

God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us

Thirty-Seventh Annual
St. Louis Area-Wide Lectureship

September 21-23

2017

Enriched

(en-rich) verb:

To make fuller,
more meaningful,
or more rewarding

A study in the book of Ephesians

Enriched

A study in the book of Ephesians

37th Annual

St. Louis Area-Wide Lectureship

Sept 21 – 23rd, 2017

Hosted by the St Peters church of Christ

Thursday, September 21st

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- | | |
|------|---|
| 2 pm | Enriched by His Grace – Eph 1:3-18
Matt Stewart |
| 3 pm | Enriched by His Mercy & Kindness – Eph 2:1-18
Shawn Deree |
| 6:15 | Congregational Singing |
| 7 pm | Enriched by a New Relationship – Eph 2:19-22
Barry O'Dell
(Breakout sessions: 2 yrs – K; teachers from Pacific church of Christ) |
| 8 pm | Enriched Through Preaching – Eph 3:1-13
Jerry Sullins
(Breakout sessions: 2 yrs – K; teachers from Pacific church of Christ) |

Friday, September 22nd

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- | | |
|------|--|
| 2 pm | Enriched by the Love of Christ – Eph 3:14-21
Barry O'Dell |
| 3 pm | Enriched by Unity – Eph 4:1-6
Kelvin Pugh |
| 6:15 | Congregational Singing |
| 7 pm | Enriched by Doing My Share – Eph 4:7-16
Denny Petrillo
(Breakout sessions: 2 yrs – K; teachers from Foristell church of Christ) |
| 8 pm | Impoverished by the Prosperity Gospel
David Powell
(Breakout sessions: 2 yrs – K; teachers from Foristell church of Christ) |

Saturday, September 23rd

- 8 am** **Coffee & Donuts provided**
- 8:40** **Congregational Singing**
- 9 am** **Enriched by Christ's Example** – Eph 5:1, 2
Kelvin Pugh
(Breakout: 2 yrs – K; teachers from West End church of Christ)
(Breakout: 1st – 4th grade; teachers from West End church of Christ)
(Breakout: 5th – 12th grade; J.C Owens)
- 10 am** **Enriched by God's Plan for the Family** – Eph 5:22 – 6:4
Denny Petrillo
- 10 am** **Looking for Riches (session for ladies only)**
Kathy Petrillo
(Breakout: 2 yrs – K; teachers from St Peters church of Christ)
(Breakout: 1st – 4th grade; teachers from St Peters church of Christ)
(Breakout: 5th – 12th grade; J.C Owens)
- 11 am** **Enriched by Taking up God's Armor** – Eph 6:11-17
David Powell

Enriched

It seems like each year another “get rich quick scheme” pops up. It makes its rounds on the internet, through email inboxes, over TV commercials and even through the mail. I mean, how many Nigerian princes with \$95 million dollars who need *your* help and *your* bank account can there be? Yet, each year people are duped out of their hard-earned money because they think that just investing a “little” into some hair-brained idea will net them “a lot.” They take ridiculous risks because the lure of getting rich is just too tempting. People like Charles Ponzei and Bernie Madoff exist because others were willing to ignore the “if it seems too good to be true it probably is” mantra.

Do you want true riches? God has not hidden true riches in a riverbed to be dredged and discovered like gold, in the ground to be dug up like a diamond, or in bedrock to be drilled like oil. God has clearly communicated to us that true riches are accessible, attainable and available in Christ.

The “riches” of Christ were a key point in Paul’s preaching. Ephesians 3:8 says, “...this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”. To Paul, only in Christ can we find true riches. These riches are not unsearchable because they cannot be found, but because they are so vast that they cannot be fully comprehended nor described. If you truly want to be “enriched”, you need to stop looking to the world to fulfill your needs. You need to look to Christ.

I hope and pray that this St. Louis area-wide lectureship and lessons centered around the book of Ephesians will enrich your spiritual life. Physical riches may be elusive, but spiritual riches are readily available in Christ.

Aaron Baker,
2017 St. Louis Lectureship Director

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1 Corinthians 2:6-13	Freely given to us
Romans 16:25-26	To Establish you
Eph. 3:1-11	Understanding
Colossians 1:25-29	Teaching all in wisdom

IV. en**RICH**ed by His Grace: By Forgiving all our sins

Eph. 1:7	Redemption through His blood
Hebrews 10:17-23	By ONE offering
Colossians 2:11-14	Making us Alive with Him
Acts 13:26-39	Therefore Christ is Preached
1 John 1:7-9	When His children confess

Conclusion: Ephesians 1:3,18

God has truly:

Blessed us with “Every Spiritual Blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

We can truly:

“...Know the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

**“...according to the good pleasure of His will,
to the praise of the glory of His grace.”
Ephesians 1:5-6**

Enriched By His Mercy & Kindness

Ephesians 2:1-18

Shawn Deree

Opening statement: People don't go to heaven because they are obedient; rather they go to heaven because God is GRACIOUS and sent Jesus to die on the cross.

This Statement, in NO WAY undermines > the Importance & Necessity of OBEDIENCE, but it makes the point that God saves us, "not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace" (2 Timothy 1:9).

It is my Hope & Prayer that this Lesson will motivate us to walk in grace and encourage lost souls to receive God's gracious GIFT of salvation in Christ Jesus! And to be ENRICHED by His mercy and by His kindness.

Really this Lesson is about KNOWING, it's about REMEMBERING because when we FORGET certain biblical truths it leads us somewhere dangerous. The mercy & grace of God are at the core of the Bible and how MERCY and GRACE are DELIVERED and applied to mankind.

Mankind through ALL of his so-called wonderful knowledge & abilities has NEVER and will NEVER be able to SAVE himself. God is the only source of salvation. So we must look to the ONLY source of our SALVATION. Our God and Father through Jesus Christ and our OBEDIENCE to the Gospel He died for. And it is through OBEDIENCE that we are covered by GRACE.

Personal illustration: Let me tell you about a time when I forgot when I thought I was MORE than I really was which led me to forgetting my purpose.

Ask yourself this, "As a Christian, are you waiting for our blessed hope, or, are you just bidding your time, hoping NOT to mess up?" For those who RECOGNIZE this undeserved Grace, we are wanting to please God with our lives.

As the story goes: a denominational pastor argues with a Gospel Preacher over the grace of God. The denominational pastor says, "God loves us so much, His grace covers all things!" He then asks the Gospel Preacher, "How much OBEDIENCE is necessary to go to heaven?" BASICALLY calling the Gospel Preacher a 'LEGALIST.' To that, the Preacher Responds, "How much disobedience is enough?"

I was tasked with Ephesians 2:1-18. And in that discuss HOW we are ENRICHED by His MERCY & KINDNESS.

Let's talk BIG PICTURE here. In good and proper Bible study we need to ask WHY this section is telling us what it's telling us.

Ephesians can be called the "Book of Compliance." How we remain compliant to Christ and His church.

Ephesians is in the section of the NT that tells the NT Christian HOW to live out their redemption. (Key verses Chapter 1:3, 7, and 11 that set the stage for Chapter 2).

Chapter 1 is still in context. Paul by agency of the Holy Spirit basically says "REMEMBER what you have IN CHRIST" (vv.3, 7). Then God wants you to know something (1:18-19). "IN CHRIST" is key (Romans 3-4; Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-5).

