

EPHESIANS -- ITS MESSAGE FOR US TODAY
(Introductory Message)

Intro: As I have been reading over this Epistle this week, I could well imagine from what the book contains that the Apostle Paul could well have used those words of James M Gray, if Paul had known them,

"Suffer a sinner whose heart overflows,
Loving His Saviour to tell what he knows;
Once more to tell it would I embrace --
I'm only a sinner saved by grace."

And then as you see the way he uses the word, grace, think of these words to that same hymn:

"Naught have I gotten but what I received;
GRACE hath bestowed it since I have believed;
Boasting excluded, pride I abase;
I'm only a sinner saved by grace."

The strange thing about this Gospel emphasis is that this letter does not just deal with the Gospel as such -- like Paul's letter to the Romans does. It is much greater in its scope, even though it is much shorter in length.

Perhaps you noticed the very prominent place that is given to God the Father throughout the book:

- 1) Note the praise in 1:3 -- addressed to God.
- 2) The prayer in 1:15-17.
- 3) "But God" in 2:4.
- 4) It is to God that we are reconciled in 2:16.
- 5) We have access to God in 2:18.
- 6) We are built together "for an habitation of God" in 2:22.
- 7) It was God who made the revelation to Paul that he speaks about in 3:2, 3.
- 8) The secret of that revelation was hidden in God "from the beginning of the world," according to 3:9.
- 9) Paul prays to God the Father again in 3:14.
- 10) In 3:19 we are to be filled with "all the fulness of God."
- 11) God is the subject of the praise in 3:20, 21 as He was in 1:3 ff.
- 12) Note 4:6.
- 13) Our Lord is called "the Son of God" in 4:13.
Not to mention them all, but . . .
- 14) It is God who forgives us in 4:32.
- 15) Christ is said to have offered Himself to God in 5:2.
- 16) In 5:1 we are exhorted to imitate God.
- 17) The filling of the Spirit leads to "giving thanks . . . unto God" in 5:20.
- 18) Servants are to do the will of God in 6:6.
- 19) The armour with which we need to be clothed is "the armour of God" in 6:11, 13
- 20) "The sword of the Spirit" in 6:17 "is the word of God."

All of these verses show an emphasis that is clear and unmistakable.

Along with this we see that God has a purpose which He is working out. It is sometimes referred to in the Epistle as His will.

His will is called a mystery in 1:10 because according to 3:9 it was hidden in God "from the beginning of the world."

Note such verses as 1:5, 9, 11; 3:9-11 -- having to do with His purpose and His will.

What is this purpose?

It is both present and future in its references here:

- 1) The present: 3:3-6, 11. Note the word, "church." This is what is new!
- 2) The future: 1:10.

This is what God is doing today throughout the world -- and He has been working on it since the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He is calling Jews and Gentiles in this age to be members with each other in the Body of Christ!

Think of what this means!

No Jew is fit to stand before God, and no Jew in himself wants to. No Gentile is fit to stand before God, and no Gentile in himself wants to turn to the Lord. We live in a world where the Jew and the Gentile have hated each other and where even Gentiles hate each other. How can such a truly wonderful spiritual fellowship ever be established?

This is where we look at another emphasis in the book: IT HAS TO DO WITH THE POWER OF GOD. Note:

- 1) All that God is said to have done and doing in 1:3-14, and then look at 1:19-23 -- the last request in the first prayer.
- 2) Secondly, notice the emphasis on what God does in 2:4-10.
- 3) Next see 3:16.
- 4) After that, look at 3:20, 21.
- 5) And then look over to the last chapter: 6:10.

God has a purpose to accomplish. It is entirely dependent upon HIM. He is going to do it. He is doing it. The goal is certain. And the accomplishment of this goal is the most important thing that you and I as the children of God have to be concerned with.

And this is why Ephesians was written -- to tell us about this purpose, and to show us what God is doing today and how it will affect our lives now and for all eternity!

The book of Ephesians, then, has to do with:

- 1) God's purpose for the Church.
- 2) How He is accomplishing that purpose.
- 3) What that purpose will ultimately mean for all of us.
- 4) How you can identify people today who are a part of that purpose.

Let us think about these things for a few minutes as we find them in the Epistle itself.

I. WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE?

This is explained for us in chapters 1, 2, and 3. But note especially:

- 1) Eph. 1:10.
- 2) Eph. 2:16.
- 3) Eph. 3:6.

All of this is being done in "the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1:22b, 23a) -- not a building,
not a denomination,
not a local church like ours (although most of us here are in the true Church) --
BUT IT IS A SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP, MADE UP OF PEOPLE OF EVERY NATION DURING THIS PRESENT AGE, WHO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD TO BE A PART OF IT.

II. WHAT DOES IT REQUIRE?

This is answered for us in chapters 1 and 2 -- although a part of it is in chapter 3.

There are two things it requires -- the first, a work of God; the second, a work which believers can do (by the grace of God).

- A. It requires the altogether transforming work of salvation -- always and only a work of God.

Cf. Eph. 2:1-10, and then 1:3-14.

- B. From us it requires prayer, much prayer, the right kind of prayer.

Cf. Eph. 1:15-23 and Eph. 3:14-21.

Actually prayer is not a work we do, but it is our crying out to God for Him to do His work!

III. HOW WAS GOD'S PURPOSE MADE KNOWN?

Paul did not make it up. The Apostles did not plan it. It

did not come out of the OT.

IT WAS GIVEN TO THE APOSTLE PAUL AS A SPECIAL REVELATION FROM GOD.

See Eph. 3:3, 5. Cf. also Eph. 1:9.

But this is not all!

The Apostle Paul was charged to preach this message to the Gentiles -- and that is why this Epistle was written. Cf. Eph. 3:8-11.

And we, too, are charged to teach it as a vital part of the Word of God!

IV. HOW CAN YOU IDENTIFY THOSE WHO ARE A PART OF GOD'S PURPOSE?

At this point we come to the latter part of the Epistle.

You can tell it by the way people live -- by their walk, but also by their talk!

The answer to this question takes us from Eph. 4:1 through 6:9. Once you understand this passage you will never have any trouble identifying a true child of God. It will help you to know if you are one yourself!

AND (as we are going to be emphasizing in this series), THE EVIDENCE IS NOT ONLY TO BE SEEN IN OUR LIVES INDIVIDUALLY, BUT IN OUR HOMES -- IN THE MOST INTIMATE AND CONSTANT RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE IN OUR LIVES! Cf. Eph. 5:22 ff.

V. IS THERE ANY OPPOSITION TO GOD'S PURPOSE?

Is there? It comes from all sides -- from the world, from the flesh, and especially from the devil! This is the reason for Eph. 6:10-20.

Our only defense is the Word of God as our armour, and prayer.

Concl: There you have the message of Ephesians in a nutshell. It is really unbelievable to see what God is doing. And yet we can believe it because God planned it,
God is sufficient for it, and
He is doing it.

Are you a part of it? If so, then ask the Lord to give you an understanding heart as we go through these wonderful chapters together. IF YOU ARE NOT, then perhaps God has been speaking to you this morning. If so, open your heart to Christ right now!

A MAN WITH A MISSION

Eph. 1:1a

Intro: (Welcome our visitors and give a brief explanation of our work, inviting them to come regularly.)

We are just beginning a verse by verse study of Ephesians and want you to see what we normally do in our services.

This morning I just want to take one-half of the first verse although the entire introduction includes verses 1 and 2.
(Read.)

I. "PAUL" -- WHO WAS HE?

A. The writer of this epistle, or letter.

It was customary in the first century to put the writer's name first, as well as the person or people to whom he was writing.

B. He was also the writer of 12 or 13 other NT epistles.

This makes him a very important person.

C. If you read the book of Acts (which gives us the history of the early Church), you would find that Paul was the outstanding missionary of the first century.

He traveled extensively throughout the Roman Empire, preaching the Gospel and then establishing churches for the spiritual growth, fellowship, and testimony of those who became Christians.

D. At the time he wrote this letter he was a prisoner in Rome. Cf. 3:1, 13; 4:1; 6:19, 20.

E. Possibly the most unusual thing about Paul was the fact that he had not been an apostle, nor even a Christian, while Jesus Christ was on the earth.

He could easily have been considered the greatest antagonist of the early Church, the one who seemed most determined to erase the name of Jesus Christ from the minds and hearts of men.

Instead, Acts 9 tells us how the Lord stopped him in his tracks, turned his heart to Christ, and made him one of the most outstanding of all of the servants of Christ for all time!

*His name had
not always been
"Paul." Cf.
Acts 9:1ff;
13:9.*

II. WHAT IS "AN APOSTLE"? He calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ."

(The best NT MSS read "Christ Jesus.")

There were some very strict qualifications. Only 13 men (excluding Judas Iscariot) have ever had the right to claim this title.

THE BASIC MEANING: MESSENGER

Here they are:

AMBASSADOR
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE.

- A. He had to be one who had seen the Lord Jesus Christ after Christ was raised from the dead.

