

# Ephesians 15-01-2014

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Date: 15 January 2014

Preacher: David Jackman

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

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Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. To ask yourself. To ask yourself. To ask yourself.

[ 2 : 40 ] say, what does this passage actually mean? Why does it say it like this, in this place to these people? Which is a question of significance, which gets you under the surface.

And that then begins to open up the application, so how are we going to do what the intention of the writer is in teaching his readers these things? If you want to think of it in another way you could say it's the exegesis of the passage, drawing out what it says, the exposing of the significance of the passage and then the application to the will of the heart of the passage.

And Dr. Lloyd-Jones used to talk about that in his book *Preaching and Preachers*. He talks about the truth going through the mind to the heart to activate the will. And really every sermon and every study we do should have that focus. What is there here for the mind?

What does it mean? How does that impact the heart? What is the significance for my life? And how is it going to work out in my life? How does it energise my will so that I put the word in the spirit strength into practice?

So mind, heart, will. And that's, I think, a good little model to follow in any sort of Bible study, and I'll try and follow it tonight as we look together at Ephesians.

[ 3 : 58 ] The other principle at the beginning is that the Scripture interprets the Scripture. So I don't have to come to Ephesians trying to interpret it.

I want the Scripture to interpret its own meaning. To me, this is of course the great principle of the Reformation, that every individual believer, given the gift of the Spirit, can be illuminated by God to understand the word of God.

Scripture itself is the interpreter of Scripture. And therefore, when I come to a passage like Ephesians, or a section like Ephesians, I want to ask myself, first of all, well, does the Scripture give me any help in coming to this letter in a way that will open it up for me?

It is a letter written to the Ephesians, verse 1 says, to the saints who are in Ephesus. Though you may have a footnote in a modern version that says some of the old manuscripts don't have in Ephesus, in verse 1.

And there has been some discussion as to whether this really was a letter to the Ephesians, because if you look at chapter 1, verse 15, Paul says, for this reason, because I've heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints.

[ 5 : 12 ] Well, he was in Ephesus for nearly three years. And if he's talking to the Ephesians, why does he say, I've heard about your love? If he was actually there for the longest period of settled ministry that we know about.

So I think what we've got to say here is that this is a letter that was written to the Ephesian church, but of course, Ephesus was the capital city of the whole of the province of Asia Minor.

There's a seat at the front if you'd like one. And the whole of the province of Asia Minor. And therefore, from Ephesus, all sorts of people would have heard the gospel.

We'll see this in a moment or two, because when we study the Acts of the Apostles, we find that it was a great center at which Paul preached the gospel day by day, and it went out to the whole area. So I don't think there's any doubt that the church in Ephesus is involved here, but it's not just the little house churches in Ephesus. It's those churches in Hierapolis and Laodicea and Colossae, which were all in that area of the Lycus Valley.

[ 6 : 16 ] And so it's probably a widespread, rather more general letter in many ways, but to people who are living in this province in which Ephesus is the dominant city.

Now, where do we go to find out? Well, let's go to Acts 19. Let's find out what Ephesus is like, and we'll find it out from the Bible, so that the scripture will help us to interpret the scripture.

Paul is on his missionary journey. He comes to Ephesus, and it begins with him finding some disciples of John who have not yet really understood who Jesus is, and they need to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, which happens, and they then receive the Holy Spirit.

And after that, Paul enters the synagogue, and verse 8 of chapter 19, for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

[ 7 : 29 ] This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. So, Paul's usual customs start in the synagogue, three months there, doubtless some converts from that, but by and large, rejection.

And so he goes to an independent, secular lecture hall, probably in the lunch hour, when the lecturer Tyrannus wasn't using it, and so you have the first lunchtime services, and here he is speaking the word of God every day to anyone who will come and listen.

And Luke tells us that the word spread throughout the whole province of Asia as a result of that. Now, what happened gives us a feel of what life in Ephesus was like.

For example, verse 13, there were some itinerant Jewish exorcists who undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits. And you probably remember that the evil spirits won't recognize the use of the name because they don't know the Lord Jesus.

And the man in whom the evil spirits are dwelling leaps on them and overpowers them and they have to flee out of the house. Look at verse 17. And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, and fear fell upon them all.

[ 8 : 51 ] And the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. And many of whom were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who practiced magic arts fought their books together and burnt them in the sight of all.