So a quick summary of the book is NEEDED to help answer that question "HOW are we enriched by God's mercy & kindness" in Chapter 2

This is all about REMAINING compliant for those "IN CHRIST"
Or as Paul writes it, "HOW to WALK in Christ"

1. Chapter 1: It begins with knowledge of God's Word ... to walk "IN CHRIST"
2. Chapter 2. REMEMBER how you used to WALK (v.2)
V.10 How we SHOULD Walk
3. Chapter 3. Walk by what God has REVEALED ... what is written in His Word
4. Chapter 4: Walk worthy (v.1) by walking in UNITY in the "7 Ones" listed
Contrasted with (V.17) how to really NOT walk worthy
5. Chapter 5: (v.2) Walk in Love... that's walking worthy IF you are IN CHRIST (v.8) walk as children of the Light ...by walking "Circumspectly" (v.15) by: being wise, redeeming the time, know what the will of God is... etc...
6. Chapter 6: Walk prepared for spiritual battle...walk with the Armor of God on.

Let's define some words that are in the title of our lesson

1] "Enriched" ... Chapter 1 v.3 & v.7 define that for us

2] "Mercy" ... NOT getting what we do deserve

So HOW are we "ENRICHED" by NOT getting what we do deserve... we'll see that...

Ephesians 2:1-18 is about what I have IN CHRIST. This is about REMEMBERING what we have and by doing so as the REDEEMED in Christ. So that we won't go back to the way of darkness & sin in which we used to walk.

#1 (vv.1-10) Remembering My Redemption by God's Mercy & Kindness

a. vv.1-3 ~ I used to be DEAD in my sins, I used to be LOST in Darkness, I used to LIVE for self, I used to LIVE for fulfillment of the flesh. But by KNOWLEDGE, by the Word of God, I found out about Jesus. I found out what I needed to LEARN & OBEY from God's Word (cf. 1:13) to receive God's blessings.

b. V.4 ~ And thanks be to God that He loves me, He wants to save me. He offered me salvation. In His KINDNESS, although I was a sinner and EARNED the wages of death (Romans 3:23); In His kindness, in His mercy He offered me this (2:4).

I responded to the evidence about Jesus Christ. I believed, then by faith I RESPONDED in OBEDIENCE to His Gospel.

Question: How did I do that? The answer is in the next verses (vv. 5, 6)

b. vv. 5-6 ~ an obvious description of the mechanics & process of salvation in baptism (cf. Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12) SAVED by the Power of God. I didn't earn this salvation. I don't DESERVE it. It is a FREE GIFT. But I have to DIE to self, I have to REPENT, I have to take action concerning my faith (Like Abraham in Romans 4). I am IMMERSED into Christ for removal of my sins.

I may believe... I may repent... I may confess... BUT I'm still dead in my sins.

Question → Do you bury that which is ALIVE or DEAD? I'm still DEAD in my sins until I'm buried with Jesus Christ in Baptism? Answer → YES! [Describe mechanics of baptism (cf. Colossians 2:12)]

So then to remain COMPLIANT to Christ (being "IN CHRIST"), I Walk a very particular way.

BECAUSE (vv.7-10), here's my REMINDER by way of motivation:

c. (READ 2:7-10) We have purpose. We have a cause. I'm part of the greatest Purpose & Cause known to man. Like the young shepherd David reminded the people of God who stood in fear facing Goliath and his army of Philistines. David, standing with a faithful understanding said, "Is there not a cause...?" (1 Samuel 17:29)

So I understand that I am part of the greatest "Cause" ever... So I live accordingly...

I work... I've been called to a place of activity concerning my faith. I CANT EARN my way into Heaven. I don't WORK to get saved. I WORK BECAUSE I'm SAVED.

#2 (vv.11-13) Remembering My Past Life outside of God's Mercy & Kindness

(V.11) compare 2 Peter to these 3 verses. A short summary of 2 Peter is this:

Chapter 1: Peter TELLS about the RIGHT Story. We learn from what is written!

Chapter 2: Peter WARNS about listening to the WRONG Story. This is a warning of false teachers/false prophets that LEAD some to destruction [like a dog returning to its vomit (v.22)].

Chapter 3: is really asking us what story are we going to listen to? What's your choice? And Peter [as he is getting us to consider these things] says, "REMEMBER Jesus is coming back!" He continues to say "REMEMBER... Judgment Day is a reality so CHOOSE carefully what story you will follow."

Peter throughout 2 Peter... says:

1. don't be short-sighted (1:9)
2. Let me remind you always (1:12)
3. "reminding" v.13
4. "have a "reminder" of these things (v.15)
5. 3:1 "I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder"
6. 3:2 (READ)
7. v.8 "DO NOT FORGET"
8. "looking" for the return of Jesus (v.12)
9. "look" for what comes when Jesus returns (v.13)
10. v.14 "Looking forward" to these things BE DILIGENT
11. v.15 REMEMBER, Be Reminded, Look forward... HOW? → By what is written in His word!

We cannot FORGET what we have "IN CHRIST." It keeps us on the Right & Proper path. REMEMBERING what God Enriches us with > > > Motivates us to REMAIN in Christ

#3 Vv.14-18 Remember God's Mercy & Kindness has been God's plan since the beginning.

Genesis 3:15 > Sin entered the world, man from that point forward had a SIN problem. God's PROMISED redemption through Jesus Christ began at that time. The remainder of the O.T. is FULLFILING that PROMISE. It's all about Jesus is coming. The promised redemption of God, the Messiah is coming!

Matthew, Mark, Luke & John are all about REDEMPTION is here. Jesus lived the perfect sinless life to be the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God at the cross. The Cross is REDEMPTION perfected for us. Jesus came to FULFILL the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 5:17). Part of God's plan of redemption to offer spiritual riches to any who come to Him on His terms. The cross is GOD offering salvation, offering to ENRICH us with MERCY, GRACE & KINDNESS through the blood of Christ.

As Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds to keep your eyes FIXED on Jesus, keep your eyes FIXED on the cross. To keep our eyes on the end results that awaits us IN CHRIST. Ephesians Chapter 2 to me may be one of the most THEOLOGICALLY In-depth sections of the Bible.

But If I could sum it up in my understanding, I would say it's all about REMEMBERING:

- 1> what I have IN CHRIST
- 2> what God has done for me IN CHRIST

3> that this was part of God's plan for me, for humanity BECAUSE it is His desire to ENRICH us with His mercy, grace & kindness.

I need to REMEMBER these things so that I can WALK WORTHY "In Christ." BECAUSE IF I DON'T REMEMBER these truths; bad things WILL happen to me spiritually.

Conclusion: a REMINDER Paul gives in this BOOK OF COMPLIANCE. He is going to WARN us of a process that happens when we FORGET.

Ephesians the 4th Chapter V.17

v. 17, Paul says, **"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk ... [and that's talking about daily behavior > you should 'no longer walk' or CONDUCT yourself] ... as the rest of the Gentiles walk [and the word "Gentiles" here means "Heathens"]."** Basically a warning to those who FORGOT or NEVER LEARNED what the Christian has "In Christ." And a warning to those who DO NOT have Jesus directing their Day-to-Day Lives.

And he continues, "...and you should No LONGER Walk like that." Why? BECAUSE you've been changed by Jesus Christ! And should want to walk "In Him." Then he says, WHY they walk without Jesus Christ daily. He says, **"In the futility of their minds..."**

Note: that word **"Futility"** or **"Vanity"** [in your KJV] means more than just "empty." It means "Empty of Morality." In-Other-Words > someone with a broken moral compass," they are living a life that is "absent of moral, godly, guidance." Which is also a life of "depravity," and morally bankrupt.