This is clear from Peter said in Acts 1 when they were replacing Judas:

"Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."

And Paul says in 1 Cor. 9:1,

"Am I not an apostle? . . . Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? . . ."

In 1 Cor. 15:8 Paul writes,

"And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time."

Paul had the most unusual experiences with the Lord which may have even included his own death and resurrection, when in 2 Cor. 12 he speaks of being in the third heaven!

- B. Secondly, an apostle had to be one who had been taught directly by Christ.

In his letter to the Galatian churches Paul says this:

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12).

The whole 1st chapter of Galatians throws a great deal of light on this subject.

- C. Thirdly, an apostle had to be called of God. Note that Paul says here, "an apostle . . . by the will of God."

In the Galatian letter, again, Paul begins by saying, "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)." Cf. Gal. 1:1.

He emphasizes the same thing in Rom. 1:1,

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle."

- D. Finally, it seems that an apostle's work had to be proof that he was an apostle.

This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Corinthian Church,

"If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

Thus, on all four points Paul qualified!

- III. But you might ask, and you should ask, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Was Paul just boasting? Absolutely not! See Eph. 3:7, 8.

In 1 Cor. 15:9 we have these words from Paul,

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

In 1 Tim. 1:12-16 where Paul is again dealing with this subject, he calls himself, the chief of sinners!

No, it was not his pride.

IT WAS BECAUSE HIS AUTHORITY, THE AUTHORITY OF HIS TEACHING, AND THE AUTHORITY OF THIS EPISTLE, RESTED FIRMLY UPON THE FACT THAT HE WAS A GOD-CALLED APOSTLE! In the case of considering this book of Ephesians, it is important for us to understand this because this does two things:

- 1) It places the mark of infallibility upon this epistle -- it comes to us as the very WORD OF GOD -- to be received by us with the very seal of God upon it.
- 2) It carries that authority from one generation to the next so that today, almost 2,000 years after Paul wrote this letter, it is still just as true and just as authoritative for us and for everyone else as it was to the Ephesians in the first century.

Once you understand this, you will receive Ephesians like the Thessalonians received Paul's letters to them:

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13).

- IV. WHAT WAS HIS WORK?

Note: Paul was "an apostle of Christ Jesus."

This means that it was his calling to tell people everywhere about Jesus Christ. Going to the basic meaning of the word, "apostle," he was a messenger with a message. He was an ambassador on a mission. He was a personal representative of Jesus Christ, to give men the truth about Jesus Christ. This would include:

- telling them WHO HE IS,
- WHY HE CAME,
- WHAT HE DID,
- WHERE HE IS NOW,
- and, WHAT HE WILL DO IN THE FUTURE!

The Lord told Ananias in Acts 9:15, 16 that He had saved Paul . . .

" . . . to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Concl: Do you know the answers to those questions,

- Who is He?
- Why did He come?
- What did He do?

These are the most important questions that you will ever have to answer. (Give the answers briefly, referring to Rom. 1:1-7 if time permits.)

But equally important is this question: HAVE YOU PLACED YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST SO THAT HE CAN BE YOUR SAVIOR?

When Paul says, as he does in this verse, that he was "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," he not only meant that he was an apostle because it was God's will for him to be, but he meant that, in being an apostle, he was made a part of that great work which God is now doing, saving men from their sins through faith in Christ.

And so we have that authoritative statement in Eph. 2:8, 9. This is the infallible Word of God. This is the truth about salvation. Make sure that you know Him. This is the whole purpose of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ -- to do all that God required in taking the penalty for your sins and mine that we might be saved by faith, and by faith alone!

SPECIAL GREETINGS FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE

Eph. 1:1b, 2

Intro: In the first part of v. 1 in this Epistle we have the name of the writer, his title, his message, and the explanation as to how he came to such an exalted position -- and all in 11 words! (In the Greek there are only 7 words!)

Here it all is:

- 1) The writer: "Paul."
- 2) His title: "an apostle of Jesus Christ."
- 3) His message: "Jesus Christ" (or, "Christ Jesus").
- 4) His claim to this position: "by the will of God."

All of this constituted his authority -- and the authority of this Epistle.

From this we can say two things which need to be said:

- 1) This means that what we are about to read is not the word of Paul, but the Word of God.
- 2) Secondly, this message is not limited to the people of God who lived in Ephesus in the first century, but this is an Epistle FOR US -- and for every generation of Christians who have lived from that day to this!

Now we want to go on to see:

- 1) Those to whom he was writing -- these very special people.
- 2) His salutation, or greeting to them -- special greetings.

I. THE SPECIAL PEOPLE (Eph. 1:1b).

I am going to teach this Epistle as though it were written to people in Ephesus even though there are some manuscript problems with these two words. Many scholars believe that they belong there. It is clear that Paul was writing to a particular group. See 1:15, 16; 6:21, 22.

Both the NASB and the NIV include the words, "at Ephesus."

But -- what we need to notice at this point is that it was NOT written to EVERYBODY in Ephesus. It was written to a special group within the city. Paul calls them:

- 1) "The saints who are at Ephesus."
- 2) "The faithful in Christ Jesus."

These are not two groups, but two descriptions of one group. Let us see what they mean.

A. "The saints who are at Ephesus."

This is a term which Paul uses many times to describe

the people of God. It is a synonym for Christians.
Only once does Paul use it in the singular: Phil. 4:21.
 It designates all who are truly the people of God.

It is used 9 times in Ephesians.

The expression is meant to convey to us at least three things about every child of God -- AND THIS PRIMARILY FROM THE DIVINE POINT-OF-VIEW:

- 1) It is a person who has been cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ.
- 2) Because he has been cleansed, he has been separated from the people of the world. He is meant to be different!
- 3) And, being separated from the world, he has been set apart, consecrated, FOR GOD!

It will help us to know how we are to live if we understand who we are. We are "saints," holy ones -- not yet sinless, but nevertheless holy.

If you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are a saint!

B. "The faithful in Christ Jesus."

If you could see this word in the original language of the NT, you would see that this word, "faithful," is related to the word, believe.

"Saints" are people who have believed and who are believing "in Christ Jesus." This is the human side of salvation. It means that they know who "Christ Jesus" is, they know what He has done for them, and they have received Him as their Savior.

This faith would produce a certain faithfulness in their lives, but Paul is not trying to tell us that the people of God are perfect NOW.

- Note: 1) Their geographical location: "at Ephesus."
 2) Their spiritual position: "in Christ Jesus."

But now let us go on to see . . .

II. THE SPECIAL GREETINGS (Eph. 1:2).

Several things will impress you with these words if you are familiar with the letters which Paul has written in the NT.

Note:

- 1) This verse or its equivalent is found in all of the 13

It does mean, however, that in the midst of the trials there can be quietness, tranquility, harmony -- which all points to security and happiness.

The reason a little child cries when he gets separated from his mother is because he has no security -- no peace.

The reason people get apprehensive when they go to a doctor is because they may be uncertain as to what the doctor will discover.

IT IS THROUGH THE BLESSINGS OF GOD THROUGH WHICH WE ARE STRENGTHENED THAT WE FIND THE SECURITY WHICH RESULTS IN PEACE. This is what it means to have "grace" and "peace."

B. How "grace" and "peace" are obtained.

There is much more to be said here than we have time for this morning.

We could talk about both words and their relationship to the Word of God, using Acts 20:32 and Psa. 119:165.

Or, we could talk about both words and their relationship to prayer, using Heb. 4:16 and Phil. 4:6, 7.

Or, we could talk about those things in our lives which lead to the experience of "grace" and "peace," such as humility (cf. 1 Pet. 5:5b, "for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble").

But let us stick with our text.

"GRACE" AND "PEACE" ARE OURS TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE REALIZE THAT:

1. God is "our Father."

and that

2. Jesus Christ is our "Lord."

As you read Ephesians, note carefully what Paul has to say about God as our Father.

And notice, too, what he has to say about Jesus Christ as Lord.

Concl: Are you one of these special people? If not, you can be. If you are, are you living like one? If not, start now.

OF ALL
THE GREATEST BLESSINGS
Eph. 1:3-6

Intro: In vv. 1, 2 we have:

- 1) The writer identified.
- 2) Those who were to receive this letter identified -- both as to what they were and where they were.
- 3) The writer's special greeting and prayer (which are one and the same).

Now in v. 3 we come to the first major part of the letter. It extends from v. 3 to v. 14.

V. 3 is the heading for this whole section indicating two things:

- 1) He is writing about "spiritual blessings."
- 2) His main purpose in mentioning them here is to praise God for what He has done. To bless God is to speak well of Him, i.e., to offer Him praise.

First of all, let us go through these 4 verses which we have this morning to make sure that we understand what Paul has written.

N.B. WE ARE DEFINITELY LOOKING AT THE DIVINE SIDE OF SALVA-

- I. THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE. TION UNTIL WE GET TO V. 12. TO UNDERSTAND SALV. WE MUST SEE GOD'S SIDE FIRST.

