's attack. We must take up the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand when the day of evil comes. The day of evil refers to any time when Satan comes against us like a flood. Satanic opposition seems to occur in waves, advancing and receding.

The good news is that none of these six pieces of the Full Armor of God require power on our part. Our Lord Jesus Christ has already won our victory through his sacrificial death on the cross. We only have to put on the effective armor he has given us. Let us look at each piece of the Full Armor of God step by step and see the importance of wearing our spiritual armor daily and how it protects us against Satan's attacks.

### **Belt of Truth**

The Belt of Truth is the first piece of the Full Armor of God. In the ancient world, a soldier's belt not only kept his armor in place, but it might be wide enough, as a girdle, to protect his kidneys and other vital organs. Certainly we must

be faithful in holding **the truth of God's Word**, but it is necessary for the truth to hold us.

In John 17:17 Our Lord prayed to the Father for us "*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth*". His promises, His commands, His word—they are all truth, plain and simple. We must apply it to our daily lives. Our Lord Jesus told us "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6,) and He called Satan the "father of lies". Deception is one of Satan's oldest tactics. As we test everything by the truth of God, we find strength and protection in the combat. Thus, the truth of God's Word shines its light of integrity into our lives and holds together all of our spiritual defences.

## **The Breastplate of Righteousness**

The Breastplate of Righteousness is the second piece of the Full Armor of God. It guards our heart. A wound to the chest can be fatal. That's why ancient soldiers wore a breastplate covering their heart and lungs.

Our heart is subject to the wickedness of this world, but our protection is the Breastplate of Righteousness, which is the righteousness of God that clothed us when we believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot become righteous through our own good work. When Jesus died on the cross, his righteousness was credited to all who believe in him, through justification. God sees us as sinless because of what his Son did for us (2 Cor 5:21).

But we must also manifest integrity and uprightness in our personal life. Words are no defence against Satan's accusation, but good life is. Let us reflect our Christ-given righteousness into our daily life; and let it cover and protect us. It will keep our heart strong and pure for God.

## **The Gospel of Peace**

The Gospel of Peace is the third piece of the Full Armor of God. It talks about fitting our feet with the shoes of peace that comes from the Gospel of Grace. Land was rocky in the ancient world, requiring strong protective footwear.

On a battlefield or near a fort, the enemy might scatter traps such as sharp stones to slow an army down. In the same way, Satan scatters traps for us as we're trying to spread the gospel.

Our safety and protection is to be found in following the beautiful feet of the Saviour on the mountains, bearing glad tidings and proclaiming peace (Isa 52:7, Rom 10:15).

We can bypass Satan's obstacles when we remember how God loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

Fitting our feet with the readiness of the Gospel of Peace is described in 1 Peter 3:15 like this: "... always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear ..." Sharing the gospel of salvation ultimately brings peace between God and men (Romans 5:1).

## **The Shield of Faith**

The Shield of Faith is the fourth piece of the Full Armor of God. No defensive armor was as important as a shield. It pushes away arrows, spears, and swords. Our Shield of Faith guards us against one of Satan's deadliest weapons, doubt. Satan shoots doubt at us when God does not act immediately or visibly. Faith here is firm confidence in the LORD and in His Word. Our Shield of Faith sends Satan's flaming arrows of doubt harmlessly to the ground.

When temptations burn, doubts assail, when shipwreck threatens, faith looks up and says, "Lord, You are My shield, in You I take my refuge". We keep our shield held high, confident in the knowledge that God provides, God protects, and God is faithful to his children. Our shield holds because of the One our faith is in, our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **The Helmet of Salvation**

The Helmet of Salvation is the fifth piece of the Full Armor of God. The helmet God provides is salvation. The Helmet of Salvation protects our thoughts and minds. It is a crucial piece of armor. We cannot survive without it. No matter how hot the battle, we are not fearful, since we know that Our Lord Jesus secured for us salvation and won the victory for us "*Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ*" (2 Cor 2:14).

1 Corinthians 2:16 tells us that believers "have the mind of Christ." Even more interesting, 2 Corinthians 10:5 explains that those who are in Christ have divine power to "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the

knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Assurance of salvation preserves us from retreat or surrender, "If God is for us, who can be against us" (Rom 8:31).