An honest question is, "Why do some Christians FALL AWAY?" I believe, it is because they FORGET what they have IN CHRIST. Or they never really ever KNEW it to begin with. Maybe we FAILED them, and never taught them. Either way, they FALL AWAY because they do NOT have that knowledge of God.

They do NOT have that CONVICTION of Jesus Christ ruling their lives! Maybe they just wanted a Savior but not a sovereign King ruling their lives!?

Therefore there is no CONVICTION that those "IN CHRIST" SHOULD have as the Children of God. Those that NEVER FORGET that "new man" in Christ left those destructive sinful lifestyles.

Notice, there are 6 things that God tells us is that Slippery Slope of Immorality (vv. 18 & 19). This slippery slope we go down when we FORGET the MERCY & KINDNESS God enriches us with.

I want you to SEE from the Scriptures that MAN didn't come up with this list. God is the ONE who says, "Let Me show you the Slippery Slope." He says in essence, "Let Me show you What Happens when people decide to listen to the WAYS of the World, or to themselves, or to Satan, about HOW to DESCEND." They go OFF the face of the mountain spiritually.

Here's HOW it happens in Verses 18 & 19. As we ask and answer what produces the "futility [the Depravity] of the mind"?

"having" #1... "Their understanding DARKENED"

#2... "Being Alienated from the life of God"

#3 ... "because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

#4 ... and "Who being PAST feeling, having given themselves over to #5"

#5... "Lewdness" [which we'll also connect to #6]

#6 ... "to work all uncleanness with greediness"

How can we BECOME "Immoral"? HOW can our moral compass be completely wrong & inaccurate?

#1 It happens when our "Understanding" is DARKENED.

The 1st thing is that DIMNESS of SIGHT concerning God based morality. Our "understanding is darkened."

#2 They then BEGIN to "Alienate themselves from the life & light of God." He could've said, "You're alienating yourself from God." He could've said, "You're alienating yourself from OTHER Christians" He doesn't say either although both of those are TRUE!

Here he says, "You're alienating yourself from the LIFE of God." So we need to RECOGNIZE that I'm literally ALIENATING myself from where I ought to be! Because I forgot HOW God enriches me with His mercy & kindness.

I CANNOT STAND FOR IMMORALITY AND STAND IN 'ONENESS' WITH GOD!

In-Other-Words the "Life of God" that I ought to be living, I'm separating myself from that (as Isaiah 59:1-2 warns against). And HOW many times have we seen individuals that have went down this slippery slope, because they forgot, or never knew and their "Understanding" is DIMMED, then completely DARKENED?

What's the problem? We are "Alienating" ourselves from the "Life of God" the more and more we forget HOW God enriches us "IN CHRIST."

#3 Then eventually we become "Ignorant." We literally reach the POINT where we say, "I don't know, if it's right or wrong anymore?"

#4 Next, as we go down this slippery slope we move into a very DANGEROUS place spiritually, then Paul says we become “past feeling.”

In-Other-Words >>> we become morally “callous” our hearts are HARDENED to the deceitfulness of the sin in our lives (cf. Hebrews 3:13). And then we just don’t care about committing sin anymore.

As the prophet of old Jeremiah said (in Chapter 6) they could NO LONGER even “blush” about their sin and they did things that were WRONG but NOT only did they NOT “blush” ... they didn’t know HOW to “blush” any longer!

They were “past feeling” ... PAST CARING about the sin in their lives. Stated differently... they FORGET... or NEVER learned about the “Mercy & Kindness of God” that ENRICHES us... IN CHRIST

Invitation from the book of Hosea. As Homer is on the auction block Hosea steps up to purchase her.

As we, because of our sin are up on the auction block. Jesus steps us and says, “I’ll purchase you!” Offering His mercy and kindness to all who will obey Him.

Question #1 What Does “By Grace” Mean? Now... There is so a lot of confusion over the issue of grace. ...We all know there are those who abuse the word, acting as if grace is a license to sin ... or a freedom from obedience (READ Jude 1:4; Romans 6:1-7).

Those folks clearly don’t understand God or His grace. But on the other hand, there are Christians who seem to ONLY talk about what grace is NOT.

... They seldom – if ever – talk about what grace is.

They get very nervous when they hear, “Saved by grace.” They are quick to say, “Yeah, kind of, but not really!” They rush to dilute teachings on grace, for fear it might be “taken too far.”

Just so you know, when you hear the words “by grace” it just means something good is given that wasn’t earned or merited. So when you receive something good, it was either given by grace or by merit.

Or as the apostle Paul puts in Romans 4:4, it is either a “wage” or a “gift.” It is that simple and there is no middle ground.

The air we breathe, for instance, is given to us from God. Is it given by grace or by merit? ... What could we possibly do to earn the air we breathe?

It is laughable to think we could. Death and punishment are the ONLY wages we've earned from God (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Everything else is a gracious gift. When we fill our lungs with air we should say, "Thank you, God for graciously giving me air to breathe!"

It is absolutely impossible to take grace too far! Pervert it, yes! But take it too far, absolutely not! In fact, God desires to show us, "the immeasurable riches of his grace" (Eph. 2:7).

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Salvation by Grace? This issue is most significant when it comes to salvation. Eternal life is either earned ...or... it is given as a gift of grace.

Scripture makes it clear it is the latter. In fact, those in the first-century who claimed to have "EARNED" eternal life by their "obedience" to the Law disqualified themselves from possessing it (Galatians 5:4).

If we've received salvation from God then it is either by grace or by merit. It is either deserved or undeserved.

To say something like, "Salvation is by grace but not grace alone," is to say it is somehow merited and unmerited at the same time.

This not only makes no sense, but is entirely unbiblical. Listen to the word of God: (READ Eph.2:4-10)

All a person is saying when he says we are saved "by grace" is...

...that our salvation is completely Undeserved & Unmerited. We deserve punishment, but because of what Jesus did at the cross we are able to receive eternal life.

Salvation IS "by grace." That's what God's word says; So we don't add to that or take away from it. And ALL of it... all blessings, including Grace, mercy, salvation... is for those "IN CHRIST"

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How Do I Receive the Gift?

The appropriate question then is, "How do I receive this gift?" The biblical answer is, "through faith."

Much like the word "grace," the word "faith" is also very misunderstood. Faith might best be understood as a "total surrender" to God.

When we hear and believe that God is able & willing to save us from the horrible fate we deserve, we totally surrender ourselves to Him, trusting Him to save us from what we deserve.

Repenting and being immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38) is how we “call on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16) and appeal to Him for “a clean conscience” (1 Peter 3:21).

It is in this act of faith that we clothe ourselves with Christ (Galatians 3:27). It is at this point – and this point alone – that “our sins are washed away” (Acts 22:16). We come up from the water rejoicing (Acts 8:39) because it is by grace that we have been saved! NONE of it by merit, ALL of it by grace!

What About Obedience? → Does this mean we don’t have to obey? Of course not! That is an absolutely absurd suggestion! It just means your obedience does NOT merit your salvation (that’s what “by grace” means). We obey because we are trusting in God to save us, both at our baptism and in our continually walking with Him in faith.

Obedience is a matter of entrusting our souls to a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19). Disobedience, on the other hand, is how you REJECT the gift (cf. Hebrews 3:12-19).