We can easily divide this according to the 4 verses.

- 1) In v. 3 we have the theme of the passage: the spiritual blessings that God has bestowed upon His people.
- 2) In v. 4 -- the first of the blessings which, in turn, makes the others possible. Paul tells the Ephesians that:
 - a) They were chosen.
 - b) When they were chosen.
 - c) Why they were chosen.
- 3) In v. 5 (taking the words, "in love," to be a part of v. 5 instead of v. 4) we have the second of these blessings:
 - a) That God pre-determined that we should have a special relationship to Him -- "the adoption of sons."
 - b) That this purpose originated with His "love."
 - c) That this purpose is guaranteed because it is an expression of His will.
- 4) In v. 6, instead of going on to the third blessing (which comes in v. 7), Paul points to one of the present reasons as well as one of the eternal reasons why God has so blessed His people -- that His people should praise Him for "the glory of His grace, which (as the ASV and the NASV render it) He hath freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Going back to v. 3 . . .

What do we need to understand about the "spiritual blessings"?

There are 7 things:

- 1) They come from God.
- 2) We already have them.
- 3) Every believer is blessed in the same way.
- 4) Every believer has "all."
- 5) They are spiritual blessings -- not material, and not physical -- spiritual because:
 - a) They originate with God.
 - b) They are heavenly in character.
 - c) They are produced by God without man having any part in them.
- 6) The blessings are lit., in the heavenlies, i.e., they bring us into that heavenly condition of things which will be ours throughout eternity. This expression is used in 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12.
- 7) These blessings can only be found "in Christ."

The foundational blessing (v. 4).

The believer must know that his salvation began with God -- "before the foundation of the world." This is a fact too great for our finite minds to comprehend. Believe it and enjoy it even though you cannot understand it!

And do not let it bother you as far as witnessing is concerned. Spurgeon used to say jokingly,
 "If you lead some person to Christ who is not chosen, God will forgive you."

The verb, "chose," means that He chose for Himself!

And the primary object of His choice is to change us. We are to "be holy and without blame before Him."

"Holy" is what a saint is. See v. 1. "Without blame" is an expression which means that there is nothing in us that would render us unacceptable to God.

Paul is looking here at the final state of every believer -- and at what we will be forever, throughout eternity, once that goal, now in process, is reached!

What amazing truth this is!

The second blessing (v. 5).

Note that all of these verses have one thing in common:

- 1) V. 3 -- "in Christ."
- 2) V. 4 -- "in Him."
- 3) V. 5 -- "by (or, through) Jesus Christ."
- 4) V. 6 -- "in the Beloved."

And this all ties in with "in Christ Jesus" from v. 1! That which is ours we have only by virtue of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now for this second blessing -- God was not satisfied just to choose us for Himself; HE PRE-DETERMINED THAT WE SHOULD BE HIS SONS, thus sharing the position held only by the Lord Jesus Christ!

We are not adopted sons. That is not what the passage means. We are born sons, and placed in the family as sons. Cf. 1 John 3:1 where the word is "children."

We are SONS because:

- 1) Of God's great love for us.
- 2) He by a sovereign act of His will determined that we should be. Note what this tells us about the goodness of the will of God.

The present and ultimate purpose (v. 6).

We had "grace" in v. 2; now we come to it again -- the undeserved favor of God. God giving us what we could never deserve and not giving us what we do deserve.

"The glory of His grace" points to:

- 1) What God had to work with.
- 2) What He is doing with what He has to work with.

And the dearness of it all is emphasized by the title that is used here for our Lord: He is "the Beloved" -- the Beloved of the Father. Cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

II. THE MAIN POINT OF THE PASSAGE.

It does not seem to have been instructional (although he is obviously teaching). Every believer learns more about his salvation after he is saved than he could ever know before. WE SEE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOCT. AND PRACTICE. The main point is worship, praise, thanksgiving! This is seen in the word, "Blessed."

Now the question is: ARE YOU PRAISING THE LORD FOR THESE GREAT TRUTHS AND SO ALLOWING YOUR HEART TO BE DRAWN UNDER THE MIGHTY INFLUENCE OF THEM BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHO LED PAUL TO WRITE THESE THINGS?

This is what Paul is concerned about. We need not only to know these things, but this should be the main part of our praise when we come to the Lord to worship Him.

Concl: Let me close with one question from each verse.

- 1) On v. 3: How recently and how much have you praised the Lord for "the spiritual blessings" that you have in Christ? You thank Him for the material, the temporal, the physical. What about the spiritual?
- 2) On v. 4: You can rejoice in the fact that you were "chosen . . . in him before the foundation of the world," but have the thanked the Lord for the purpose of your choosing?
 - a) God chose you for Himself.
 - b) He chose you so that you would be "holy and without blame before Him."How much do you long to be what He wants you to be?
- 3) On v. 5: Have you lost your delight in the fact that you are in the family of God, that God has placed you there as His son?

Are you living like a son of God?

Are you drawing upon all of the resources that you have in Christ and in God?

- 4) On v. 6: Are you praising God for His grace, and do you always keep in mind that you would have no part in God except for the grace of God?

Paul would teach us that the things that we pray about and the things that we praise God for are the things which usually become the most important things in our lives.

What if you are not a Christian?

You can be this morning by receiving Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior.

GOD'S
THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE
Eph. 1:7-10

Intro: We are looking at the blessing that we have in Christ -- blessings which serve a twofold purpose for Paul in this Ephesian letter:

- 1) These form the subject of his praise to God (in vv. 3-14).
- 2) He is teaching.

There are many ways in which we as the people of God are different. BUT -- we all have the same need,
we all have the same blessings in Christ,
and we all have the same destiny.

Therefore, Paul's praise should be ours, too!

The blessings are unbelievable to begin with, and they just go on getting better and better as we read from v. 3 to v. 14.

In the verses we will consider in this message, the little expression, "the riches of his grace" is a connecting link between two ideas, OR we might say that it is an expression which points in two directions: backwards and ahead -- back to v. 7; ahead to vv. 8-10! (Show how this is indicated in the text.)

And so in considering these verses this morning I want us to do three things:

- I. First, look at THE SOURCE OF ALL OF OUR BLESSINGS.
 - II. Second, note WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE. This will take us into v. 7.
 - III. Finally, we want to see in vv. 8-10 WHAT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO.
- I. THE SOURCE OF ALL OF OUR BLESSINGS.

Obviously it is God -- but what in particular about God?

It is often a terrifying thing to learn the truth about God, especially if at the same time you are learning the truth about yourself!

God is absolutely holy. Man is utterly sinful. How can such a God have anything to do with us?

There is only one reason: "the riches of His grace."

Back of His grace is His love. Instead of choosing to give us what we deserve God has chosen to deal with us in grace, which indicates what kind of a God He is.

"Grace" means ^{the} undeserved goodness of God toward man. We can understand why it is undeserved. But "grace" is shown to

man in two ways:

- 1) First, God does not give us what we deserve. (Explain.)
- 2) Second, He does give us what we could never deserve or earn or merit in any sense of the word.

And Paul speaks of "the riches" of God's grace for two reasons:

- 1) First, because "His grace" is adequate for the poorest of sinners -- yes, for all of the poor sinners of the earth in every generation!
- 2) Second, because "his grace" brings us into blessings that go beyond anything that man could ever have imagined!

As proof of these statements, let us now move to our second point:

II. WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE (Eph. 1:7).

This, of course, speaks, as the verse indicates, only of those who are IN CHRIST. We are placed in Christ when we receive Him as our Savior like a vine and a branch are joined to each other.

V. 7 is really made up of two parallel statements -- each one helps to explain the other.

What do we have?

We have "redemption" and "the forgiveness of our sins."

Both of these words speak of a release. And "redemption" in particular includes in the very word itself the idea that we cannot get back into that bondage, into that place of judgment again.

How can we have them?

Two reasons are given here:

- 1) By the "blood" of Christ -- the price that had to be paid.
- 2) By the "grace" of God -- which shows that the reason for our salvation is in God, and not in us.

And we are all alike in this. Our sins may be different, but our redemption and forgiveness in every case is just as complete and just as permanent!

It is no wonder that Paul is filled with praise to God!

But this leads to our third point.

III. WHAT CAN WE LOOK FORWARD TO?

This also is because of "the riches of His grace."

Cf. Eph. 2:7 as further proof!

WE CAN OBVIOUSLY SEE FROM READING VERSES 8 THROUGH 10 THAT GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE!

And just as God's grace has been rich enough to make us what we are now, SO HIS GRACE "HATH ABOUNDED TOWARD US" IN SUCH FULNESS AND ABUNDANCE THAT THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THIS PLAN AND ITS FULFILLMENT.

Notice the things that are said about it:

- A. God has a plan: "in all wisdom." This is a synonym for "His will" (v. 9). It means that God has laid out a plan for using the best possible means for achieving the highest possible goal.
- B. God is exercising "prudence" concerning His plan. This means that He is actually working at it. It is a practical word. The work is now in the process of being done.

Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9 followed by v. 10.

- C. God's plan is now known, but it formerly was a "mystery."

Note what this tells us about the OT. The plan is not there. A "mystery" is a divine secret. Cf. 3:3; 4:9; 5:32; 6:19.

Be sure to see that there is progress in what God has revealed.

Notice furthermore that this plan could never have been known except by revelation. Paul received this revelation. He wrote it. He preached it. The Ephesians were to know it with their heads and their hearts.

- D. God's plan is an expression of "His good pleasure." Cf. v. 5.

This means:

- 1) That He is doing what He wants to do.
- 2) That He is doing it because it will bring Him the greatest possible delight.

- E. God's plan is sure to succeed because it rests, not on us, but is dependent upon Christ. God has determined that it shall be this way. Therefore, IT CANNOT FAIL!

- F. God's plan is described (Eph. 1:10).

What is a dispensation?

It is a stewardship -- like the master in Luke 16 who had entrusted his goods to men called stewards.

Cf. 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. The present dispensation started when the Lord Jesus Christ went back to heaven and the Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers who were in Jerusalem.

This dispensation has been made up of "times" which Archbishop Trench defines as

"the critical epoch-making periods fore-ordained of God . . . when all that has been slowly, and often without observation, ripening through long ages is mature and comes to the birth in grand decisive events, which constitute at once the close of one period and the commencement of another" (p. 211).

So -- all through the history of the Church God has been working. The history of the Church can be divided into these "times" -- all determined by God and all being moved by God to one great climax! This is what is meant by "the fulness of times."

We have not reached this yet.

BUT WHEN WE DO, GOD WILL (LIT.) GATHER TOGETHER UNDER ONE HEAD, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, ALL THAT IS IN CHRIST, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him."

What is this great event which, as far as the Church is concerned, will usher in "the dispensation of the fullness of times"?

Call to mind for a moment what Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Church in his second epistle -- 2:1,

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him."

What is this?

THIS IS THE RAPTURE! Cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

This is to be the culmination of God's marvelous plan for us when the believers who have gone to heaven and the believers who are still on earth are gathered together under the one, perfect, eternal headship of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Concl: What a day that will be! All divisions in the Church will be gone forever. No more schisms. No more denominations -- just one big, grand Central Bible Church! (Would that it were true!)

Paul is rejoicing in this -- and we should be too -- for that day when the Lord Jesus Christ will be the Head over His perfected, glorified Church!

But, what will help us from this passage for today as we await that time?

May I suggest two things:

- 1) That here and now, and day by day until the Lord comes, or takes us to heaven by death, WE RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OVER US INDIVIDUALLY, AND OVER THE WORK AND DESTINY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.

This is the only way to be at peace.

The Lord is in control in every place -- in Cambodia, in Viet Nam, in Israel, in Egypt, in Russia, in the United States.

Let Him be in absolute control over us.

- 2) That you and I always remember that we would have no part in any of these wonderful things if it were not for "the riches of God's grace"!

In closing -- for those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ -- "the riches of His grace" are still available for you.

THE HEIRS OF GOD

Eph. 1:11-14

Note: Other titles -- A SECURE INHERITANCE
THE GUARANTEE OF SALVATION

Intro: Vv. 3-14 of chapter 1 give us a panorama of salvation.

- 1) It begins with God in eternity past -- with election and predestination.
- 2) It continues by pointing to the death of Christ as that which has made it effective.
- 3) It is concluded by showing how the work of salvation is guaranteed by the Godhead.

While all of the members of the Godhead are occupied in all that has to do with our salvation, note that in this passage of Scripture,

- 1) We begin with God.
- 2) We continue with the Son.
- 3) We end with the Holy Spirit.

We see also in this passage some of the goals of salvation -- both present and future.

- 1) Presently: in v. 4, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him."
- 2) Collectively as to the future: "that . . . He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." See v. 10.
- 3) Individually as to the future: "that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." This is v. 12.

And then, as we look at salvation, we see that the grace of God is spread through it from start to finish. This means that our salvation is from God and completely a work of God because:

- 1) To begin with -- I don't want it.
- 2) I don't deserve it.
- 3) I can't earn it.
- 4) By myself, even after I am saved, I can't keep it.

This last point brings us to the main emphasis in the passage this morning. SALVATION IS ETERNAL.

Every true child of God here this morning knows that there have been times in our lives when, because of things which we have done contrary to God and to His Word, we should have had our salvation taken away.

Most of us here this morning know that there have also been times in our lives when, at least for the moment, we would not have cared if God had taken our salvation from us. This shows the deep depravity of our hearts.

Remembering that this is a section of praise, of worship, it is Paul's intention to teach us that a major part of the joy of being saved is in also knowing that once I am saved I can never lose it!

Let us notice how this great truth is presented to us here.
Note first:

I. THE INDIVIDUAL PURPOSE OF SALVATION (Eph. 1:12).

We have seen in v. 4 what we are to be NOW. We have also seen in v. 10 what we will be COLLECTIVELY when the Lord returns. NOW NOTICE THAT V. 12 SPEAKS OF WHAT THE PURPOSE OF SALVATION IS FOR EACH AND EVERY CHILD OF GOD -- not WHERE we shall be, but WHAT we shall be!

This is our inheritance.

All of the future blessings of salvation are related to this in one way or another.

In what Paul says about OUR INHERITANCE we have two aspects to consider:

- 1) In v. 11 the verb is in the middle voice and should read, we were made an inheritance. This is God's side and is a part of Paul's prayer in v. 18b. God is looking forward to what He will receive from us!
- 2) In v. 14 we have "our inheritance" -- which is obviously our side, what we are to get from salvation.

Now let us relate this to v. 12.

The glory of God is the manifestation of Himself. It was seen when the Tabernacle was finished (Ex. 40:34, 35) and when Solomon's Temple was finished (1 Kings 8:9, 10).

To "be to the praise of his glory" means not only that we will manifest the glory of God in ourselves, but that God will be approved by the praises of men and angels for all that He has done in bringing us to this glorious climax of salvation!

Cf. these related passages: Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2.

The question now is this: If it were not possible for me to get salvation for myself to begin with, how can I possibly ever expect to bring myself to such a goal?

A part of the answer is given in our text -- and only a part. In fact, there are four specific things mentioned here by Paul which will help us to understand that, since salvation is of God, it cannot be anything else but eternally secure.

II. THE FOURFOLD GUARANTEE (Eph. 1:11, 13, 14).

Are you ready? Here they are:

- A. The predestined purpose of God (Eph. 1:11m): ". . . being predestinated according to the purpose of Him . . ."

We had predestination in v. 5.

These are things which God pre-determined from eternity past. It was not decided when you were saved. It was not even decided when Christ died. We can even say that it was not decided after man sinned, or even when he was created. The predestined purpose of God preceded all of that!

Let me ask you a question: Who is greater -- you, or God?

Let me ask you another question: Do you suppose, then, that you can nullify a purpose which God has had in His heart from all eternity?

What a low picture we have of God if we put ourselves above Him! No men nor any nation of men nor all of the men who have ever lived can possibly change anything that God has determined that He will do!

Read Psa. 2:1-3, and then read v. 4!

This is the first point in our guarantee. It alone would be enough -- but there are 3 more to follow.

- B. The working of God (Eph. 1:11b): ". . . Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

This is like Rom. 8:28, followed as it is by vv. 29, 30.

God did not just determine that something should be done; HE IS WORKING AT IT!

And, from the text, there are three ways to describe God's work:

- 1) It is a continuous work.
- 2) It is an in-working (where the changes need to be made).
- 3) It is an effective work. I.e., it will be completed.

It is a work which includes "all things."

And it is being done according to "the counsel of His own will" -- i.e., according to what he has determined.

Surely this has to be a guarantee because who would say that God can fail?

Even this would be enough, but there is more!

- C. The clear, true teaching of God's Word -- "the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13a).

Could God have been any clearer in the Word?

Note Eph. 2:8, 9. Or Phil. 1:6.

Is salvation a joint effort between man and God? What does the Word say? Let us turn from the opinions of men and all of the experiences that they cite, and look long and hard at "the word of truth"!

Let us be like the Thessalonians as described in 1 Thess. 2:13,

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually wrought also in you that believe."

Remember that even believing is not a work; it is putting my confidence in the work of another -- in God!

Finally . . .

- D. The work of the Holy Spirit -- in a twofold way (Eph. 1:13b, 14).

1. As a seal.

This indicates three things:

- 1) A finished transaction. Deeds have always been endorsed by seals.
- 2) Ownership, identification.
- 3) Security. That which is sealed in cannot get out.

2. As an earnest.

This is a common practice which is found among most ancient nations:

" . . . money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid" (Thayer, p. 75).

This does not guarantee the purchase in this case, but it guarantees the completion of the work!

"The redemption of the purchased possession" points to the time when the work will be completed IN FULL -- when the Lord returns, and we see Him!

