

Ephesians

April 13, 2025

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled, "Ephesians. Thank you to Ed, Amy, Geoff, Jonathan, Toluwani, and Don for being part of the service. The scripture reading is Ephesians 4, 1-6. Happy birthday this week to Helene, Jonathan, Kristin, and Gloria, and happy anniversary to Sherry and Ernie.

Scripture Reading

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers and mothers in waiting. The Bible reading is from Ephesians 4, verses 1 to 6.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 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. 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.

Thank you.

Sermon

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much for being with us today. One of the most optimistic books in the New Testament I think is the book of Ephesians and this is mentioned on three different occasions. Living to the praise of God's glory is what is said. Then it said living to the praise of Christ's glory and then he says living to the praise of the Holy Spirit's glory. It's a book that takes us from heaven to earth and back.

Listen to these words. To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus, grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Christ Jesus. And then he says this. Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms. Listen with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless. How holy are we and what about blameless? It's Jesus coming to this wonderful story and the Apostle Paul sharing with us how spiritually wealthy we are. We don't have to earn it. It's given to us and he talks about the heavenly realms know us very well. To the praise of his glorious grace. It's rising to the Father. Our spiritual blessings come from him and we return by sharing with others. So this book of Ephesians is brief but it's positive. It's helpful in many many ways. He says this again speaking of all of us. In him, meaning Christ, we also are chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works everything out in conformity with the purpose of his will. Listen now. In order that in Christ might be the praise of his glory.

This word glory we don't use this word very often but when we read this it's all about the glory of God, the glory of Jesus, the glory of the Holy Spirit and the glory that they give us even today. And he says, "And you were also included in Christ when you heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, having believed that you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing, guaranteeing our inheritance. We are God's possession." And then he's gonna say, "Living to the praise of God's glory." And so this wonderful author is sharing with us over the generations and still very real for us today. Now he doesn't lessen the fact that we fall short. As for you, he says you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of the world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, meaning Satan and his angels, and the spirit who is now at work with those who are disobedient and then it comes to us. All of us also lived among them at one time gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature like rest we were by nature.

And then he says, "But because of his great love for us," isn't that remarkable? "God who is rich in mercy has made all of us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins and transgressions. And God has raised us up with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms." We're already there. He's telling us this is who we are because of Jesus. And so what do we do? Live to the praise of God's glory. Live to the praise of Jesus' glory. Live to the praise

of the Spirit's glory. Live with one another in love and peace and joy, all of these things which are always so very important.

But then he brings us all together, one in Christ. All of us here together are united. We are one in Christ. Maybe that wasn't always the way. He says, "Remember that formally you who are Gentiles by birth, called uncircumcised by those who call themselves circumcision," different culture of that day. "Remember at a time that you were separate from Christ." Do you remember that? Excluded from citizenship in Christ. In Israel and foreigners of the covenants. And do you remember, as he says here, "without hope." Until one day someone says, "There is this man named Jesus and there's God and there's the Holy Spirit and they have come not just to be known but they've come inside of us." Living to the praise of God's glory. Living to the praise of Jesus' glory. Living to the praise of the Spirit's glory in us. It's not that we have to work for it, it's that Jesus gives it to us. And because of that we need to share peace with others. A

and I apologize for repeating this but it's in the scripture. His purpose was to create in himself, out of two, thus making peace. And in his one body to reconcile both them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility and preached peace who were far away in the peace that comes near now. Consequently you are no longer foreigners, you're no longer aliens, but you're fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. Where do you live? With God. Members of God's household. Built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone, in him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple and in him you too are being built together in a dwelling which God lives by his spirit. That should be the end of it. I mean what more can you say? These wonderful gifts given us but he wants us to know more than that. He said sometimes it's difficult. He said Paul, the Apostle Paul, he says I was a prisoner. I was a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles. I wanted you to know Paul said what's happening to me even though it's horrible is for your benefit. That death is not the end. Surely you've heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you know that this was a mystery made known to me by a revelation and I've already written briefly about this.

