

Ephesians, Chapter One, Lesson One

FAITHFUL IN CHRIST Ephesians 1:1-2

STIMULATE

** Where do you live out your Christian life? Do you realize that our Heavenly Father sees you "in" a certain location? Paul's letter to the Ephesians begins with a preoccupation for the reality that every child of God has been placed "in Christ" and as such is equipped to live for His glory. That personal relationship is the basis for all of our blessings and joy in this life. What impact will it have on our ability to obey the word of God and to then witness for the gospel truth?

MOTIVATE

** Over the next six months, it is going to be our joy to learn together all that the Holy Spirit has for us in this marvelous letter by the apostle Paul to the believers at Ephesus. Just over the next month and a half, here in chapter one, we will see Paul address six critical issues in the life of a Christian.

They are:

FAITHFUL IN CHRIST - Ephesians 1:1-2

BLESSED IN CHRIST - Ephesians 1:3-6a

REDEMPTION IN CHRIST - Ephesians 1:6b-10

HOPE IN CHRIST - Ephesians 1:11-14

THANKFUL IN CHRIST - Ephesians 1:15-17

STRENGTH IN CHRIST - Ephesians 1:18-23

** As we approach this treasure we hold in our hands, what do you suppose is our greatest prayerful need?

That we might understand, learn and apply all that Christ is about to teach us so that our lives might be lived out for His glory!

If we will do that, we can join those in Asia Minor who, by their lifestyle, came to be known as "Faithful in Christ".

Read Passage (V.1-2)

Opening Prayer

Faithful in Christ

INVESTIGATE

Introduction - Before we start our study of today's passage, let's begin with an introductory look at this letter to the Ephesians.

1. Where is Ephesus? (See the map in the back of your Bible)

Forty miles south of Smyrna, on the eastern side of the Aegean Sea. Smyrna is the location of the suffering church mentioned in Revelation 2:8-11. This was a famous church in that Christ brought no word of reproach

against it. By 1980 the population had reached around two hundred thousand and about one third were Christians. That city is now called Izmir (Turkish) and those in it are still faithful!

2. What was special about Ephesus?

It was a harbor town and trade center in Asia Minor as well as the location of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Temple of Diana (Roman) or Artemis (Greek) made Ephesus an important hub of that part of the world. The temple became very much like a modern bank as many people stored their money in it for safe keeping. All see - cf. Acts 19:23-28

3. Who wrote this epistle?

The apostle Paul - see Ephesians 1:1, 3:1 and 4:1

4. What is the historical setting of this epistle?

Paul wrote to the Ephesians during his first Roman imprisonment between 60-62 A.D.
cf. Acts 27:1, 28:16 and 28:30

It was written during the same time period as Philemon and Colossians and carried by Tychicus and Onesimus cf. Colossians 4:7-9, Philemon 1:10-12 and Ephesians 6:21-22

5. To whom is Paul writing?

This was a circular letter sent to the churches of Asia Minor, perhaps the letter "that is coming from Laodicea" as mentioned in Colossians 4:16, because Ephesus became the hub of influence in the world for Christ (Acts 19 and 20:17-36).

Later manuscripts all include the phrase "at Ephesus", although the oldest ones we have do not. They merely leave a blank space so we know that the letter was circulated throughout Asia Minor. The truths that Paul addresses in this epistle are not localized by geography and therefore qualifies all believers living in that area as the recipients.

6. Why did Paul write his letter to the Ephesians?

- A. To express his satisfaction with the Christ-centered faith of his readers and their love for all the saints.
- B. To express God's redemptive grace toward the church as being "all in Christ".
- C. To draw a contrast between the world's kingdom (Rome) and God's kingdom.

Rome's glamour - Church's Glory
Rome's dictator - Gracious Lord
Unity by force - Bond of Peace
Military might - Believer's Armor

Paul lays out for us in the first three chapters of this marvelous epistle, who we are in Christ and then turns the tide by instructing us how we are to live in the last three chapters.

Alright then, with that as a backdrop, let's get into our text for today.

V. 1 ** How does Paul describe himself in this verse?

As "an apostle of Christ Jesus".