The gracious gift of salvation is either accepted by humble obedient faith...or – at any point – rejected by stubborn and sinful pride: (READ Hebrews 10:26-29)? Saying “we are saved by grace” does NOT negate the necessity of obedience. It does not mean there is nothing we must do to be saved ...or to remain in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. It just means that even after all of our obedience, we will always be “unworthy servants” (Luke 17:10) who are saved by God’s amazing grace and NOT by our own merit.

For too long members of the Lord’s Church have begun conversations about salvation with, “You need to...” AND Certainly there are things man MUST do to receive God’s gift of salvation, But I think we need to start the conversation with, “God...” Therefore, we MUST EXPLAIN How & Why God provides grace...and then what man must do to receive it.

1. Christians Need to know that they have not saved themselves! If you are saved, it is by the grace of God in Christ Jesus! When you were baptized into Christ, you did not save yourself—you appealed to God...for salvation through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:21).

2. NON-Christians Need to know exactly what they MUST do to receive the gift of grace in Christ Jesus. They need to know what grace is, why they need it, and how to get it!

They need to know that their denominational preachers, pastors, priests, and popes may not have been telling them the truth about the grace of God.

Enriched By a New Relationship

Ephesians 2:19-22

Barry O'Dell

Introduction:

1. The book of Ephesians is all about being “in Christ” and what that means.
 - a. Every spiritual blessing (1:3), acceptance (1:6), redemption and forgiveness (1:7), reconciliation (2:16), strength (6:10), and on and on.
 - b. The Ephesians were able to be in Christ because of the work done by Paul as recorded in Acts 19.
2. A definition of terms – Important in any study of God’s word!
 - a. Enriched – “to improve or enhance the quality or value of something or someone; to make wealthy or wealthier.”
 - b. New – “not existing before; introduced recently.”
 - c. Relationship – “the way in which two or more people are connected; the state of being connected.”

Body:

1. “Now, therefore, **YOU...**” (Eph. 2:19).
 - a. To whom was Paul speaking? What was their past?
 - b. Acts 19 and Paul’s third journey. Paul ran into some who were “hardened unbelievers” (19:9) and idol worshipers (19:23-27). Temple of Diana.
 - c. Many became believers (19:11-20).
2. “Are no longer **STANGERS** and **FOREIGNERS...**” (2:19).
 - a. After their conversion to Christ they were no longer aliens (strangers) and temporary dwellers (foreigners).
 - b. What they were previously – 2:1-3, 11-12.
 - c. The Old Law was delivered to the Jews at Mt. Sinai – Deut. 5:1-3. The Ephesians were Gentiles in the flesh, but no longer when in Christ.
 - d. Not only reconciled to God through Christ, but also to one another. The enmity (hostility) that exists in the world cannot exist in the church.
3. “**FELLOW CITIZENS** and **MEMBERS** of the household of God...” (2:19).
 - a. They were now living together and belonging in the household (church) of God!
 - b. What a transition from the previous description!
 - c. How do we get into God’s house, which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15)?
 - d. Acts 2:41, 47; Gal. 3:26-27.
4. Their **FOUNDATION** (2:20).

- a. The apostles and prophets – John 14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:20.
 - b. Jesus Christ is the foundational stone off of which everything else is built (1 Cor. 3:11). Yet, He was (and is) rejected by many (1 Pet. 1:7).
5. The whole building is **FITTED TOGETHER** (2:21).
- a. This is descriptive of the character of the church (Eph. 4:11-16).
 - b. The church is compacted together by the right attitudes and doctrines (Eph. 4:1-6). This is completely opposite of the denominational world!
 - c. *Temple* would have a significant meaning for both Jews and Gentiles (Jerusalem and Diana).
6. The church is the **DWELLING PLACE OF GOD** (2:22).
- a. This verse helps us see that the church is a spiritual kingdom, not physical (Jn. 18:36).
 - b. There is not going to be a reign in Jerusalem for Christ. God dwells with and in His people (1 Jn. 4:16).
 - c. Paul said the same thing of the church: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (1 Cor. 3:16-17).
 - d. God is glorified in the church (Eph. 3:21).
 - e. All of this is made possible by the word of God which was given to us by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Conclusion:

1. Paul’s journey to Ephesus in the mid-first century changed many people for an eternity.
2. People who had been separated from God because of sin were now children of God because of the gospel.
3. Gentiles and Jews, who had been separated by a wall and enmity, were now reconciled in Christ.
4. The gospel that Paul preached to them is the same gospel that we preach today!

Enriched Through Preaching

Ephesians 3:1-13

Jerry R. Sullins, Sr.

Thesis: To show how God enriched the world through the world through preaching.

Introduction:

1. Before the beginning of this world, God, in His wisdom, chose to save the world through the gospel.
 - a. He would save all mankind through the foolishness of preaching (I Corinthians 1:21).
 - b. The Jews requested a sign and the Gentiles sought after wisdom.
 - c. Paul said, “we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness---(I Corinthians 1:22-23).
 - d. He said, “to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (I Corinthians 1:24).
2. It is the wisdom of God in a mystery.
 - a. “Hidden” wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory (I Corinthians 2:7-10).
 - b. The rulers of that age did not know it.
 - c. God revealed the mystery through the Holy Spirit.
3. The “mystery” is brought to a greater understanding in Ephesians 3:1-13.
 - a. Paul revealed his involvement in the plan of God is revealed.
 - b. The reasons for the presentation of the “mystery” are revealed.
 - c. The results that God desired to accomplish by the revelation of the “mystery” are given.

I. PAUL’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLAN OF GOD ARE CONFIRMED.

- A. Paul Was Called To Be The Apostle To The Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1-3).
 1. Paul was converted to Christ having been a persecutor of Christians (Acts 9:3-22; 22:6-21; 26:12-18).
 2. The Gentiles were once alienated from God (Ephesians 2:11).
 3. The Gentiles would have access to the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2).
- B. Paul Received Revelation From God Concerning the “Mystery” Found In Christ (Ephesians 3:11).
 1. It was made known by revelation (Ephesians 1:9).
 2. After the “mystery” was made known, it needed to be proclaimed.

- a. The apostles would proclaim that message as directed by Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).
 - b. The early church was active in spreading the message to all the world (Acts 8:4).
- C. In The Ages Before, The Complete Message (mystery) was not revealed (plan of salvation, organization of the church, membership, names, etc.).
- 1. The “mystery” was first referred to in Genesis 3:15.
 - 2. Further revelation was given when God promised that through all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3).
 - 3. The prophets of old spoke of the “mystery” and called upon Jew and Gentile alike to repent and do the will of the true and living God (Noah-Genesis 6; Isaiah 4-66; Amos; Jonah, etc.).

II. THE REASON FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE “MYSTERY” ARE REVEALED (EPHESIANS 3:6).

- A. The Gentiles Would Become Fellow Heirs In The Kingdom Of God.
- 1. The middle wall of partition would be broken down (Ephesians 2:14-16).
 - 2. No longer would they be second class citizens (Romans 8:17).
 - 3. They would all be one in Christ (Galatians 3:26).
- B. They Would Be A Part Of The Same Body.
- 1. God would bring reconciliation between the Jews and Gentiles through Christ (Ephesians 2:16).
 - 2. All mankind would be a part of the same body (Galatians 3:28; Romans 12:3-5).
- C. They Would Be Like-Partakers Of His Promises In Christ Through The Gospel.
- 1. They were qualified to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light (Colossians 1:12).
 - 2. They would be recipients of the great and precious promises of the gospel (II Peter 1:2-4).