He said in reading this then you'll be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to men in other generations as it's now been revealed to the spirit of God's holy Apostles and prophets. Then he says this, the mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles, that's us, are heirs together with Israel members together of the promise of Christ Jesus. We have brothers and sisters around the world and it's happened for generations and generations and it will last throughout eternity and so he reckons us together that we're all part of a household of faith. He said I kneel before the Father whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I kind of get the idea that when we get to heaven everybody's gonna know our name and we'll know theirs.

This is the riches of God's glory. His riches may strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit in your inner being so that Christ, listen to this, may dwell in your hearts through faith. You have to believe it and I pray that you being rooted and established in love may have power together with all the Christians to grasp, I love this, 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. How is that even possible? The full measure of God. He wants us to know that we're part of all this and back then Christians had a very difficult time often being thrown into prison and so forth many of you have read this. Chapter 4 he talks about this as a prisoner for the Lord and I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling whether you're in prison or not and he says be completely humble and gentle. Be patient with one another. Make every effort to keep the unity of God's Holy Spirit through peace. There's one body and one spirit just as you recall to one Lord, one hope, one faith and so forth and then he finishes up by all saying and all in all the God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

I kind of get the idea there's something inside of us that is precious. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and it's not always easy and in this book he talks about this. He said there were apostles and there were some that were evangelists and there were some that were preachers and teachers but they've come to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ like today may be built up until we reach the unity of

faith and I'm not sure that we'll ever get to the end of that. So he says instead of all of this in speaking the truth in love we will in all things listen grow up into him. Can you imagine--who is the head, that is Christ from him the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament as each part does its work. We may not even feel it inside of us but God is bringing it to us and so he says

there are people that have read this but their heart is dull. It's not something they want to hear. So he says put on a new mindset don't give the devil even a foothold and please be careful how we speak. Don't let anyone don't let anyone unwholesomely talk. Don't let anything come out of your mouth that way. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom with whom you're sealed. We're sealed by God's promise for the day of retention. Get rid of some things. Get rid of bitterness. Get rid of rage. Get rid of anger. Get rid of brawling and slander among with every form of malice but here's what to do. Be kind. Be compassionate to one another. Forgiving each other just as Christ and God forgave you.

How many times has God forgiven us? I think I'm around 12 or 13 million now. It's for everyone. The promise of Jesus. His love for us. His caring for us. He talks about how people can change their lives and he says this in speaking very strongly to them. For you were once darkness but now you are the light in the Lord. Live as children of light. For the fruit of the light consists of, listen, all goodness, righteousness, and truth and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedience is in secret but everything exposed in the light tells us this is why it said, "Wake up. Wake up, oh sleeper. Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you."

It's not just metaphorical. It is the reality of Christ's light in us. Wake up and let Christ shine on you in your heart, in your head, in the way we speak, where we go, what we do, how we can help others. But he says be careful about this now. Not as one eyes but wise. Make every opportunity because the times are evil. So here's what you do. You live to the praise of God's glory.

You live to the praise of Jesus' glory. You live to the praise of the Holy Spirit's glory, not just on Sunday but as for always. And then he talks about husbands and wives loving one another, children and parents being with one another, and then he says these words.

And maybe a lot of people like this word at the end of a sermon where it says finally and that's the word finally. He says finally be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but it is against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God so that when the evil days come you can stand your ground. And after you've done everything else, stand again. Stand firm with the belt of truth buckled around your waist with the breastplate of feet. Be feed with readiness that comes from the gospel. I love this phrase. The gospel of peace. The gospel of peace. Living to the praise of God's glory. Living to the praise of Jesus' glory. Living to the praise of the Spirit's glory. And living to the praise of the glory God gives us and let's return it back to him. In addition, take up the shield of faith. The helmet of salvation. The sword of the Spirit. And I kind of think Paul wants to even keep on going but he's going to finish with these words and so will I. He says, "Peace to the brothers and sisters and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love."

I know with all of my heart we're going to continue loving God as much as we can, understanding how much he loves us every single day. Some days will be difficult but remember what he says. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am always with you. What an amazing God we have. Amen.

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