But what is the Holy Spirit doing now? Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18.

Concl: How do we get such a salvation?

Note the emphasis on believing in v. 13, and upon hoping in v. 12.

To know all of these things from v. 3 to v. 14 means:

- 1) Rest.
- 2) Worship.

COULD THIS BE YOUR GREATEST NEED?

Eph. 1:15-18a

Intro: In chapter 1, verses 3-14, which we have just concluded, Paul has taken us:

- 1) From eternity past
 - 2) To eternity to come
- in dealing with the subject of our salvation!

He has been dealing with truths that apply equally to every person who has received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Paul has told us:

- 1) About the origin of our salvation with God "before the foundation of the world."
- 2) About the character of our salvation -- "redemption . . . forgiveness of sins."
- 3) About the means of our salvation -- the "blood" of Christ and "the riches of His grace."
- 4) About the purpose of our salvation -- "that we should be to the praise of His glory."
- 5) About the way in which the Spirit of God has become the guarantee of our salvation.

You might think from what we have already learned that this means that the people of God have no more needs. But this is not true! FROM SUCH WONDERFUL TEACHING AND SUCH WONDERFUL TRUTH WE NOW MOVE INTO THE INNER CHAMBER OF PAUL'S LIFE AS WE LISTEN TO HIM PRAY!

This morning we will not get to the real content of his prayer, but we do want to see:

- 1) What encouraged him to pray.
- 2) The character of his prayers for the Ephesians.
- 3) The intensity of his prayers.
- 4) The primary objective of his praying.

I. What encouraged him to pray (Eph. 1:15).

We ought to be praying for everyone we know, BUT BEFORE WE CAN PRAY CORRECTLY FOR PEOPLE WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE THEY STAND IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. Are they saved? Have they been born again? Do they know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior? OR ARE THEY COMPLETELY WITHOUT CHRIST?

Once we know this, we then know how to pray for them.

What about these Ephesians?

Paul had heard two things about them:

- 1) Of their "faith in the Lord Jesus." This comes first. He knew how they felt about the Savior -- that they were trusting Him for their salvation.

- 2) Of their "love unto all the saints." This comes second, but it must always be there. He knew how they felt about each other and about all the people of God.

Always look for these. They are the signs of salvation.

II. THE CHARACTER OF PAUL'S PRAYERS FOR THE EPHESIANS (Eph. 1:16).

First note that the people of God need our prayers!

The prayers were twofold:

- 1) Thanksgiving.
- 2) Intercession.

Be careful to observe the order of these. It is important to start with thanksgiving. In fact, this will prepare your heart to intercede for others because you are concentrating, first of all, on those things which are a delight to you about them. If you have trouble praying for anyone, concentrate to begin with on the things you can be thankful for in their lives.

But then intercede. How wonderful it is to be able to tell people that you are "making mention of" them as you pray.

But we want also to note in considering Paul's prayers the things he prayed about. They are vastly different from the way we usually pray for one another.

III. THE INTENSITY OF PAUL'S PRAYERS (Eph. 1:16). WHAT THINGS ARE SO IMP. TO YOU THAT YOU DO THEM EVERY DAY?

There is one thing that Paul was always doing: HE WAS ALWAYS PRAYING!

The needs of the people of God were so urgently laid upon his heart that this was one task he never finished because the needs of the people of God never came to an end. Every day presented the same kind of needs which he writes about here.

In Paul's first epistle (1 Thess.), he told the Thessalonians to do three things all of the time:

- 2) "Pray without ceasing.
- 1) "Rejoice evermore."
- 3) "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

IV. THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF PAUL'S PRAYERS (Eph. 1:17, 18a).

ONE THING WHICH MAKES US REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PAUL'S OBJECTIVE IN PRAYER IS THAT THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE ALL INVOLVED IN IT. "Spirit" should be capitalized.

"God" is identified in two ways:

- 1) As "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is "the God" to Whom our Lord Jesus Christ prayed and to Whom Christ was absolutely submissive and upon Whom He was dependent. He is "the God" who did so many wonderful things for our Lord while the Lord was here on earth -- ultimately raising Him from the dead!!!

Is it not amazing that you and I can pray to the very same "God"?

- 2) As "the Father of glory." This means that He is the source of glory, the author of glory, the possessor of glory.

This word obviously has to be related to the word, "glory," as it has been used in the preceding passage. Cf. vv. 6, 12, 14.

This would mean that this request is somehow related to God's ultimate purpose in our salvation -- that we be like He is!

An interesting thing arises here: IF I AS A BELIEVER IN CHRIST ALREADY HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (as vv. 13, 14 surely indicate), HOW CAN THE FATHER "GIVE" HIM TO ME AGAIN?

We can speak of the Holy Spirit as being given to us when He does a certain thing for us! It is like praying for the Lord to be with us. He always is, but to be with us means to bless us!

The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" because:

- 1) He is concerned with the Word of God.
- 2) He has made known this Word by "revelation" -- which indicates that it is completely beyond the ability of of man to discover it or to understand it.

Now we come to the heart of the burden that was on Paul's heart: "the eyes of your heart (lit.) being enlightened."

THE PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE WITH THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT THAT THE WORD CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD, BUT THAT WE ARE BLIND!

This is the way we started out in this world. Cf. Eph. 4:18 and 2 Cor. 4:3, 4.

BUT IT CAN BE A CONTINUING PROBLEM WITH EVERY CHILD OF GOD -- and this is what keeps us from "the knowledge of Him," i.e., GOD! (That is refers to God is brought out in the prayer itself.)

COULD THIS BE YOUR GREATEST NEED THIS MORNING? You read your Bible, but you are not understanding it because you cannot see!

Read the words spoken by our Lord to the Laodicean church in Rev. 3:17, 18.

Is this the reason we have the record in the Gospels of so many blind people receiving their sight -- so that we would understand that this is spiritually our great need?

Concl: How is this need to be met?

Our passage this morning gives us the answers that we need:

- 1) Let us recognize that only God can give us sight, and that He does it through the ministry of the Spirit of God.
- 2) Let us make this a matter of continuing prayer for each other. This is a request that ought to come from our hearts and lips every day!
- 3) Let us be aware that this is our need, that it can increase any time, that it will always be in this life our greatest obstacle in understanding the truth.

This is what the Lord spoke to His disciples about when He was with them in the Upper Room.

It was the great problem with the Corinthian church.

It was the great problem in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Always be careful of anything that would grieve the Spirit of God, and always pray like the Psalmist did in Psa. 119:18,
"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

This is our great problem, but God can meet it -- and He will!

THINGS GOD WANTS US TO KNOW
Eph. 1:18b-20a

Related Scriptures: 1 Cor. 2; 2 Cor. 4:8-18.

Intro: I might have called my message this morning, Things God Wants Us To SEE (in line with the first part of v. 18).

We will not see these things until the Holy Spirit shows them to us.

We are naturally blinded to spiritual truth -- and we keep that tendency even though we are saved.

Note Paul's words in the 2 Cor. passage listed above, esp. vv. 16-18!

As we come to the prayer and its specific requests . . .

we must keep in mind that Paul's reason for praying this prayer is that we might come into the full, experiential knowledge of God. (See v. 17.)

LET US THEN THINK OF THESE REQUESTS, NOT PRIMARILY AS THEY AFFECT US, BUT AS THEY REVEAL GOD.

God is known in all of His works. Cf. Psa. 8; 9:16; 19:1; 145 (with its emphasis upon the works of the Lord). See also 2 Pet. 3:18; Phil. 3:10, 11.

I. THE FIRST REQUEST (Eph. 1:18m). Cf. Eph. 4:4.

In "His calling" we have the beginning; in "the hope" we have the ending.

"Hope" in Scripture is not something uncertain. It is something which is future and not yet realized. Cf. 1 John 3:3 as it relates to 1 John 3:1, 2. Also cf. Col. 1:5, 23, 27; Heb. 6:11, 18, 19; Titus 2:11-14.

The object of the Gospel is
-- not to make us happy,
-- not to make us successful,
-- not to make us healthy,
-- not to keep us from being lonesome.

IT IS TO CHANGE US SO THAT WE WILL BE LIKE CHRIST -- AND LIKE GOD!

This is why God called us! Imagine! Think about it! What kind of a God must He be who would:

- 1) Even consider such a thing.
- 2) Undertake to accomplish it -- especially knowing what He has to work with in you and in me.

This means that everything about us which is not like the Lord Jesus has to go! This includes:

- our pride,
- our self-will,
- our evil thoughts,
- our lack of love,

ALL of the whole, ugly, ungodly mess that is you and that is I, has to go!

Thank God it will be done. God is even now in the process of doing it. But it is His work. We must understand it. And, as we do, we come to see more of the glory and greatness of God!

II. THE SECOND REQUEST (Eph. 1:18b).

This ties in with v. 11 -- we were made an heritage.