And they counted the value and it came to 50,000 pieces of silver. That's 50,000 days' wages. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

Well now this fits in with what we know not only from scripture but elsewhere that Ephesus was a hotbed of occult religion. There are all sorts of spells and incantations, all sorts of magic forces at work.

These books that they burn are magic books, how to call up spirits, how to put curses on people.

The whole area was controlled by the religious life of the temple which was at the heart of the city of Ephesus, the great temple of Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians.

But not only of the Ephesians, it said that she was worshipped more than any other god other than the Roman emperor, and that was always by compulsion, but more than any other god in the Roman empire. So Diana, or Artemis as she's called, her temple right at the heart of Ephesian life, it was the centre of the financial prosperity, it was the centre of the tourist industry, everything really revolved around the temple of Diana and its occult worship practices.

[ 10 : 28 ] And this is the city into which Paul now comes, preaching the gospel of Christ. Not surprisingly, God accompanies the preaching with remarkable signs.

You see back there in verse 11, God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul. So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

Now that is extraordinary, there is nothing else like that in the Acts of the Apostles. Because Ephesus is a city that knows about magic. And Ephesus needs to know that there is a name that is stronger than any other name.

And Paul here does these extraordinary, I mean miracles are wonderful, but extraordinary miracles, in order that the name of Jesus may be seen to be more powerful than any other name amongst the people of that city.

Well, there is a riot, as you remember, because the temple trade declines. The silversmiths who make the little souvenirs that everybody bought from the temple. If people are not going to go to the temple now, and people are going to worship this unseen Jesus, then their trade is in jeopardy.

[ 11 : 39 ] And there is a riot, you remember, and in the end, Paul leaves, but he leaves behind a church which has been well taught by him for two to three years, and lots of little churches in the area around, which have been planted from his lunchtime ministry in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

Now, obviously you could spend a lot longer on that. My problem tonight is knowing what to say and what not to say, really, because there is so much you could say. But I think it helps us to see what the situation is.

See, put yourself into the shoes of one of the converts of Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Suppose you're a young man, and you hear what he says, and you go, you know, for several weeks every day to the lecture hall of Tyrannus, and you pick up this gospel about this Jesus Christ, and how this is the fulfillment of all the monotheistic tradition of Judaism coming to its peak in God himself revealing himself in human form.

And as the Holy Spirit opens your eyes, you come to faith in Christ. And you go home and you say to your parents, well, I'm not coming to the temple of Diana anymore.

She's just a fiction, just a creation of human minds. She, of course, had a huge statue, which they say was carved out of a meteorite that fell from the heavens, so she was thought to have come from heaven.

[ 13 : 05 ] And if you look at the secular evidence about Ephesus, you'll find that she was called the Queen of the Cosmos, and the Saviour of the World. Fascinating titles.

Now he's proclaiming a new Saviour, and a king over all the earth. And so you say, well, I'm not having anything to do with that, it's just pagan superstition. And before you know where you are, your father's going down the road to hire somebody to curse you, because our city depends upon this temple, it's the centre of everything.

We can't have you turning your back on this. You're a threat to our whole community, you and your friends who start to believe this nonsense. Now, if you're a young Christian, you've got to know, is there any power in that curse?

Can you actually be separated from Christ? Are you still vulnerable to these forces, these hostile powers? Or, does your new faith give you a strength and an ability to resist, and to grow, and to develop?

And it's something like that, you see, that is in the background of writing this letter to the Ephesians. Because, the letter picks up these very themes.

[ 14 : 22 ] So let's turn back to Ephesians. And what I would do myself, if I'm starting again to work on a book of the Bible, is obviously to read, read, and read again, but you wouldn't really feel you've got any money's worth if we read it through twice tonight and did nothing else.

So I'm going to presume that we've read it and that we know a bit about it, but that we want to sort of pick up the clues as we go. Now, the thing about reading the Bible is to read it with your antennae up.

That is to say, read it looking for the things you don't understand and the things that surprise you. The more you build your Bible study on what you think it was, why does it say that?

I wouldn't have put it like that. Why does it put it that way? The more we do it like that, the more you will find you get out of the Bible study. If you open it and say, oh Ephesians 1, I know that.

