

## **Ephesians, Chapter One, Lesson Five**

THANKFUL IN CHRIST Ephesians 1:15-17

### **STIMULATE**

\*\* In our study together last week, we saw the importance of listening "to the message of Truth, the gospel of your salvation" and being found among those who have "also believed". How did that wonderful reality impact the desire of your heart to share this Truth with others? Did the Lord provide any of you with an opportunity to witness on His behalf? If so, how did you do?

### **MOTIVATE**

\*\* So far in our study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians we have been overjoyed to see our blessings, as he has described them from verse 3 to 14, as well as showing us the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There has been so much to be thankful for as we have graciously received everything from God. But, for today, what are the two main characteristics of a Believer for which we ought to be "Thankful in Christ"? For the answer, please join me in Ephesians 1:15-17 and let's hear what the apostle has to say about this very important issue in the life of a Christian.

Read passage (V.15-17)

Opening Prayer

### *Thankful in Christ*

### **INVESTIGATE**

**V.15** \*\* Paul opens today's passage with, "For this reason". To what is he referring?

All that we have gained by God's grace, through Jesus Christ and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

1. Our election (V.4)
2. Our redemption (V.7)
3. Our inheritance (V.11)
4. Our sealing (V.13)

\*\* If you remove for a moment Paul's parenthetical thought from verse 15, what two things does he say he is doing in verse 16?

He is giving thanks for the Ephesian Believers and offering prayers for them. This was Paul's ever present pattern for ministry. We would be wise to follow his example as we "minister" our gifts to one another. cf. Romans 1:8-10, Colossians 1:9, Philippians 1:3-5

\*\* As the church first began, how did the apostles feel about the importance of prayer in their ministry?

They placed it at the top of their priority list, along with the ministry of the Word of God!  
cf. Acts 6:4

\*\* Back in verse 15 of our text, Paul says that he has "heard of the faith" which belonged to the Ephesians. Was this a saving faith?

Yes! In that they displayed both of the two main characteristics of a Believer in the living out of that faith.

1. Their faith was in the Lord Jesus.
2. Their faith gave them a love for all the saints.

\*\* Let's take these one at a time. How important is it that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, uses the word Lord here?

It is crucial! **kurios** - Is used referring to Christ 747 times in the New Testament, 92 times in the book of Acts alone! An individual cannot merely receive Jesus Christ as their Savior, without understanding that He is to be their Lord as well.

cf. Matthew 9:9, 19:27, Luke 9:57-62, Romans 10:9, 14:9  
Acts 2:36, Philippians 2:11, Luke 6:46-49

Also - John 15:13 (Savior) and John 15:14 (Lord)!

So the Ephesians' faith was a genuine saving faith because of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their personal lives and ...

Their faith generated a true love for the Brethren!

\*\* Is that really such an important issue?

Absolutely! cf. John 13:34-35

\*\* So, since this is so important, are we supposed to crank up the love - somehow generating feelings of affection for other Christians?

No, like the Lordship of Christ, this is the natural by-product of our regeneration. All true Believers will follow the commands of Christ and have an abiding love for other Christians.

All see - 1John, chapter three. John pens his epistle from the position of absolutes. He could be called the "Mr. Black and White" of Biblical principles. Just for the record, the epistle of James serves as a wonderful companion to this letter because it focuses on the "black and white" application of Biblical principles.

**V. 3-9** John begins by restating the importance of Jesus Christ as Lord. We are to obey Him!

We purify ourselves because He is Lord (V.3)

We practice righteousness because He is Lord (V.7)

**V.10** At the end of verse 10 John turns his attention to the second main characteristic of a Believer. What is it?

Love for the Brethren!

**V.11** - "we should love one another"

**V.14** - "we love the brethren"

**V.16** - "we ought to lay down our lives..."

**V.18** - We love "in deed and truth"

cf. 1John 4:19-21 Our salvation produces a love for God and for our brothers and sisters in Christ!

Having established in our thinking the reality of the Lordship of Christ and a love for the Brethren as the two main characteristics of a true Christian, let's return to our passage in verse 15 of Ephesians chapter one.