Here we find the answer to this question: WHAT DOES GOD GET OUT OF THIS WHOLE BUSINESS OF SALVATION?

The answer: HE GETS US!

We immediately ought to come back with another question: HOW COULD AN INFINITELY WISE GOD BE INTERESTED IN A DEAL LIKE THIS? Isn't He losing out?

Let us see.

What are we? We are "saints."

What is a saint? He is one set apart by God and for God. Saints are holy ones.

Are we saintly? Not yet -- at least not like we should be!

This is where we need to understand the expression, "the riches of the glory." See it again in Eph. 3:16.

"Riches" means wealth, abundance.

God is placing His glory upon us. This is what makes us saintly. And He is wealthy enough in glory to make every saint saintly -- AND THEN HE WILL STILL HAVE PLENTY TO SPARE!

We talk about how wonderful heaven will be. DO YOU KNOW WHAT GOD AND CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ANGELS TALK ABOUT IN THE GLORY? They talk about how wonderful the saints will be!

"The heavens declare the glory of God" -- BUT SO DO THE SAINTS, AND SO WILL THEY!

The finished product is going to be so much more wonderful than you and I can possibly imagine that we will see then that God has not made a mistake in choosing us as "His inheritance"! Then we will be "to the praise of His glory."

III. THE THIRD REQUEST (Eph. 1:19, 20a).

The first request had to do with the past of eternity and with the future of eternity.

The second request had to do with the future of eternity.

The third request has to do with our experience in time -- past, present, and future!

We have here four words for power -- probably the greatest concentration of such words that you will find in the NT.

They are:

- 1) "His power."
- 2) "The working."
- 3) "Mighty."
- 4) "Power" (but a different word from that listed above as 1).

Combined they can only mean one thing: OMNIPOTENCE.

Three ideas seem to be present in these four words:

- 1) That God is powerful.
- 2) That God has displayed His power.
- 3) That God is accomplishing some specific thing by means of His power.

WE NEED TO KNOW THIS IN VIEW OF THE HUMAN IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE FIRST TWO REQUESTS.

Think of the omnipotence of God!

But then do this: Add the words "exceeding greatness" to this description of omnipotence.

Take all of the combined powers of men and of the universe and even what you understand about the power of God and lit. throw your thoughts far beyond all that you know and you will still not come close to what God is able to do!

LIKE THE
QUEEN OF
SHEBA VISIT-
ING SOLOMON
IN 1 K.
10:7.

See the word "exceeding" in Eph. 2:7; 3:19 (where it is translated, "passeth").

Now -- such power needs to be illustrated. We have this in v. 20a.

This verse evidently means that the greatest displays of the

God's power are only seen twice:

- 1) In the raising of the Savior from the dead.
- 2) In the making of a saint.

V. 20 does NOT read, Which He wrought in Christ when He made the universe!

And yet ask yourself: WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT THING THAT GOD DID ON THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION? COULD YOU ARRANGE THE DAYS IN ORDER OF DIFFICULTY?

The thought is ridiculous, isn't it, because they would all be beyond the realm of possibility for us.

Listen: The making of a saint is infinitely more so. Only God can do this. You will be overwhelmed with discouragement if you think it is your job. This is the reason that Paul prayed, and we need to pray, that our eyes would be opened to know the power of God so that we would see that what needs to be done in us can be done!

Concl: We will see the extent of God's power in the rest of chapter 1 next week.

Let me close with an illustration.

In the days of Elisha, the prophet, the Syrians came against Israel in such numbers that Elisha's servant in utter despair cried out,

"Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

This was Elisha's answer and Elisha's prayer found in 2 Kings 6: 16, 17,

"And he (Elisha) answered, Fear not; for they who are with us are more than they who are with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

This is what we need: open eyes -- eyes to see GOD,

-- "the hope of His calling,"

-- "the riches of His glory,

-- "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe."

Then and only then will we know that God's work of salvation in our behalf will succeed. It cannot fail!

THE EXALTED CHRIST
Eph. 1:19-23

Intro: There are two things which cannot but impress the careful reader of the Word of God:

- 1) The impossibility that a person could ever make himself a Christian.
- 2) The completely supernatural character of the Christian life.

This latter point is seen to be completely beyond our reach when we consider the ultimate objective of our salvation: that God has purposed that we be made like His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is because of these impossibilities that:

- 1) Paul prayed,
and that
- 2) He prayed as he did!

We find his elaboration on Point #3 in his prayer.

The only possibility that we can ever be like Christ rests solely upon the power of God.

IN ORDER FOR US TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT POWER CAN ACCOMPLISH FOR US, WE MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD IN "HIS MIGHTY POWER" HAS DONE FOR CHRIST.

This is the subject of our text for this service.

We see five ways in which our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted.

- I. CHRIST EXALTED OVER DEATH (Eph. 1:20m). (Read vv. 19, 20 down to the word, "dead.")

If you need to be reminded of the hopelessness of everything which has been caused by death, go back and read the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

Death is the result of sin. In order to deal with our sins effectively, God has had to deal with death.

And He has!

This is one of the two great themes of the Gospel: "that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures; And that He was seen . . ." (1 Cor. 15:4b, 5a).

In Eph. 2, vv. 4-7, we will see the relationship of the resurrection of Christ to us and to our destiny, but for now we just want to get this truth firmly in our hearts. OUR LORD IS THE VICTOR OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE. And Paul tells

us in Rom. 1:4 that by His resurrection our Lord was "declared to be the Son of God with power."

II. CHRIST EXALTED TO THE FATHER'S RIGHT HAND (Eph. 1:20b).

Where is this? "In heavenly places," i.e., in heaven.

Where is He seated in heaven? We learned in our study of the book of Hebrews that God is on a throne -- so the Lord Jesus is there with the Father.

What does this mean?

1) It means that God has honored His Son as He has honored no one else in all of the universe -- either in heaven or in earth.

Do you remember that verse in Heb. 1 (v. 13) which reads,

"But to which of the angels said he at any time,
Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies
thy footstool?"

The answer: He never said it to any angel -- nor to any man. CHRIST IS UNIQUE IN THIS HONOR WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO HIM!

2) It means that God is pleased with and has accepted the work which His Son did on earth -- especially on the Cross.

3) Most important of all in Ephesians -- it means that our Lord shares the authority of the Father in His sovereignty over the universe. There is no greater power than this!

Since this is true, we must also recognize the next point that Paul makes in speaking of what the power of God has accomplished in exalting Christ.

III. CHRIST EXALTED "FAR ABOVE" ALL OTHER POWERS -- HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY.

We have four expressions for power here -- governmental power.

The first two have to do with angelic powers, both good and bad: "all principality, and power." The first speaks of the chief powers like Satan, Michael, Gabriel. The second speaks of all of the lesser angelic powers. Cf. Eph. 3:10; 6:12.

The second two have to do with earthly powers: "might, and dominion." These are human powers -- first the lesser, like the power of men of wealth (like Onassis); the second is the power of governmental leaders -- kings, presidents, dictators, etc.

Take all of these mighty forces that are and have been -- "every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come" (which mean forever) -- and our Lord Jesus Christ is "far above" them all!

There is no power, no authority that is equal to His.

Cf. what Pilate said to Him, and what He answered in John 19:10, 11.

But there is another detail to this which we need to understand.

IV. CHRIST EXALTED AS KING OVER THESE KINGS AND AS LORD OVER THESE LORDS (Eph. 1:22a).

He is not only "far above" them in power, but they are "under his feet." His position is not only greater than theirs, but they are His subjects -- to do His will.

This expression at the beginning of v. 22 is a quotation from Psa. 8:6 -- quoted also in 1 Cor. 15:24-28 and Heb. 2:8.

It has always been true that

"the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will" (Dan. 5:21), but now this is also declared about the Son of God incarnate.

What tremendous truth this is!

Finally, in this series of statements showing the exaltation of Christ, we have . . .

V. CHRIST EXALTED AS THE HEAD, THE SUPREME AUTHORITY, OVER THE CHURCH (Eph. 1:22b, 23).

This is the first time Paul mentions "the church" in this Epistle where it is one of the main themes. Cf. Eph. 3:10; 5:23-25, 27, 29, 32.

What is "the church"? It is the body of Christ, a spiritual body made up of all believers in this present age. We have been united to Christ as our Head. He is:

- 1) our Supreme Authority.
- 2) One Who is always with us.
- 3) The One who cares for us.
- 4) The One who shares His life with us.

And we are "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" -- in the sense that He fills us like He filled the Tabernacle and the Temple when they were completed!

If Solomon were amazed at what God did in his day, how much

more should we be amazed at our relationship to the Lord in our day! Cf. 2 Chron. 2:5, 6; 6:18.

Concl: What does this mean concerning God's ultimate purpose for us in salvation as seen in v. 12 and in the first two requests of his prayer?