Oh yes, it's all the blessings we have in Christ. What comes next? So you're never going to get anywhere. So read it with your antennae up. Answer the questions. Think the thoughts. Now, you come to verse 3.

[ 15 : 22 ] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ Jesus with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. What's that mean?

I mean, it's a straightforward sentence, but where are these heavenly places? And what does it mean to be blessed in the heavenly places? Does it mean heaven?

Well, that's where Jesus is. He's ascended to heaven. Well, if our every spiritual blessing is in heaven, do we have it on earth or do we have to wait to get to heaven in order to receive it?

What are these heavenly places? If you look at other translations, you'll find it's sometimes translated to heavenless and that's a more literal translation.

But the other thing, of course, with any Bible book is to see what vocabulary in the book is used more in this book than in any other book. So if you've got a concordance, which I hope you do have in the back of your Bible or maybe Strong's exhausting concordance or somebody else's concordance, Young or whoever, if you've got a concordance, look up heavenless and you'll find that in Ephesians it's used more than in any other letter.

[16:39] Now, when you find something like that, that one particular book has some vocabulary in it that is distinctive to that book, you will find then that you're on to a bit of a clue as to what the distinctive ingredient is in terms of the message, in terms of the theme tune, in terms of where it's going.

So I would chase heavenlies, which of course I have done in studying it and let me just take you through, it's quite interesting. So we've got the heavenly places which is the source of every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Then in chapter 1 verse 20, the great power which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority.

Okay, well that seems like Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven. When does it occur next? Verse 6 of chapter 2, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Yes, but we're not in heaven at the moment. I mean it's a great joy to be here but if this was heaven it's a letdown, isn't it? We're not there yet but are we seated with him?

[17:52] Well, you may say positionally we are. We've been raised with Christ and so where Christ is we are and Christ who is our life will appear and we'll appear with him in glory. Okay, so perhaps that is what it means.

But what do we have here and now in this world? Well, chapter 3 verse 10 God's purpose is that through the church the manifold literally the many colored wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenless.

So who are these rulers and authorities? Angels, yes, certainly but are they simply the angels that are in heaven around the throne of God into the book of Revelation or is there more to it than that?

Well, you've probably already got ahead of me to the most famous reference to this which is chapter 6 verse 12 verse 12 for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over the present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

it can't mean heaven then, it can't mean the place where there can be no evil in the presence of God. These are forces which are fighting against God we're wrestling against them in the spiritual battle and the spiritual battle is being conducted in the heavenless.

[19:21] So clearly what Paul's interested in here is not a visible kingdom but an invisible context in which a spiritual warfare is being waged.

And what he wants these young Christians in Ephesus to know is that in that context there is one supreme name above every other name. There is one who has been exalted to the position of all authority and power, far above all rule and power and authority and dominion and every name that's named.

And that is the name of the Lord Jesus. And so what Paul is proclaiming is that Christ is supreme in this spiritual battle. We are all involved he says in the wrestling but it's not against flesh and blood. It's against the spiritual opposition that fights against the will of God and against the gospel in the spiritual realms. And in that realm Christ is utterly supreme over all those hostile forces.

So that when your father goes to get the curse from the wizard down the road that curse can have no power on you if you are in Christ. Which is why the letter begins I think with all these verses in chapter 1 1 to 14 that we read and I'm sure it struck you as we read it.

[20:39] That Christ comes in almost every verse and in nearly every verse it says either in Christ or through Christ. It's absolutely striking the way that happens.

An apostle of Christ Jesus to the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ notice the full title used twice in successive verses who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heaven of the Lord.

So this is going to be a letter then about Jesus and his exaltation and the fact that you can put your faith and confidence in the one who is exalted above all the hostile powers who has triumphed over them all.

And you are he says the faithful in Christ Jesus. He chose us in him verse 4 he predestined us in love for adoption through Christ verse 5 it's to the praise of his glorious grace because he's blessed us in the beloved verse 6 in him redemption verse 7 he made known to us the mystery of his will which he set forth in Christ verse 9 and then verse 10 the climax of the whole paragraph what is the mystery of his will a plan for the fullness of time now this is very important to unite all things in Christ things in heaven and things on earth that is what he describes in verse 9 as the mystery of God's will so the secret that has now been revealed because mystery doesn't mean a puzzle that you've got to solve it means something that you would never know if God had not revealed it to you a mystery is something where