** What does that mean?

"apostolos" meant a "sent one", used 79 times in the New Testament.
All see - Matthew 10:1-2, and 5

** When was Paul sent, and by Whom?

Damascus - Acts 9:3-6, Woe to me - 1Corinthians 9:16
Under obligation - Romans 1:14-15

** What were the duties of an apostle?

Teach and pray - Acts 6:4
Build up leaders - Acts 14:23
Preach the Word - 1Corinthians 1:17
Work Miracles - 2Corinthians 12:12
Write the Word - Ephesians 1:1 (by example)

** Here in verse one of our text, do you think there is any doubt in the mind of Paul that he is an apostle of Christ Jesus?

Absolutely not! He had become one "by the will of God"! He would repeat that phrase when writing 1st and 2nd Corinthians, 2Timothy and Colossians. Do you recall from our study of Galatians how he even further explained that issue? Paul said he was "not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father" (Galatians 1:1).

** Is Paul being arrogant by describing himself and his role in these terms?

No - he is merely stating the authority that God had entrusted to him.
cf. 1Timothy 1:12-15, Ephesians 3:8

As we now dig deeper into today's text, we are going to see a dual description of believers, a dual blessing for believers and the dual source for those blessings.

** To begin with, we do not get far at all into this epistle before we find ourselves eternally grateful that God called us and set us apart to be His own. Let's look at the first set - What is the dual description of believers?

Set #1

A. "Saints" [hagios] lit. sacred, holy, set apart. Remember what Paul had said to the Galatians about when Christ had set him apart for salvation? "He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb" (Galatians 1:15).

This is how we are seen by our heavenly Father, that by His grace alone we are whole and set apart for His service and glory sake.

B. "who are faithful in Christ Jesus" - Paul uses the word "pistos" to describe our part. We are to be reliable and trustworthy. It comes from the root word "peitho" which means to persuade or to have confidence. This is the

believer as viewed from man's perspective, one who is bold in the proclamation of the truth through his or her lifestyle - we are **Faithful in Christ**.

V. 2 ** Let's now look at the second set before us, what are the dual blessings for the believer in verse two?

Grace and peace! This became a common greeting in the early church.

** How would you describe God's grace?

Grace is the unmerited favor of God in bestowing salvation upon guilt-laden sinners. Do you recall the acronym we have used for God's grace before?

God's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense

** How does God's peace relate to His grace?

Peace is the by-product of Grace as we enjoy our reconciliation with a holy God which Christ's atoning work alone could accomplish.

** Can you think of two ways to describe this peace that a Christian can experience daily?

Peace with God - Romans 5:1

Peace of God - Philippians 4:6-7

** Finally, let's look at the third set in this passage, what is the dual source of those wonderful blessings?

God our Father

The Lord Jesus Christ

** While we can see that there are two manifestations of the source of blessings from God, is it really coming from two separate sources?

No, not at all! Notice the little word "and" in this phrase that describes the source of all our blessings. In the original Greek language this is the word "kai", which can be used to indicate equivalence and here Paul uses it to indicate that the Lord Jesus Christ is Deity just like God our Father. cf. Colossians 2:9

** When we consider the phrase "God our Father", it brings to mind all sorts of imagery. What do you think of when you consider God as your heavenly Father?

His protection, provision, wisdom, love, caring, majesty, holiness . . . and so on.

** What about the phrase "The Lord Jesus Christ"?

I think of all the same elements or characteristics of God, but the term Lord makes my relationship more personal and intimate, as it properly describes how I am to serve him as my loving Master!

EXTRICATE

** What examples have you seen today in Paul's life or in the lives of his readers there in Ephesus, that are worthy of imitation?

1. Paul's total commitment to Christ because he knew Who had set him apart for ministry.
2. Paul boldness and confidence, tempered by genuine humility.
3. The fact that the Ephesians were known as those who were "Faithful in Christ".

DELINEATE

** What blessings have we seen today, that when we truly consider them will prompt our hearts to a more loving obedience to the One we call Lord?

God has given us His grace and peace!

EVALUATE

** When you consider how fortunate you are to have been so blessed, how well are you doing in following the examples set forth by the apostle Paul and the Ephesian believers?

By God's grace in your life, can it be said of you that you are living your life each day trying to be Faithful in Christ"?

ACTIVATE

** Please look back over our list of godly examples that we saw in today's passage and commit your heart to applying what you have learned! Perhaps you could pick just one item and watch this next week to see how it impacted your walk with our beloved Lord and Savior.

Closing Prayer