IT MEANS THAT ALL OF OUR HOPES FOR PERFECTION AND GLORY ARE IN GOD AND IN GOD'S SON, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This means that Christ alone is enough. And it follows that:

- 1) Death cannot nullify it.
- 2) Demons cannot ruin it -- nor can their chief: SATAN.
- 3) Angels are not really necessary for it.
- 4) Nations cannot stand in the way.
- 5) CHRIST IS ALL WE NEED. And our relationship to Him is such we cannot fail to reach our ultimate goal.

We are not looking here at the practical side of it -- how we need to walk with the Lord, to obey Him, to trust Him, and so on.

We are looking at the truth of what has happened and what is the true state of affairs in heaven and on the earth NOW!

Only as we know this will we really be able to enter in an understanding way into the practical side of our perfection. We need to know how our Lord has been exalted.

What can be our practical response to such truth -- without going any farther? Two things:

- 1) Believe it.
- 2) Thank God that it is true, and let your heart go out to Him in worship and praise.

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH
Eph. 1:22b, 23

Intro: Eph. 1:22 gives us the first mention of "the church" in the book of Ephesians.

The first time it is mentioned in the NT is in the passage which we read as our Scripture reading this morning (cf. Matt. 16:13-20):

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (v. 18b).

Our text this morning is important for a second reason: It describes the relationship between Christ and His Church as that which a man's head has to his body.

And then the third thing that is important in our text is the way the Church is described -- as "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

Therefore, this morning we want to consider these four words:

- 1) The Church.
- 2) The Head.
- 3) The Body.
- 4) The Fulness.

I. THE CHURCH.

"The Church" is also mentioned in Eph. 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32. Obviously it is an important subject in this Epistle.

What is "the Church"?

It is the term, or the name, which God has given to all who have received the Lord Jesus as Savior, or who will receive Him as Savior from the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 until the Rapture of the Church as described in 1 Thess. 4.

The word is actually used two major ways in the NT:

- 1) As I have just described it.
- 2) As it is used in Gal. 1:2, "the churches of Galatia," speaking of local church groups like Central Bible Church.

In Ephesians, Paul is only using it in the former sense -- with reference to all in this dispensation who really know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

You cannot get into the Church as Paul speaks of it in Ephe-

sians until you have received Christ, but it must also be said that you cannot receive Christ without being in the Church. EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN IS A MEMBER OF "THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY."

It is possible, however, to have your name on the roll of a local church without being a real Christian, and, therefore, without being a member of "the church, which is His body."

The local church is intended to be a part of "the church, which is His body," but sometimes people get in who are not saved. That is another subject. What we are concerned about this morning is understanding what the true Church is. Then, and only then, can we follow the Apostle Paul in what he has written in Ephesians.

We have already said that:

- 1) It is made up of all believers in this dispensation -- from Pentecost to the Rapture.
- 2) It is supposed to find its present expression in the local church -- which, however, can be and has been corrupted.

We need also to know the basic meaning of the word. The word, "church," means a group of called-out ones.

The Lord was referring to this when He prayed in John 17, "I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" (v. 6a).

Not only do we who are in the Church belong to the Lord, but we do not belong to the world -- and our lives are to reflect these two facts!

Let us not forget this!

Now -- in our Lord's relationship to "His Church," He is . . .

II. THE HEAD.

This is the specific aspect of our Lord's exaltation that Paul is concerned about in this Epistle.

What Christ is to the Church is illustrated by considering what your head is to your body!

Let me mention five things we need to recognize:

- A. It shows our Lord's oneness with His Body.
- B. It shows our Lord's presence with His body.

- C. It shows our Lord's importance in the Body.
- D. It shows our Lord's care and concern, His love, for the Body.
- E. It shows our Lord's authority over the Body.

He is the Supreme Authority, the Source of all its help, the One who meets its needs, the One who is always with it, the One who shares His life with the Body, the One who directs its destiny.

How important it is for us to dwell upon these aspects of this great truth.

But let us go on to speak of . . .

III. THE BODY.

Now we have moved from holiness to sinfulness, from perfection to imperfection, from strength to weakness, etc.

Two things stand out:

- A. Our relationship to the Head.

We are joined to Christ in the most vital kind of a relationship -- a living union. We belong to Him; He belongs to us. He is our life.

- B. The reason for our existence.

The body exists to do the will of the head. We are in the world not only to show our relationship to the Lord, but also to carry out His will in His strength and in His wisdom!

What remendous implications this has!

And there is another aspect of the truth which we must note in passing, although this is not particularly emphasized until we get to chapter 4. As members of the Body of Christ, we are also members of one another.

Consequently, we have need to be concerned not only about our individual relationship to the Lord, but our relationship to Him and to each other as members of His Body!

No child of God can ever get along without the other members of the Body of Christ!

Finally, we come to what is probably the most amazing of all!

IV. THE FULLNESS.

This is another word which is of major importance in Ephesians! Cf. Eph. 3:19; 4:13 for examples.

Let me mention four things which are indicated by this expression.

- A. Basically this points to the fact that the Body of Christ has been filled with something -- "filled with the presence, power, . . . riches of God and of Christ" (Thayer, p. 518).

This is what happened to the Tabernacle,
to the Temple,
and now it is true of the Church.

- B. It speaks of abundance -- of that which is more than enough!
- C. It speaks of that which is complete so that nothing else is needed.
- D. And then, what is the most amazing part of this amazing truth -- It speaks of the fact that God and Christ do not consider Themselves complete without us!

This is like a husband feels when his wife is away, or like parents feel when their children are gone.

Concl: If these truths can get into our hearts, our lives would be changed and there would be a peace and joy that would prove to be more than sufficient for all of the trials and testings that might come our way!

Oh, the fullness of Christ, the fullness of Christ!

THE STARTING POINT
Eph. 2:1-3

Intro: The passage we have this morning is altogether different from the passages we have had in chapter 1.

There we have seen the glories of salvation followed by Paul's prayer that somehow the people of God might be able to comprehend what it all meant!

If we have had our hearts open to the Lord, we have not only been learning, but we have had our hearts moved to worship (as Paul does in vv. 3-14) and to pray (as he does in the latter part of the chapter).

But suddenly, as we come to chapter 2, the atmosphere changes!

Here we see what God has to work with in making people what He wants them to be. This is the starting point for all of the amazing truth of chapter 1. Here we see man as he really is. It is not a pleasant picture, but it is a true picture. And we will never fully appreciate the wonders of the Gospel message until we understand what we have in our text this morning.

Are you ready for it?

Man is not just a victim of circumstances.

He is not just unfortunate -- one who would have been entirely different if he had only had an opportunity!

The Bible can give us no better description of man than we have in these first 3 verses of chapter 2. Man is a sinner -- a rebellious, resisting, condemned runaway from God -- and in himself he will never be anything else.

And Paul wants us to know that this same picture is the only way that you can understand any man in any country at any point in human history. The situation is no better today than it has ever been; it is just exactly the same!

These are not easy words to take.

But we have to understand them because there is no other way for us to know what our problem is. And we will never look in the right place for the remedy until we know what is wrong.

And once you accept what is stated in verses 1-3, you will have no argument with what comes next in verse 4-10!

There are five specific things stated here for us to know.

Any one of these could send a person to hell for all eternity.

They are like five diseases -- any one of which could result in a person's death.

Our text tells us all:

- 1) What we are.
- 2) Where we are.
- 3) Whose we are.
- 4) What we do.
- 5) Who we are.

Thank God, for many of us this can be put in the past tense -- although there are still some possibilities of trouble which can arise from the last four. But these describe every man as God sees us.

Let us examine them.

I. WHAT WE ARE: "dead in trespasses and sins."

- A. The first and obvious thing that this means is that we can do nothing to help ourselves, nor to help anyone else.

If we can learn this at the outset in connection with our relationship with God, it will be a tremendous gain.

Dead men do not do anything!

- B. It means, secondly, that we are separated from God.

We are completely lacking in any possibility for fellowship with Him -- or in any desire for God's fellowship!

The Psalmist was describing this condition when he said in Psa. 10:4,

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts."

- C. It means also that the reason for this condition is in our "trespasses and sins."

Probably a better translation would be, on account of our trespasses and sins.

These two words are used to describe sins of all kinds -- outward sins, and sins of the heart; sins in which we have violated intentionally God's will, and sins in which we have tried to do right, but failed.

This is WHAT WE ARE -- and we cannot change it!

II. WHERE WE ARE: "In which in times past ye walked according to the course of this world."

You are in "this world."

Do you think it is getting any better? Do you think it has changed at all since Paul wrote these words?

NO! It is still the same evil place. It is just the same that it has always been. It has never been an easy place to live for God since the first sin was committed -- and it never will be until we have a "new earth."

And every man stands condemned by the fact that the world has done more to formulate his way of life than God has had, or than the Bible has had.

John gives us all that we need to know about the world in 1 John 2:15-17;

"Love not the world, neither the things . . ."

The world never helped anyone to be a Christian. It will only move you farther and farther away from God!

III. WHOSE WE ARE: "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience!"

No commentary of any significance has interpreted this passage as referring to anyone but to Satan himself.