God pulls back the curtains and he says look there it is and the mystery of his will that was hidden for ages and generations he's pulled back the curtain and he says look here it is it is that in Christ everything ultimately will come together in the fullness of time things in heaven things on earth everything under Jesus and what is the evidence for that well he's going to explain it in his prayer that comes later in this first chapter because the evidence for it is the mighty power by which he raised Jesus from the dead if you have a look at verses 19 and 20 and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all these authorities and powers now look at verse 22 and he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church which is his body the fullness of him who fills all in all it's magnificent isn't it so everything comes to its fulfillment in [ 23 : 32 ] Christ he's the purpose of the whole universe the whole of creation is by him and for him everything will come together under his feet and already the fact that he's been raised from the dead in the power of an endless life ascended to the right hand of the father seated in the heavenly glory already that means that everything is under his feet and that he is head over everything for his people the church now in some countries if we were talking like that we'd be standing on the seats clapping our hands and saying isn't that marvelous I mean we don't do that sort of thing here of course but it is marvelous isn't it it ought to move us this is what Christ has done for us my friends we're not caught up in some sort of minority religious group interest this is the purpose of the universe this is what it's all about this is what we're caught up in the great purposes of God and well he wants us to know just how great those purposes are in the Lord Jesus

Christ so that's what this first chapter is talking about and it's interesting that Paul not only teaches them but he prays for them because you see it's not just a matter of information for the head it's the heart being warmed it's the will being shaped to do God's will and that will only happen when we pray that's why he says you see I don't cease to give thanks to you verse 16 and I remember you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him having the eyes of your hearts enlightened that you may know what is the hope to which he's called you and what are the riches of his glorious inheritance and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power well there's a good bible study there isn't there when you get to that prayer there's a terrific amount to be unpacked there but you see what he's saying this is a wonderful thing isn't it that this is what

God has done for us in Christ and he is praying that they will understand it so let's pray for one another that we will know this not just know it in the sense of writing it in a notebook and giving our affirmation to it but know it in our hearts know it as the controlling factor of our lives knowing it as the thing that dictates how we look at our life day by day at work and at home and in the community so that we are really Christian it was John Wesley who said that he used to pray Lord cure me of my intermittent piety and make me thoroughly Christian and that's what this letter will do it will cure us of that sort of well sometimes I feel it sometimes I don't and make us thoroughly Christian because we see from God's word through God's spirit who Jesus really is and what the Lord Jesus has really accomplished and the fact that there is no power on earth or in the heavens in the heavenlies or anywhere else that can overcome his authority all things under his feet now that's the first strand let me suggest to you that there's another strand that's running parallel with it and that comes out in verses 11 to 14 of chapter 1 the book is often divided into two very neatly 1 to 3 4 to 6 and it's often said 1 to 3 is the doctrine and 4 to 6 is the practice and that's not wrong but it's not the last word on it because the practice is in 1 to 3 and the doctrine is in 4 to 6 as well but it's not wrong to look at it like that 1 to 3 is mainly doctrine 4 to 6 is mainly practice but let's just pick up this

second theme from verse 11 in him we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will so that we now who is we so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory in him you who is you also when you heard the word of the truth the gospel of salvation was sealed with the promised holy spirit

I want to suggest to you that we is the Jews and you are the gentiles and what Paul is saying is we who were the first believers in Christ those to whom Christ came he came to his own and his own received him not but those who did receive him were predestined according to the purpose of the loving will of God to be the first believers in Jesus and to hope in Christ first then he says you gentiles because of course most of the people that he's addressing are gentile converts you heard the word of the truth the gospel and you've been incorporated into this body of Christ now the we and the you is going to be really important when we come to chapter 2 chapter 2 explores how the salvation works in verses 1 to 10 famous passage I'm not going to dwell on that tonight but 2 1 to 10 at the personal level this is where you were when Christ found you this is what God has done for you in Jesus this is how you were to live as a result of it we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works so chapter 2 1 to 10 is a wonderful passage about the gospel by grace you're saved through faith and it's all about where you were how Christ has changed you and the implications of that but the second half of chapter 2 verses 11 to 22 is all about the corporate expression of that so it's not just you as an individual that's important we all come into the kingdom of heaven one by one it's a narrow gate you go through it as an individual repenting and believing but then we find we're members of the body of Christ he's the head and we're the body as the letter is going to teach us and the body is made up of Jews and Gentiles so just as he says at the beginning of chapter 2 you were dead in trespasses and sins so he says in verse 11 of chapter 2 therefore remember at one time you Gentiles in the flesh remember that you were separated from Christ and alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and you had no hope because you were without