III. THE RESULTS THAT GOD DESIRED TO ACCOMPLISH BY THE REVELATION OF THE “MYSTERY” (EPHESIANS 3:8-13).

- A. God Wanted the Whole World To Know Of The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.
- 1. Paul was a part of that plan (Ephesians 3:8).
 - 2. The “mystery” was past finding out without the revelation of God.
- B. God Wanted The Church To Understand Its Responsibility To Preach To The Whole World The Manifold Wisdom Of God (Ephesians 3:10).

1. The church has the responsibility to make the “mystery” known to “rulers and authorities”.
 2. This “Divine Wisdom” is to be made known through the church (I Peter 2:9).
 3. Everything about the church, her love, mercy, grace, identity, membership, etc. needs to be made known by the church.
- C. God Wants The Church To Have Confidence In His Promises Through Christ.
1. We need to have fearless confidence and courage.
 - a. Peter and John displayed this kind of courage (Acts 3-5).
 - b. Steven gave his life in a proclamation of the gospel (Acts 6-7).
 - c. The (Heroes of Faith) mentioned in Hebrews 11 had confidence in God and His promises fulfilled in the revelation of the “mystery”.

Conclusion:

1. Paul ended this beautiful passage with words of encouragement.
2. He admonished them not to be discouraged.
 - a. To the churches of Galatia he said: “And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:9).
 - b. To the church at Corinth Paul gave words that cause of to have great hope when he said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).
3. All Gentiles have the same hope that was promised to all people of His creation throughout the Ages (Colossians 1:27).
4. In Romans, Paul mentions several passages from the Old Testament speaking of the Messiah who was to come for all mankind. He said:

“Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.” And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!” And again: “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all ye peoples!” And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And he who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.” Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:7-13).
5. All people on earth can be one in Christ (Galatians 6:15).

Enriched By the Love of Christ

Ephesians 3:14-21

Barry O'Dell

Introduction:

1. How do you encapsulate the love of Christ in a forty minute lesson?!
 - a. Paul wrote that the love of Christ “passes knowledge” (Eph. 3:19).
 - b. Yet, His disciples are commanded to love one another “as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34-35).
2. This section of Ephesians 3 seems to be a prayer of Paul for his Ephesian brethren.
 - a. This prayer is based upon his fear that they “might lose heart.”
 - b. He did not want them to be fearful or feel guilty because of the persecutions he was suffering (3:13).
 - c. Here is his prayer for them:

Body:

1. Be strengthened in the inner man (3:16).
 - a. It takes strength to live the Christian life!
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:12; 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1.
 - c. This strength comes by means of the Spirit. In the same letter Paul answers the “how.”
 - d. Ephesians 6:10-18.
 - e. David wrote, “My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word” (Ps. 119:28).
 - f. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).
 - g. God’s word gives us the strength we need to endure the difficulties of this life!
2. Allow Christ to dwell in your heart (3:17).
 - a. Why is it that when the topic of “indwelling” is brought up that people usually only want to talk about the Holy Spirit?
 - b. Do we realize that all three members of the Godhead dwell in the Christian?
 - c. God, the Father – 1 John 4:15-16.
 - d. God, the Son – Colossians 1:27.
 - e. God, the Spirit – 1 Corinthians 6:19.
 - f. How is all of this possible? John 14:23-24. “By faith.”
3. Be rooted and grounded in love (3:17).
 - a. Rooted – “to render firm, to cause to strike root.”
 - b. Grounded – “to be founded, to establish.”

- c. They needed this relationship because of what he said in verse 13.
 - d. We need this relationship today (Rom. 12:10).
- 4. Comprehend the dimensions of the love of Christ (3:18-19).
 - a. How is this possible?
 - b. Romans 5:6-8; John 3:16.
 - c. The love of God cannot be measured and our lives are enriched by this great love!
- 5. Be filled with the fullness of God (3:19).
 - a. We are called to be “perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).
 - b. We are called to be holy “as He who called us is holy” (1 Pet. 1:15).
 - c. Christ has left us that example and we are called to follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).
 - d. We are to model our lives after His life (Phil. 2:5-8).
 - e. We do this by putting off the old man and putting on the new through renewing our knowledge (Col. 3:5-15).
- 6. Glorify God (3:20-21).
 - a. “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).
 - b. This glorification takes place “in the church.”
 - c. Matthew 5:13-16.

Conclusion:

- 1. As stated earlier, this prayer of Paul came out of his concern for them: “Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory” (Eph. 3:13).
- 2. The love of Christ changed the world 2,000 years ago and it is still changing the world today!
- 3. May our lives be enriched by the love He has shown for us and by the love that we show for Him and others!

Enriched By Unity

Ephesians 4:1-6

Kelvin Pugh

Introduction

1. The church in Ephesus consisted of Jews and Gentiles.
2. Paul emphasized the Gentiles were to be fellow heirs of the same promise and partakers of the promise in Jesus Christ (Eph 3:6).
3. As with human beings, sometimes once nationality may feel as though they are superior to others.
4. Some Jews felt this way especially since at one time they were known as God's chosen people.
5. Unity among God's people, whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female has always been important to God.
6. The unity among God's people should reflect the unity the Godhead has.

I. The Call to Unity – v. 2

A. Definitions

1. Walk – to regulate or conduct one's life
2. Worthy – suitably, worthily
3. Vocation – a calling or an invitation
4. Called – to invite

B. Description of our calling

1. A call by Jesus – Matt. 11:28-30
2. Heavenly calling – Heb. 3:1
3. Holy calling – 1 Thess. 4:7
4. Challenging call – 1 Peter 2:21
5. Transforming call – 1 Peter 2:9

C. Our Duties to this calling

1. We are to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the calling.
2. Is my walk of life on par with the high calling of the gospel?

II. The Character of Unity –v. 3

A. Dynamics of our duties for unity

1. All lowliness – having a deep sense of one’s moral littleness, modesty, humility
2. Meekness – gentleness, mildness
3. Longsuffering – patience, forbearance, slowness in avenging wrongs
4. Forbearing in love – to bear with, to put up with
 - a. This is being done under the umbrella of agape.

B. Depletion of Unity

1. The opposite of the above 4 characteristics will always lead to division.
 - a. Lowliness / Pride
 - b. Meekness / Arrogance, brashness, boldness
 - c. Longsuffering / quick tempered and quick to avenge wrongs.
 - d. Forbearing in love / suspicious, not giving benefit of the doubt

III. The Charge to keep Unity – v. 4

A. The Demand

1. Endeavoring – to exert one’s self; give diligence to
2. To keep – to take care of, guard, preserve
3. Unity – agreement
4. Bond – virtues are bound together to bring perfection
5. God demands His people to strive for unity.

IV. The Comparison of Unity – vv. 4-6

A. Duplication of unity

1. Anything that springs from the Godhead is unified.
2. Since we are the offspring of the Godhead, we are to be unified like the Godhead.
3. Oneness from the Godhead
 - a. One body/one church – Eph. 1:22-23, Matt. 16:18, Eph. 5:23
 - b. One Spirit – Matt. 28:19; Mark 12:36
 - c. One hope of your calling – Gal. 5:5; Eph. 1:18; Col. 1:5
 - d. One Lord – the One who has the power; Col. 1:16
 - e. One Faith – system of belief;

f. One Baptism – 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16

g. One God and Father –

1. He is the Father of all (Jew & Gentile)
2. He is the Father above all (Jew & Gentile)
3. He is the Father through all (Jew & Gentile)
4. Everything the Godhead is associated with is unified.
5. God's people must exert themselves to preserve this same unity.