## **The Sword of the Spirit**

The Sword of the Spirit is the sixth piece of the Full Armor of God. It is the only offensive weapon in the Full Armor of God with which we can strike against Satan. This weapon represents the Word of God. "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12, NIV)

Our Lord Jesus Christ used this sword when He was tempted in the desert by Satan. Three times He quoted the Word of God to resist the devil, setting an example for us. Satan's tactics have not changed, so the Sword of the Spirit, the Bible, is still our best defence. Commit the Word to your memory and to your heart.

## **Prayer**

Prayer is not mentioned as a part of the armor; but standing strong also requires it. It is the atmosphere in which the soldier of Christ must live and breathe. Watchful prayer, not just for one's self, but for all Christians, even Paul asked prayers for him that he might be bold as an ambassador in chains as he makes known the mystery of the gospel "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." (Ephesians 6:18)

Every smart soldier knows they must keep the line of communication open to their Commander. Satan hates it when we pray. He knows prayer strengthens us and keeps us alert to his deception. Paul cautions us to pray for others as well. With the Full Armor of God and gift of Prayer, we can be ready for whatever the enemy throws at us.

Finally, Apostle Paul gives the Ephesians a brief explanation concerning Tychicus, and the letter concludes with a prayer for peace to the brethren, love with faith, and grace for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in all sincerity.

## **Index of the Book**

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Author's Preface</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. The Blessings of Grace</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. The Greatness of Grace</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3. The Mystery of Grace</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4. The Call of Grace</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>5. Walk in Unity</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6. Walk in Holiness</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>7. Walk in Love</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>8. Walk in Light</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>9. Walk in Wisdom</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>10. Walk in Harmony</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>11. Walk in Victory</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>12. The Author's Publications</b>	<b>97</b>

## ***The Authors' Publications***

### **The Following 8 Books are in English**

1. Questions Frequently Asked by Young People
2. Sitting at the Table with a Muslim Friend
3. Sitting at the Table with a Buddhist Friend
4. Sitting at the table with a Hindu Friend
5. Sitting at the Table with a Jewish Friend
6. Keyes to What Every Christian should Know
7. What Will Happen When The Lord Jesus Returns
8. The Call of Grace in the Letter of Ephesians

### **The Following 28 Books are in Arabic**

1. A Guide to the Ministry of the Church
2. The Message of the Song of Song
3. The Sacrifices of the Old T in the Light of the N.T
4. The Feasts of the Old T in the Light of the N.T.
5. The Tabernacle of the Old T in the Light of the N.T.
6. Psychological Problems in the Light of Scriptures
7. The Message of the Book of Revelation
8. Stop Anger and Enjoy Living
9. Be Conformed to the Likeness of His Son
10. Know Your Enemy
11. Our Father In Heaven

12. Stop Worrying and Enjoy Life
13. Sons of the Kingdom
14. Christ Is Risen
15. The Coming of the Lord in Glory and Majesty
16. Heaven of Glory and Hell of Fire
17. Build a Joyous Marriage
18. The Da Vinci Code and the Lies of the Anti-Christ
19. The Book of Daniel in the Light of the N. T.
20. The Book of Ruth in the light of the New T.
21. The Message of the Thessalonians letters
22. The School of Suffering (the Book of Job)
23. The Wonders of The Christmas story
24. The Wonders of the Cross
25. The Wonders of Providence in the Book of Easter
26. The Wonders of Grace in the Book of Ephesians
27. Egypt In the Bible Prophecy
28. It Is Well With My Soul

## **The Call of Grace “*An Overview on Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians*”**

**Dr. Botros Botrosdief**

---

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the most encouraging, instructive and inspiring book in the Bible. The passages which describe God’s great plan of salvation reach to the highest places in heaven, and the passages which instruct us on how we are to live address in great detail our lives here on earth.

If we study this great letter carefully, we will find great benefit for our soul, and when we share its message to others we will feed them the rich food of God’s Word. Let us then enjoy this great letter.

**Dr. Botros authored 36 books, 8 in English and 28 in Arabic. Currently Dr. Botros is ministering at**

**Mernda and Whittlesea Presbyterian Church**

**Come and Join us every Sunday**

**9:15 am @ Mernda, 1345 Plenty Rd**

**10:30 am @ Whittlesea, 10 Lime St**

**1:00 pm @ Mernda, the Arabic Service**

**الكنيسة الإنجيلية العربية بميرندا الساعة الواحدة ظهراً كل يوم احد**

**1345 Plenty Rd, Mernda**

**For inquiry call 0401967468**