[ 30 : 01 ] God in the world but now in Christ Jesus you've been brought near so in chapter 2 1 to 10 you were dead in sins but God raised you up to life chapter 2 verse 11 you Gentiles had no hope you were alienated from God you had nothing to plead but in Christ you've been brought near through his blood for he himself is our peace now look at what he's done he has made us both that is Jews and Gentiles one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility now the biggest division in the Mediterranean world was between the Jews and Gentiles the Jews had no dealings with them the Jews regarded them as inferior dogs outside the law they weren't given the law of God they had none of the privileges of the covenants they were scum really and the Gentiles returned the compliment to the Jews and the two groups of people were constantly in friction with one another if God is going to do something to show in time what will happen in eternity i.e. that he will bring everything together under Jesus

Christ then would it not be likely that what he would do would be to bring people from the widest divided hostile social communities and unite them together as one body under the authority of Jesus Christ rhetorical question answer yes of course that's what he's going to do so you see the unity of the Jews and Gentiles in the church where all those old divisions now are broken down is the proof that Christ's supremacy unites together what otherwise would always be separate and always apart now for us in our 21st century Jews and Gentiles division is not so classic but there are plenty of divisions in our society social divisions ethnic divisions racial divisions all sorts of divisions I mean the newspapers and the media are full of it all the time the church is the one place where those divisions should not matter the one place where

Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ Jesus where there is neither male nor female bond nor slave bond nor free but we are all one in Christ Jesus so you see what he's saying is this that the church is the outcrop in time if you like the sort of prototype in time of what God is going to do in eternity he is going to bring everything together under the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ and he's demonstrating that he can do that by bringing the most disparate groups of people together as one united body one family in Christ here and now I was talking to a young man just this week his father was Jamaican his mother was Sri Lankan and I was asking him about how he's getting on in his church and he said oh it's an evangelical church he goes to he said oh I'm running into the black problem so I said what do you mean by that he said well you know people sort of think oh he's a black young man he doesn't know much he hasn't got very much ability and they talk down to me all

the time actually he's a very able young man and a very godly young man and I thought to myself yes you see

Jews and Gentiles those sorts of divisions are there all the way through because unless Christ changes us we'll all be like that that's human nature but the church is the place where the change is seen where what Christ can do as sovereign lord over everything should be seen you should be able to say if you want to see that the gospel is true look at the church because the church is the prototype in time as F.F.

Bruce said of what God will do in eternity now jumping on then to chapter 3 verse 10 it makes sense of that very important verse doesn't it what is God's purpose well it is to reveal the plan of his mystery hidden for ages but now revealed in Jesus chapter 3 verse 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places this is according to the eternal purpose that he has realised in Christ Jesus our Lord so you see this is what Paul's concerned about that these hostile powers when they see the church and the people of God loving one another and caring for one another and being Christian with one another irrespective of wealth or lack of it status or lack of it ethnicity or any of those other divisions when they see how these Christians love one another the hostile powers know they're defeated the manifold wisdom of God is revealed to them they know they can't beat that they know that this is going to triumph in the end they have to do everything they can to resist it of course but we respond to that verse 12 with boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him that is to say we come to God in prayer we ask him for his power to be demonstrated we put our confidence in him and we go forward trusting that he will demonstrate his many coloured wisdom as he unites us together in the Lord

[ 35 : 44 ] Jesus and then there follows the prayer with which the doctrinal section ends this great prayer for love the prayer in chapter 1 was for knowledge and that's really important so if you haven't got your head right you won't get your heart right but now it goes from the head to the heart it's a prayer for love that you will know the love of Christ that passes knowledge and that you will be filled with all the fullness of God chapter 3 verse 19 so you can see where he's going with this theological argument in this point in the letter all these blessings are ours in Christ he has come to reveal the father to us he has triumphed over the evil one he's been raised to the right hand of God he is in the position of ultimate authority nothing can overcome his will and his purpose he rescued you personally he rescued us corporately and together we demonstrate as the body of Christ the new community the reconciling love and power of the cross of Jesus and the resurrection power of the new life that is in