Conclusion

1. The cost for being called to unity is high.
2. Each of us need to ensure we are giving diligence to keep unity among brethren as the Godhead is unified.

Enriched By Doing My Share

Ephesians 4:7-16

Intro:

- A. I had two brothers and a sister – all older. As the ‘baby’ of the family, I was a frequent an easy target for my older siblings. If there was something that needed to be done, they found a way to get me to do it.
- B. That same injustice is frequently seen in the church. It has been said that 20% of the church does 80% of the work. Think about that. If there are 100 people in the church, it is fairly certain that whatever was accomplished was accomplished by a meager 20 people. In the workplace we wouldn’t stand for such inequity. Yet we seem to accept this disparity in the church.
- C. Are we a part of the 20%? If the church was made up of people/workers/contributors *just like us*, what condition would the church be in?
- D. If you are a part of the 20%, thank you. Many churches would die were it not for the faithful few workers.
- E. Yet, we have to know that *this isn’t God’s plan*. He never intended on the burden to fall on those faithful few. The reason the church is often compared to a human body (cf. Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:16) is because every body part has a role and function. So also does *every* member of the church have a role and function. This is God’s design and plan.
- F. The question “Why should I do my share?” might seem like a foolish question. Apparently not. In this section Paul offers the *reasons why each should work*.

I. Each should work because each has received grace (Eph. 4:7-10)

- A. No one deserved what he received. It was truly “unmerited favor.”
- B. It is “Christ’s gift.” He didn’t have to give. If we accept His gift without responding in love and gratitude, doesn’t that insult the gift itself along with the Giver?
- C. Christ went through a lot in order to give to us (based on Ps. 68:18).
 - 1. Before assuming His position on “high,” He engaged in a great spiritual battle against Satan and those enslaved by him. He defeated these enemies of God (cf. 1:20-23).
 - 2. Instead of receiving gifts as the conquering hero, Christ *gave* gifts to His followers. Those gifts will be detailed in v. 11.

3. The magnitude of the sacrifice has to be appreciated. In order for us to receive grace, Jesus had to become a man (“descended”) and then return to heaven (“ascended”) as the victorious Lord. He did this so that He might “fill all things.” Every aspect we needed in a Savior and Lord was filled by Christ.
- D. Since Christ did His part, shouldn’t we also now do ours?

II. Each should work because each has been equipped to work (Eph. 4:11-13)

- A. Christ gave us all that we need in order to accomplish the work He wanted done.
- B. What were His gifts? Five categories are named.
- C. What was His intent in giving these gifts? To equip us for (note: in the Greek Paul gives a list of five areas in which we have been equipped. Each of these begins with the Greek preposition *eis* (εἰς), frequently translated as “for.”)
 1. for the work of ministry, (*for ministry*)
 - a) As Christians we are all engaged in various ministries.
 - b) These ministries involve our helping/assisting/nurturing other Christians
 2. for the edifying of the body of Christ (*for edification*),
 - a) There are way too many discouragements in this life
 - b) We need to find ways to build up, pick up and lift up
 3. till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, (*for unity*)
 - a) Our job is not finished until we demonstrate the kind of unity desired by God
 - b) This unity is found in the body image with one Head (Christ) and one body (His people). Cf. 1:22-23; 4:1-6).
 4. to a perfect man, (*for maturity*)
 - a) An infant isn’t able to use his body properly.
 - b) A church that doesn’t use all of her members is an immature church
 5. to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (*for Christlikeness*)
 - a) How high is the bar set for the church? We are to measure up to Christ!
 - b) It is not God’s plan to have a mature Head and immature body.

III. Each should work because it demonstrates maturity (4:14)

- A. Workers show a discipline, a commitment and an adult perspective.
- B. There is something wrong with a healthy person who won’t work. Such people demonstrate a number of problems:

1. We should no longer be children,
2. We should no longer be tossed to and fro and
3. We should no longer be carried about with every wind of doctrine,
4. We should no longer be carried about by the trickery of men,
5. We should no longer be carried about in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting

IV. Each should work because it is the only way the church will grow (4:15-16)

A. My dad used to say, “that lawn isn’t going to mow itself!”

B. Paul gives three reasons churches grow:

1. We grow because of a loving attitude
2. We grow because we are following our Head, Jesus Christ
3. We grow because everyone does his or her part.

Conclusion:

A. The title of this lesson was “*Enriched* by doing my share.”

B. We are enriched in this life, because we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done what our Lord wanted us to do. He cared enough for the church to die for her. Do we care enough to work for her?

C. We will be enriched in the life to come, hearing the words, “well done, thou good and faithful *servant*. Were we – are we – truly “servants”?”

Impoverished By the Prosperity Gospel

David Powell

I. Introduction:

- A. Text: Matthew 5:3-12
- B. Lead: They say we are impoverished by something called the prosperity gospel. What is it? And is it God's intention that we be happy or holy? Let's talk about it.
- C. Illustration: Joel Osteen Ministries
- D. Context of Matthew 5:3-13
- E. Thesis: To explore what the prosperity gospel is compare to what the gospel teaches about prosperity.

II. Body:

- A. Definition of the Prosperity Gospel:
- B. What are the Major Tenets of the Prosperity Gospel?
 - 1. Faith
 - 2. Wealth
 - 3. Health
- C. What are the Errors/Implications of the Prosperity Gospel?
 - 1. Was not Abraham was Wealthy
 - a. Genesis 12, 16, 17, 22
 - b. Galatians 3:14
 - c. Hebrews 11:8-19
 - 2. What do you do with the "Sin" of Material Poverty?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 8:9
 - b. 2 Corinthians 8:5
 - c. 2 Corinthians 8:10-15
 - 3. Do Christians Give in order to Gain Material Compensation from God?
 - a. Mark 10:30
 - b. Luke 6:38
 - c. Luke 10:29-37
 - 4. Is Faith a Self-Generated Spiritual Force that Leads to Prosperity?
 - a. Hebrews 11:6
 - b. Matthew 5:3-12

5. Is Prayer a Means by which God's Hand is Forced to grant Christians Prosperity?
 - a. Matthew 7:7-8
 - b. James 4:2
 - c. Matthew 7:9-11
 - d. Luke 22:39-46
 - e. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

III. Conclusion: God has called us to holiness not happiness (Matthew 5:3-12; 1 Peter 1:13-16)

Enriched By Christ's Example

Ephesians 5:1-2

Kelvin Pugh

Introduction

1. Following after the example of Jesus will enrich our lives.
2. In life, children often imitate their fathers.
3. In our spiritual lives, we should want to be more like our Heavenly Father.
4. The greatest way to be like the Father is to imitate the actions of the Son.
5. What steps can we take so that we can be enriched by the example of Jesus?

I. We need to be Forgiving

A. The Context

1. God is forgiving, and tenderhearted – Eph. 4:32
2. Paul begins the next chapter encouraging his readers to be like God.

