

EPHESIANS

Introduction

When thinking of the book of Ephesians, remember this: "2 visits, a riot, and a letter from prison."

By today's standards, Paul's ministry to and around the City of Ephesus would be considered a dismal failure. He cut short his first visit (Acts 18:18-19), promising to return shortly. But it was years before he made it back.

When he did finally return, he started some trouble:

- A. He was kicked out of the local Synagogue after teaching there for a year.
- B. He single-handedly caused a recession and put people out of work.
- C. He had to take a second job teaching at a training center. Acts 19:8-10
- D. He had several legal complaints, lawsuits, and arrests.
- E. Eventually, he stirs up so much trouble the city leaders lead a protest against him that turns into a riot.
- F. Paul is run out of town and has to finish up his business with the people of Ephesus in the form of a letter... that he writes from prison, in another place where he has stirred up even more legal problems.
- G. He was accused and actually admitted guilt to some of the charges which included:
 - a. Murder
 - b. Kidnapping
 - c. Conspiracy
 - d. Hate crimes
 - e. Embezzlement
 - f. Heresy... Oh, and...
 - g. Exciting a riot.
 - h. His worst crime of all according to his accusers was taking a Gentile into the Temple and defiling it for all.

Beyond the controversy, the letter to the Ephesians is a tender set of instructions to this infant Church of how to live in order to fulfill the call of God. It has been called the "Alps of the New Testament" because of the heights which it takes its readers. Chuck Smith suggests we underline every time we read, "In Him," "By Him," and "Through Him." These are the spiritual blessing Paul is speaking of.

The book of Ephesians is the 49th book in the King James Bible. It has 6 chapters that contain 155 verses.

GREETING

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

- Chuck Smith taught that we all should be able to apply this verse to ourselves: _____, a _____ of Jesus Christ by the will of God...
- So... Later on today meditate on this.

...**To the saints** (*Sacred & cleaned*) who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: (Which includes us!)

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **CCSV, Why “Grace” before “Peace?”**

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every **spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places in Christ,

HE CHOSE US

4 just as **He chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world,

- How could God choose us before He made the earth?
- Could He possibly know who of us would choose Him?
- IF He knew who would choose Him, He would choose them, right?
- IF you knew what B-ball team would win the NCAA March Madness tournament, would you choose any other on your bracket? (Guys?)
 - Ladies, **IF** you could know back in your dating days which guy would turn out to be MR. PERFECT, wouldn't you have only dated him? WHAT? You DID????? 😊
 - Knowing in advance that you would choose the Lord, HE CHOSE YOU! THAT is predestination.

HE CHOSE US...

that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption (**Chosen**) as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us **accepted** in the Beloved.

- **Chosen** AND **accepted** by God! Friend, THAT is just an amazing gift, isn't it?
- HE chooses us...
- HE cleans us up...
- HE purifies us...
- He represents us to the Father...
- He is preparing a home for us in heaven... AND...
- He is coming back for us. BE... BLESSED!

REDEEMED TOO!

7 In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, (**Think of the communion cup**) the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

- His grace is the most valuable thing you own - IF you have accepted it!
- And IF you have it, His grace, you are rich indeed!

8 which He made to abound (**NLT – showered down**) toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of **His will**, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation (**the management of household affairs. – Barnes**) of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

- I was raised by a Mom who sang... She sang all the time... One of her favorites was “Showers of blessings...” She taught us 4 boys to “count our many blessings – see what the Lord hath done.”
- We too should pass along the truth that God is managing our affairs in HIS own time and in HIS own way.
- FOR HIS OWN WILL, He is managing our lives to please Himself!
- Oh CCSV, we should be teaching this to the next generation!

- His will; HIS way; For HIS glory.

YOU'RE IN HIS ESTATE

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined **(Invited ahead of time)** according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

- **NLT** - Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan. 12 God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.

SIGNED & SEALED

13 In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

- In Paul's day, seals were really important. In the seaport city of Ephesus merchandise would arrive off of ships and then be claimed by the servants of the wealthy merchants.
 - HOW did they know which merchandise was to be chosen? BY THE SEAL of the owner. It was the guarantee that the goods would get to the right person.
 - OUR seal... Our guarantee that WE will arrive to God is the seal of the Holy Spirit!
 - NO SEAL... NO DEAL...

THANKSGIVING AND (FIRST of TWO) PRAYER

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

- A personal revelation, encounter, and relationship...
- Think of it this way, we have been witness lately to heads of state having conversations with one another. How do Russian, Ukrainian, Chinese presidents speak to President Biden? With the aid of an interpreter.
- Through the Holy Spirit we are in touch with God, and only through the Holy Spirit.

ENLIGHTENED & HOPEFUL

18 the eyes of your understanding being **enlightened**; that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of **His** inheritance in the saints,

- Don't miss how valuable WE ARE to God!

PLUGGED IN

19 and what *is* the exceeding greatness of **His power** toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

RESURRECTED & READY TO RULE

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21 far above all principality and power and might (**Fallen angels**) and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

CCSV, whatever it is that seems like a great challenge to us – is nothing for Him. Nothing!