Jesus and that is demonstrated when Christ dwells in our hearts through faith 316 and we are rooted and grounded in love love is the ultimate proof of the gospel the Christian love that we have for one another that's what the watching world needs to see Schaefer you remember wrote that book the church before the watching world in which he said the ultimate apologetic is love love that changes hearts love that changes lives and to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge is what Paul's praying for we've got to teach it we've got to believe it we've got to pray for it it's not just cognitive it's at that deeper level of relational dependence on God his great love plan for us and if you think that's a bridge too far have a look at verses 20 to 21 now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think according to the power that is at work within us that's the power of the risen Christ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus that's where the glory is in

Christ and because we're in Christ it's in the church throughout all generations including this one forever and ever amen I just love that verse because when we hear these things we think oh yes wouldn't it be wonderful if but verse 20 says no it's not a wouldn't it be wonderful if this is possible God can do this this is what he's about he's able to do what we ask what we think and more than that abundantly more than that far more abundantly more than that and this book is designed to expand our horizons and to generate our faith in this great and glorious saviour now the second part of the book then and I'll only spend five or ten minutes on this at the most and then we'll have our questions the second part of the book is the outworking of this in practice the doctrine gets threaded through again but in a much more supportive role as it were but the first verse of chapter four really sets us up for the second section of the letter

I therefore a prisoner for the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called so the second part of the book is all about our walk walking in a way that is honouring

to Christ and worthy of this calling and the calling is that we should demonstrate the love of God in the world through the unity of the church and through our care for one another and that love overflowing to others all around us now that calling requires as verse two says humility and gentleness and patience and forbearance it's not easy C.S. Lewis said that the first problem with humility was that you have to admit that you don't have it and that's too big a step for most of us but when you realise that you don't have it then you can begin to ask God to give it to you and those qualities of humility and patience and long suffering on how the love works out in the community so then there's the stress upon the one body and one spirit because of what we've just seen you see that's why chapter four is all about the unity of the church in Christ the one spirit who gives us all sorts of different gifts remember those lists in verse 11 of apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastor teachers but to equip the saints for the work of ministry that all together as the body of Christ we're living out the reality of the gospel equipped by the gifts that God has given the church and therefore we're growing up no longer children tossed to and fro but stable growing into Christ and the whole body united in Jesus held together by every joint is growing up into Christ in maturity as well as growing out in terms of numbers so 4.1-16 is the sort of overture to the second half of the book now what does this worthy walk look like well the word walk is repeated then a number of times so 4.17 now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do so contrast with what you were and the rest of that chapter shows the contrast between the old self which has to be put away the new self which has to be put on verse 24 after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness and that happens verse 23 by the renewal of your minds so there's an old way of living to be finished there's a new set of thinking which will issue in a new set of behaviour true righteousness and holiness very practical this very clear about what it involves no lying no intemperate anger no stealing no corrupting talk no bitterness and wrath but kindness tender heartedness forgiving one another and then 5.1 imitators of

[ 42 : 06 ] God and walk verb again in love as Christ loved us so walk worthily don't walk like the Gentiles that's what he's rescued you from no going back to Ephesus walk in love because Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God and then we get the word the verb repeated twice more chapter 5 verse 8 walk as children of light in the context there of sexual purity particularly and then again in verse 15 of chapter 5 look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise walk worthy walk in love walk in light walk in wisdom and each of those sections explores for us what that looks like and how it's to be accomplished and the supreme way in which it is to be accomplished comes out in that famous 18th verse of chapter 5 don't get drunk with wine but be literally be being filled continuous present imperative be being filled with the spirit so none of these things will happen unless I'm being filled with the spirit unless the life of god is in me transforming me from the inside out

I won't walk with me I won't walk in love I won't walk in light and wisdom I'll go back to my old gentile ways and I will deny the gospel because I will not contribute to the unity of the church I'll be a difficult person who in one way or another seems to deny everything that the gospel stands for what a tragedy that is and yet that happens in so many churches doesn't it so many congregations it's only by the transforming power of the spirit be continually filled with the spirit not get filled once and look back on it nostalgically but every day let the light of the holy spirit flow in and flow out from you and that will lead to a life of praise a life of worship in the fullest sense of that word verse 19 the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs but more than that giving thanks always and for everything and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ and then he follows the famous passages about the household code as it's sometimes called what does that look like in the church well of course the family church is the first place to look the home church in the most literal sense of that word the relationships of husbands and wives and so 5:21 following is about how wives submitting to their husbands and husbands loving their wives as

