

Week beginning Monday 26th April 2021

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Ephesians, "The Epistle of *In-ness*," 138 of them in 6 chapters! We, as believers, are *in* Christ. He is *in* us. We are *in* the heavenlies. Keep your your eyes open for the rest. (Oh, and I guess not many of us reading this are *in* Ephesus! But I do hope you are *in* Christ.)

Paul was in prison at the time, about AD 60. From there he gazes at God's plans to bless us in Christ and writes this "theological, and pastoral reflection on the nature, origin, character, mission, and future of the church." US!! Prepare to be blown away. I'm afraid there is so much in this letter that one page doesn't begin to do justice to it. Sorry. I've done the best I can.

Ephesians 1 -**Chosen** to be holy (set apart for Him alone); blameless (Rom 8:1 Now.. **no** condemnation); **every** Spiritual blessing; Pick out others and think them through and make them yours. Notice how so much of this has already happened to us when we put our trust in Jesus. We don't have to wait for it or earn a number of brownie points before it's *all* ours.

V14 The Holy Spirit is the deposit, downpayment, guarantee, engagement ring. There's more to come! We have been saved, we are being saved, we will be saved. What a life God has given us! And then what a prayer! Do we need to change our prayer life a bit?

Ephesians 2 – Resurrection day for us! (Sorry, another exclamation mark.) Our Philippians 2:7-9. Past tense. We believe He's done it, and -- He has. We do absolutely nothing. No works. Nothing. We were: separated from Christ, not counted as chosen, not entitled to rights and privileges, without hope, without God. "BUT NOW"...

Note. The Christian faith is personal – but not private. It brings us nearer to God *and* one another. The consequences give purpose and dignity to the church. A kingdom, a family, a temple. How does each affect our relationship to God, to the church?

Ephesians 3 – vv 1-13 "The mystery" what is it? (vv3, 4,6,9, 5:32) – a revealed hidden truth. See also Eph 4:11,12; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21

Paul is interrupting himself in this section 'For this reason..' v 1 he returns to his prayer in v 14. NB v 7 Paul took no glory for his work. "The fuller a vessel becomes the deeper it sinks in the water" (Spurgeon) The more fruit a branch bears, the lower it hangs. Why is it important that the more successful you are in God's work, the more humble you must be? 'Humble yourselves' 1 P 5:5 Now get your heart round v 16 – *according to* the riches of his glory ... also see v20 How is God glorified in the church? Through all generations?

Ephesians 4 – OK We've see we're not what we should be! So now 3 chapters of 'therefore'. This is what we're 'herefore'. Live out what Christ has put in – 'be worthy' – reflect the beauty of the bride of Christ. Unity! Trace it, dwell on it, pray for it, work for it. It's ours, work it out – the beauty of unity – 'They'll know you are Christ's by your love for one another'. So why do we quarrel over such minor differences when we have this enormity of Christ in common?

Ephesians 5 – Pretty straightfoward stuff. So v14 – get up off the morgue slab and start living – look at Chapter 2 again Resurrection Day for us! We're the bride Jesus loves so much. He might get a bit upset if we speak ill of His bride. Be warned.