**\*\* Was there any limit to the number of Christians that would benefit from the love of the Ephesians Believers?**

No, they had a "love for all the saints". Without love, the true love of God which has been shed abroad in our hearts, our claim to be a genuine Christian becomes as useless as a "noisy gong or a clanging cymbal". cf. 1Corinthians 13:1

**V.16 \*\* We have already noted that Paul was giving thanks for the Ephesians faith, what unusual thing do you notice about that in this verse?**

He did not cease from giving thanks to God for the miraculous work of salvation granted to the Ephesians. This was a daily, if not hourly pattern for the apostle as he fulfilled his life and ministry in Christ's name. cf. Philippians 4:4, and 1Thessalonians 5:16-18

**\*\* In the case of the Ephesians, when was Paul giving thanks for them?**

In his prayer life! "...while making mention of you in my prayers..." The apostle, like Jesus, was a person of prayer. We need to be also! We should be willing to stop in the middle of our busy day and just talk to the Lord, making mention of all sorts of things for which we are to be thankful.

**\*\* What kinds of prayer does God's word present?**

Intercessory - Hebrews 7:23-25

Supplication - Philippians 4:6

Requests - Philippians 4:6

Confession - Psalm 32:1-5

Thanksgiving - 1Thessalonians 1:2

Praise - Revelation 19:5-6

**V.17 \*\* What is the specific content of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians?**

That God would give them "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him." It is important to understand the use of the word "spirit" in this statement.

pneuma - lit. a breath of air, we get our words pneumatic and pneumonia from this word. From that meaning is derived the connotation of spirit. It is best understood as speaking of a disposition, influence or attitude. cf. Matthew 5:3

Paul wants the Ephesians and us to have an attitude of wisdom and knowledge, an understanding of all that we have "in Him".

**\*\* Did Paul personally treasure the knowledge of Christ, which God had bestowed upon him?**

More than anything else! cf. Philippians 3:8

Nothing in life could "surpass" the value of knowing Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. Do you have the same value system?

\*\* In giving us this "spirit", what has our gracious God done? What difference do you see between wisdom and revelation?

**Revelation** - God's communication to the soul of man regarding sin and the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Savior willing to die for that sin. cf. John 16:7-11

**Wisdom** (sophia) - The God given ability to apply spiritual truth to our everyday life. This is one who puts knowledge into practice! cf. James 3:13 & 17

\*\* In our text for today, to what is the wisdom and revelation referring?

"...the knowledge of Him." It is not enough to know about Jesus Christ, we need to personally know Him and grow in that knowledge of Him throughout our life here on earth. cf. 2Peter 3:18

\*\* How much do you think we need to learn about our beloved Savior?

Everything! cf. Colossians 2:1-2, Paul labored his whole life that we today might gain "...the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself...!"

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* The apostle Paul lived his life being "Thankful in Christ", and so should we! What were the two main characteristics in the lives of the Ephesians, that demonstrated the legitimacy of their faith and for which Paul was compelled to give thanks?

They had placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and that manifested itself in:

- 1) The Lordship of Jesus Christ over them on a personal basis.
- 2) They had an unlimited "love for all the saints".

\*\* Just in our passage today, how did Paul manifest his love for the Ephesians?

By praying for them and giving thanks for them!

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* Understanding the Jesus Christ is **Kurios**, or Lord, and that I am not; how important is it for me to apply the wisdom God has given me relative to Who is in charge of my life?

It is vital! I must not slip into the arrogance that says, "It's my life, I can do whatever I want".

\*\* In light of what we have seen today, would you be willing to do an inventory of your heart? Try looking for love, specifically love for your Brethren. If you are truly a Believer, Jesus Christ has become your Lord and you will find an unquenchable love for those of like precious faith!

## **EVALUATE**

\*\* As you consider these two main characteristics of a truly born-again Christian, do you find yourself to be "Thankful in Christ"? Not only for what He has done among the Brethren, but also for what He has done in your own heart!

### **ACTIVATE**

\*\* Let's take a moment now to personally thank Him, in the silence of our own hearts, for allowing us to submit to His Lordship and for giving us such a strong love for each other.

Closing Prayer