Christ loved the church in that way submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ because they both fulfill their Christ ordained roles and so in the joy of a united loving Christian marriage the glory of the gospel scene I'm talking about Christ and the church that's what our marriages are to demonstrate because of the transforming power of Jesus and then in 6.1-4 still in the home obviously the children there who obey their parents and the fathers who don't provoke their children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord that's again a way which the gospel's fleshed out in our culture loving Christian marriages and loving Christian families are going to be enormously important in the next few decades because all around us they're collapsing there

aren't any marriages that are very few marriages that are lasting and as marriage is you know redefined and regarded as being totally flexible of course these things will all start to collapse more and more in our society and more and more the church will be the place and the only place where you will see the power of God to create marriages that reflect the love of Christ for his people and family groups that demonstrate the reality of

Christ now of course that doesn't mean we're going to be perfect it doesn't mean we won't have many many challenges but he's able to do exceedingly more than we ask or imagine the trouble is we don't really ask and then there's slaves and masters which has a sort of equivalence to employees and employers the whole of our daily work and in that too we have to demonstrate the reality of God just one comment in passing have you ever wondered why there's so much about marriage in Ephesians and in none of the other epistles I mean it's mentioned in Colossians and there's some references in 1 Corinthians of course but the classic marriage passages are in Ephesians I think it's because of that whacking temple in the middle of Ephesus to the great goddess Diana totally feminist dominated culture and the one thing that no Ephesian gentile pagan woman would do would be submit to her husband gospel is going to change things going to change the whole order of things and there's nothing that a pagan man would do that is equivalent to Christ giving himself up for his church as a husband gives himself up for his wife transforming this is how the power of the gospel seems and we need to pray that the Lord will enable us to live by that and so he comes down in the end to saying well it will be a battle we are wrestling not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers but look the armour's there the resources are there the shield of faith the belt of truth and so on all the resources that are ours because we are in Christ and that greatest resource of all prayer that wonderful verse that comes near the end verse 18 of chapter 6 praying at all times in the spirit you see again we can't do it unless the Holy Spirit helps us we won't be able to use the word of God unless it's used as the sword of the spirit with all prayer and supplication and to that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints it's wonderful isn't it all times all prayer all perseverance all the saints and as we pray for one another like that and love one another like that then maybe our church family will reflect just a little bit more what God has in mind for us as his redeemed people so yes

[ 48 : 41 ] Ephesians is all about the church but not a dry set of doctrines it's all about how the church is formed through the mystery revealed in Christ how the church should live how the gospel shapes the church and how the church lives out the gospel and I don't think there's anything more important in our contemporary context than that we learn those things they sink into our hearts they control our lives and by God's grace we can more and more live that way are there questions people have got on a few years that means one of two things yes I take it to mean complete agreement Marsha so if somebody asks me or if I ask you what is heavenly places what's the short answer

I think the short answer to that is the spiritual realm in which the battle the spiritual battle against God is conducted by the devil and all his forces and it is in that area that we are seated in Christ so we are victorious because Christ is victorious there and so we are not to think that we are fighting people we do don't we because I mean the way our media present everything is by human antagonism this group against that group that person against this person it's all antagonistic and it's easy for us then to think we've got to fight these battles against wicked people he says no it's not flesh and blood it's spiritual forces that are monitoring and empowering all these hostile attacks and we therefore have to resist that in Ephesians 6 terms with the armour of God the armour of God the sword of the spirit and all prayer and knowing that we are in Christ and that he is over all these things we can by faith claim his victory so I would say it's the spiritual arena of conflict so I have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms it's sort of like the armour of the spirit yes I think so I mean it's all in the heavenly realms because that's where Jesus is supreme all the blessings from Christ from our initial salvation through our knowledge of his will through the power of his spirit all the things that the letter talks about they are already ours in Christ so I don't have to go on a quest for some power that's extra or anything like that Jesus is sufficient in it all I've got to trust him obey him draw my resources from him and he will keep me in the battle but it will be a battle so thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you