B. God's example of forgiveness.

1. Who does God forgive?
 - a. Those who do not worship properly - Gen. 4:6-7
 - b. Those who were not His chosen people – Jonah 1:2; Jonah 3:4
 - c. Those involved in immorality – 2 Sam. 12
 - d. Those who murdered His Son – Acts 2:23
2. Why does God forgive?
 - a. Because of His nature – Neh. 9:17
 - b. Because He keeps His promises – Heb. 6:13; Heb. 8:12
 - c. To leave us an example – Eph. 4:32

C. When does the Lord forgive?

1. When sin is acknowledged and repented of – Luke 17:3-4

D. How does the Lord forgive?

1. He does not remember – Heb. 10:17
2. He subdues iniquities – Micah 7:19
3. He casts them in the depths of the sea – Micah 7:19

II. We need to be Sacrificing

A. Love will sacrifice for the spiritual benefit of others.

1. John 15:13; 1 John 3:16 – love caused Him to lay down his life

B. What other ways did Jesus sacrifice for mankind?

1. He gave up heaven to become a man – Phil. 2:6-7

2. Jesus sacrificed the comforts of life - Luke 9:58
3. He became our sin offering – Heb. 9:28
4. He became a servant instead of being served - Matt. 20:28
5. He sacrificed His will for the Father’s will – John 4:34
6. He sacrificed even when He knew the cruel results – John 2:19ff
7. He sacrificed willingly – John 10:18

C. We can be enriched by Christ’s example.

1. How much better would the church be if every member sacrificed like Jesus?
2. Imagine the lost souls that could be saved, if we sacrificed our will like Jesus?
3. Following the example of Jesus will always bring enrichment to our lives.

III. We need to be Pleasing

A. The result of Christ’s sacrificing?

1. He was pleasing to God.
2. A sweet smelling savor is a metaphor for that which pleases God.

B. Use of the phrase in Old Testament.

1. Burning of whole ram – Ex. 29:18
2. Burnt offerings (of herds, of flocks, or of fowls) – Lev. 1:9,13,17
3. Sacrifices without blood – Lev. 2:1-2
4. Peace offerings – Lev. 3:1-5
5. Offerings for sins of ignorance – Lev. 4:31

C. Use of the phrase in the New Testament

1. Eph. 5:2 – Life of Jesus
2. 2 Cor. 2:15 – apostles as they preached the gospel
3. Phil. 4:18 – money sent to support Paul in preaching
4. Heb. 13:15-16 – Sacrifice of our lips & doing good.

D. Practical examples for us to follow

1. Preaching and teaching gives off a sweet smelling odor.
2. Financially supporting good works of the church
3. Our singing and good works that glorify God

Conclusion

1. Each of us should be striving to follow after the steps of Jesus.
2. When we do, we can always know that our sacrifices and offerings are acceptable to God because Jesus never did anything to displease the Father.
3. May God give us the strength and courage to always follow and imitate Jesus.

Investing in a Life of Obedience

J.C Owens

Introduction:

1. So many in our world today have issues with obedience.
 - a. Young people are disobedient in the home despite what Paul said. Ephesians 6:1
 - b. They are also disobedient at school, work, and even to police officers.
2. These rebellious attitudes many times comes from the actions displayed by a parent, or both parents.
 - a. Mom and dad are disobedient to their employers.
 - b. Mom and dad are disobedient to God.
3. Maybe it's the negative stigma associated with obedience.
 - a. Many believe that obedience equates to a form of weakness.
 - b. Many think it's degrading.
 - c. Our Lord was obedient and was elevated by God. Philippians 2:8-9
4. Today's lesson will focus on obedience.

Discussion:

I. What is obedience?

- A. Define obedience – Webster's – to carry out instructions; to be guided or controlled; to follow directions.**
- B. All three meanings are important in our pleasing to God.
 - 1) To carry out instructions, i.e., **Do what God has said!**
 - a. Great commission. **Matthew 28:18-20**
 - b. Golden rule. **Matthew 7:12**
 - c. Plan of Salvation.
 - 2) To be guided or controlled. **Christianity is a surrendered life. Mark 8:34, cf. Galatians 2:20**
 - a. To please God we must allow Him to control our lives.
 - b. God controls and guides our lives through His word. **Psalm 119:105**

- 3) To follow directions.
 - a. Since God guides us through His word, His work is a direction guide.
 - b. Example: **Assembling a toy**. You must obey the directions to have success.
 - c. Only by following the Bible can we have spiritual success.

II. Biblical Examples of Obedience.

A. Constructing of the ark. **Genesis 6**

- 1) Instructions. **Genesis 6:14-16**
- 2) Noah allowed the Word of God to guide him. **Hebrews 11:7**
- 3) Noah followed directions. **Genesis 6:22**

B. The Passover in Egypt. **Exodus 12**

- 1) Instructions. **Exodus 12:3-7 & 11-13**
- 2) Moses allowed the Word of God to guide him. **Exodus 12:21-23**
- 3) The people followed directions. **Exodus 12:28**

C. The taking of Jericho

- 1) Instructions. **Joshua 6**
- 2) Joshua allowed the Word of God of God to guide him. **Joshua 6:1-5**
- 3) The people followed directions. **Joshua 16:16, 20**

III. True obedience is complete obedience.

A. As seen in the three cases previously reviewed.

B. Sadly, many only want to render partial obedience.

- 1) Denominations believe in God – **and that's good** – but they will not obey The Plan of Salvation in its entirety.
- 2) Our brethren are many times guilty of the same.
 - a. Only attending worship when it's convenient.
 - b. Only attending once a week. Hebrews 10:25

C. Biblical example. **I Samuel 15**

- 1) Instructions. **I Samuel 15:2-3**
- 2) Saul allowed the Word of God to guide him. **I Samuel 15:7**
- 3) Saul did not completely follow the directions. **I Samuel 15:8-9**
- 4) Therefore, Saul was displeasing to God. **I Samuel 15:10-11**

IV. Disobedience has consequences.

- A. Nadab and Abihu. **Leviticus 10:1-2**
- B. Saul. **I Samuel 15:23**
- C. Uzzah. **II Samuel 6:6-7**

Conclusion

1. If God dealt with those in the Old Testament days who disobeyed Him this way, how do you think He will deal with us on the Day of Judgment, if we have not developed hearts of obedience?

Enriched By God's Plan for the Family

Eph. 5:22-6:4

Intro:

- A. One of the great tragedies happening in the U.S. today is the disintegration of the family unit. There are many single parent homes. There are broken marriages everywhere. There are dysfunctional families. The breakdown of the home is always going to have a direct impact on the church. Weak families almost always result in weak churches.
- B. It is no wonder that Paul spends a large section in Ephesians talking about both the church and the family. There are just too many parallels.
- C. When talking about the family, each member of the family needs to consider his or her role and place in this divinely created institution. In talking about the family, Paul also has much to say about the church.

I. Why did God choose to describe the church as the bride of Christ? What concepts does this designation convey in our minds?

- 1. The Bride of Christ...indicates love.
 - a. The key ingredient of a healthy marriage is love.
 - b. The love Christ has for His church is seen in that He built her (Mt 16:16-18), and died for her (Eph. 5:25), having purchased her with His blood (Acts 20:28). No one would go through so much for someone he didn't love.
- 2. The Bride of Christ...indicates selection
 - a. There is a special relationship that exists between a husband and wife.
 - b. Equally, there is a special relationship between Christ and the church. Any church won't do – any more than any wife would do.
- 3. The Bride of Christ...indicates protection
 - a. When a man marries a woman, he is taking on the responsibility to care for her. Paul says that Christ “nourishes and cherishes” the church (Eph. 5:29).
 - b. Daniel 2:44 prophesied that the church built by Christ would never be destroyed. The church of Christ exists because of the protection provided by Christ.
- 4. The Bride of Christ...indicates devotion
 - a. It is God's plan for there to be one man and one woman for life.

- b. Yet there are those who want to make Christ out to be a polygamist! If the church is his bride, then how many brides – that is, how many churches – does He have?

II. Key Observations

1. Christ is the head of the church (5:23)
 - a. In the home, it is God’s design that the man be the leader.
 - b. It has never been God’s design for the church to have a human head, because that is the role assumed by Christ. What you think about an arrangement where a husband appoints another man to function as the head of his wife?
2. The church is subject to Christ (5:24)
 - a. Subjection is when one complies having to swallow pride and do that which he/she didn’t want to do.
 - b. Rebellious wife – failed marriage. Rebellious Christians – failed church.
3. Christ loves the church (5:25)
 - a. There are those who foolishly think the church was nothing more than an afterthought of God.
 - b. There are NO others that He loves.
4. Christ gave Himself up for the church (5:25)
 - a. His trip to the cross was a journey of love, a sacrificial act that required the ultimate sacrifice. How could anyone minimize the importance of the church?
 - b. Good marriages are built upon the self-sacrificing disposition of the couple. He would do anything for her; she would do anything for him.
 - c. Paul says there are three reasons Jesus did this:
 - i. So that He might sanctify her
 - ii. So that He might present her to Himself
 - iii. So that she would be holy and blameless
5. Christ is the Savior of the body (5:23)
 - a. There was another observation back in v. 23 that I’ve kept until now. Paul said that Jesus is the “savior of the body.”
 - b. He had already established (1:22f) that the church is the body. So, this verse says that Jesus is going to save the church.
 - c. While husbands can’t save their wives but they can lead them to Christ. Same with wives (cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-5)

III. Admonitions to Children (6:1-3)

1. The word for “children” (*ta tekna*) is not emphasizing an age group, but making a general statement regarding children with their parents.

2. The admonition is a simple one: *obey your parents in the Lord*
 - a. Obey carries the idea of compliance and submission
 - b. “In the Lord” means that whatever the parents demand, within the bounds of God’s will, they should do.
3. Why should children do this?
 - a. It is right
 - b. It is the first commandment
 - c. It carries with it two most desired blessings!

IV. Admonitions to Fathers (6:4)

1. One negative: do not provoke your children to anger
 - a. Fathers can be overbearing and unreasonable
 - b. The child becomes angry because of his failure to meet unreasonable expectations
2. One positive: bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord
 - a. Involves both training and educating.

Conclusion:

- A. Every demographic in the church is important. Each must know his/her importance.
- B. Yet everyone must also know his/her role, both in the church and in the home.

Equipped to Stand

Ephesians 6:10-18

J.C Owens

Introduction:

1. We are often times encouraged to **“Stand Firm”**.
2. In the military sense of the word **“stand firm”** means for holding one’s ground.
3. The Greek word **“steko”** means **to stand firm in faith and duty, to be constant, to persevere, to remain steadfast and to continue in that state.**
4. In this lesson we will exam the steps necessary to secure our **territory**, and to **stand firm!**

Discussion:

I. Tapping the Source of Strength (Ephesians 6:10-11)

- A. Battles are exhaustive. An exhausted soldier needs to be restore his strength or he becomes an easy target for the enemy.
- B. This verse indicates that the source of our energy is not found within ourselves but within the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Identifying the Enemy (Ephesians 6:12-13)

- A. In warfare, gathering intelligence is key. It’s used to identify and assess the enemy. The entire offensive strategy is dependent on it.
- B. In spiritual warfare, the Bible being our source of intelligence, identifies the devil and his host as our enemy.
- C. The weaponry used depends on the kind of enemy you will engage. Like pistols are useless in a situation that requires heavy artillery. We are fighting a spiritual warfare, therefore we need spiritual weapons.

III. The Belt of Truth (Ephesians 6:14a)

- A. The belt held the rest of the armor together. From it hung the scabbard in which the sword was sheathed.
 - 1) **Ephesians 6:17,**
- B. The interpretation is twofold. First it means the word of God. We must know the word of God
 - 1) **John 8:32,**
- C. Secondly, our integrity and character. We should be doers of the word, you can’t fight something that’s already within you.
 - 1) **James 1:22,**

IV. The Breastplate of Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14b)

- A. The breastplate was made of bronze and covered the body from the neck to the thighs. It protected the soldier's heart.
- B. For the believer this means to guard our hearts above all else, because it's the source of life as well as evil.
 - 1) **Proverbs 4:23**
 - 2) **Matthew 15:11**
 - 3) **Matthew 15:18**

V. The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15)

- A. The specially designed shoes enabled the Roman soldier to remain well-grounded even in the heat of the battle and to move fast over the terrain.
- B. The interpretation is two-fold. First, we have already been reconciled to God by the Gospel. This is our foundation.
 - 1) **Ephesians 2:16**
- C. Secondly, we need to be ready with the same Gospel to proclaim war against the devil and peace to the world.
 - 1) **Philippians 1:15-17**

VI. The Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16)

- A. The Roman shield consisted of two layers of wood glued together, covered with linen and hide, and bound with iron.
- B. Faith definition – having faith to obey God's word.
 - 1) Faith's purpose is not to shield us from physical suffering or guarantee ease but rather, strengthen and comforts us in every situation.

VII. The Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17a)

- A. **Illustration:** Private Leon Wilson escaped a bullet fired by a sniper by only two millimeters, thanks to the helmet that he wore.
- B. Our mind is Satan's battle field. He brings fear, hopelessness, frustrations and despair into it.
- C. We overcome these through renewal of our hope that flows from Christ
 - 1) **I Thessalonians 5:8**

VIII. The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17b)

- A. Roman soldiers carried short, straight swords. Very effective in hand to hand combat and was essential for individual survival.
- B. God's word is our sword. The only weapon of offense. We must use it regularly, in order to become proficient users.

C. Knowing the word (logos) is insufficient. We must know how to use the word (rhema).

1) II Timothy 2:15

IX. Praying in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)

A. We are encouraged to pray without ceasing, when the situation is good, as well as when it is bad.

1) I Thessalonians 5:16-17

B. Too often while we are warring, we lose focus and began to worry. Christians are encouraged to be careful for nothing or worry about nothing, but pray about everything.

Conclusion:

1. The Bible gives assurance that we can stand firm and resist anything that Satan throws on our way, **ONLY** if we put on the whole armor of God!

Enriched By taking up God's Armor

Ephesians 6:11-17

David Powell

- I. Introduction:
 - A. Text: Ephesians 6:10-17
 - B. Lead: How do we live right in a world that has gone so terribly wrong? With boldness and courage we take up God's armor! Let's talk about it.
 - C. Illustration: The Apostle Paul
 - D. Context of text:
 - E. Thesis: To explore how taking up God's armor in today's world may enrich us.

- II. Body:
 - A. The Christian's Battle with the World:
 - 1. Ephesians 6:10-13
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 4:2; 11:14
 - 3. Acts 20:28-31; Revelation 2:4-7

 - B. We are never Alone with the Lord:
 - 1. Ephesians 6:10, 13
 - 2. Matthew 28:18-20
 - 3. Romans 8:31, 37

 - C. Take Up the Armor of God:
 - 1. Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14; John 8:31-32; 17:17)
 - 2. Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14;
 - 3. Feet Prepared to Preach the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15; Rom. 10:13-15)
 - 4. Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16; Heb. 11:6)
 - 5. Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:13-15)
 - 6. Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10)
 - 7. Prayer (Eph. 6:18-20; James 5:13-18)

 - D. We must Stand!
 - 1. Ephesians 6:10, 13

2. Jesus Stood (1 Timothy 6:11-16)
3. Stephen (Acts 7:54-60)
4. 2 Timothy 4:16-18

III. Conclusion: Turning the world right-side up with the gospel (Acts 17:6)