Notice:

- A. He is an absolute ruler. You cannot escape from his power.
- B. He is "the prince of the power of the air."

This is the only time he is given this name. DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT PAUL IS DRAWING A CONTRAST WITH THE EXPRESSION WE HAD IN CHAPTER 1 -- "in heavenly places"?

"Air" here means the lower and more dense atmosphere which surrounds the earth in contrast with outer space.

And so we can say:

- 1) He does not belong to the earth, but neither is he a part of "the heavenlies."
- 2) He does not belong to the earth, but he has access to the earth. He is not above God, but he is above us -- and that is our problem.

What does he do?

C. He is "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience."

He energizes "the sons of disobedience" like the God works in us, and like God worked in Christ, raising Him from the dead!

And we are called here "the sons of disobedience" because he makes us unwilling to be persuaded (which is what an unbeliever is).

Cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. He does his work well. We cannot undo it for ourselves, nor for anyone else. In fact, we do not even want to undo it!

But, I can almost hear someone say, look at what you are saying. You say that we are dead, that we live in a godless world, that we are held in bondage by Satan -- HOW CAN WE BE BLAMED?

Will you look at the next one -- in v. 3?

IV. WHAT WE DO: "Among whom also we all had our manner of life in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."

The emphasis in v. 2 may be on that which is outside of us, but here in v. 3 it is clearly inside!

Our "flesh" is our old sinful nature -- all that we are apart from Christ! It affects our whole being -- what we are, what we think, what we do -- and you and I cannot change these things either. Nor do we want to change it!

Oh, if you feel the desire for a change, that is something that God is doing in your heart -- not something that you are doing for yourself!

Cf. Gal. 5:19-21. Also, Eph. 4:17-19. And, if we need more, we have it in Rom. 1:26-32.

Finally . . .

V. WHO WE ARE: "by nature the children of wrath, even as others," or, as the rest of mankind.

You see, the reason you cannot change yourself if you could is because this is your nature!

"Children of wrath" means that we are under the wrath of God! Thirteen out of the twenty times that Paul speaks of "wrath" he is speaking of the wrath of God.

Whether we like it or not, this is where we stand because of

who we are.

Concl: Could you think of a more hopeless picture than we have in our text this morning?

Can you think of anything more in contrast with what we had in chapter 1?

Could you come up with anything more hopeless for God if these things are to be changed? Can He change it all? If so, how?

This is why, if our hearts are open, we are ready for what comes in the following verses, beginning with the words, "But God"!

Will you believe that God can change you -- not because you deserve it, but by His infinite grace?

God has done it many times before. Many here this morning are trophies of the grace of God. Paul says it this way in 2 Cor. 5:17,

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ . . ."

Back in 1660, George Swinnocke, who was, I believe, one of the Puritans, said,

"How wonderfully does the new born soul differ from his former self. He lives a new life, he walks in a new way, he steers his course by a new compass, and toward a new coast. His principle is new, his pattern is new, his practices are new, his projects are new, all is new. He ravel's out all that he had woven before, and employs himself wholly about another work" (quoted by J. C. Ryle in Old Paths, p. 130).

Will you let the Lord do it for you?

"BUT GOD . . ."

Eph. 2:4-7

Intro: Several passages which begin as our text does this morning -- like Mom's letter to me when I was in the university:

- 1) Acts 13:29, 30 -- Paul's message in Antioch of Pisidia:
"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead."
- 2) 1 Cor. 2:9, 10 -- concerning the Word of God:
"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man . . . But God hath revealed them unto us . . ."
- 3) Two passages that go together, having to do with Joseph:
 - a) Acts 7:9, from Stephen's message before the San.:
"And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt; but God was with him."
 - b) Gen. 50:20 -- Joseph summarizing his life in Egypt for his brothers:
"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive."
- 4) Psa. 73:26 -- one of Asaph's psalms:
"My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

Cf. also
1 Cor. 3:5, 6.

There are more, but this is enough to illustrate the point -- as our text itself begins: "BUT GOD . . ."

In seeing the contrast between Eph. 2:1-3 and Eph. 2:4-7, how amazing it is to see that it is God who intervened -- so great is the contrast between:

- 1) What man is.
- 2) What God is.

And, yet, no one but God could possibly meet man's need -- as the following verses show.

Four things are stated about God.

One goes into eternity past -- and tells us something about God that has always been true of Him: that He loves us, and always has, and always will!

The second and third link us together with Christ -- for us, spanning a period of almost 2,000 years:

- a) We were made alive -- and that takes care of the death we read about in v. 1.
- b) We were raised and seated with Christ in the heavenlies -- and that takes care of the problems mentioned in vv. 2, 3.

The fourth projects us into the future -- into eternity to come!
This is what we have in v. 7.

So we can say that these verses take us from eternity past all through time into eternity to come!

Let's divide it this way:

- I. The Basis of Our Salvation (vv. 4, 5a).
- II. The Nature of Our Salvation (vv. 5b, 6).
- III. The Prospect of Our Salvation (v. 7).

I. THE BASIS OF OUR SALVATION (Eph. 2:4, 5a).

Verses 1-3 show that it cannot be in us:

- 1) Either for the capacity to do it for ourselves,
- 2) Nor for the merit that God would do it for us.

It rests solely upon His amazing love for us.

Cf. John 3:16; Rom. 5:8.

Nothing in all of the world is more amazing than the fact that God loves man -- "even when we were dead in sins."

And Paul wants us to know that God's love has two characteristics:

- 1) "Rich in mercy."
- 2) "By grace ye are saved" (v. 5b).

"Mercy" has to do with our miseries -- caused by sin.

"Grace" deals with our guilt -- caused by sin.

SO -- God does not start to love us when we love Him. He has always loved us, and He always will. This is what gives hope to every sinner. Cf. Jer. 31:3,

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

How wonderful it is just to stop and dwell on verses like these!

II. THE NATURE OF OUR SALVATION (Eph. 2:5b, 6).

Two things need to be said here:

- A. The child of God has life (Eph. 2:5b).

Note that this takes care of the problem of Eph. 2:1.

And see what this means:

1. This life is a present possession.
2. This life can only be found in Christ -- in His resurrection.
3. This life is eternal. Paul says about the resurrection of Christ,
 "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him."
 If He cannot die, and we are in Him, neither can we!
4. This life is "by grace" (v. 5b).
5. This life means that I am saved (also v. 5b). And this takes care of the latter part of v. 3. Men do not like the word, "saved," because they do not believe that they are under the wrath of God! But they are!

That is all past once we receive Christ.

- B. The child of God has been raised to glory and seated with Christ at the right hand of God.

We need to link this with vv. 19-23 in chapter 1.

This spiritually is our position.

Will you note what this means?

1. It means that since Christ is accepted by God, the Father -- SO ARE WE!
2. It means that since the work of Christ is completed for salvation -- SO IS OURS!

Oh, how we need to realize that we are seated! And this is what will give us assurance and rest.

3. It means that since Christ is out of the reach of demons and men, of the world and the Devil -- SO ARE WE!

There is all of the assurance in these two passages that we will ever need. Do not worry if you cannot explain it all. Just believe it!

But there is one other thing.

III. THE PROSPECT OF OUR SALVATION (Eph. 2:7).

All of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior would be quick to say that God has already given us in Christ far more than we could ever deserve!

And, as far as this life is concerned, we are not through yet!

BUT -- always keep this in mind:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" -- most to be pitied!

This is 1 Cor. 15:19.

Never separate what you have now from what is coming! Read v. 7.

Solomon said it like this: (The NASB rendering)

"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day" (Prov. 4:18).

My father-in-law who is now with the Lord used to say, "Better days are coming!"

How true!

We read in Eph. 1:7 about "the riches of his grace"; here in Eph. 2:7 we have "the exceeding riches of his grace."

This has to mean two things -- and perhaps much more:

- 1) It means that, however wonderful it is to be a child of God now, it is going to be far more wonderful when we are with the Lord!
- 2) It means that we will find out in eternity to come that God's riches are inexhaustible! His power is just like it -- in Eph. 1:19.

Ill.: When I was young, I felt that my Dad could get anything I needed. He had to remind me every once in a while that the supply was limited. Not so with our heavenly Father.

Concl: Let me use an over-used illustration in closing this morning -- having to do with the Queen of Sheba's comments when she visited Solomon. When she heard his wisdom and saw all that he had, she said this:

"It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom; howbeit, I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it. And, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me; for thou exceedest the fame that I heard" (2 Chr. 8:5, 6).

So will it be with us! Prepare now. Enjoy it now. And get ready for it to be even better when the Lord comes!

GOD'S MASTERPIECE

Eph. 2:8-10

Intro: It would be difficult to find a clearer statement of the Gospel any place in the NT than we have in Eph. 2:4-10. Perhaps this is one reason why it became one of the main passages used by the Reformers!

There are three words which give an indication of the relationship that vv. 4-10 have to each other and to what immediately precedes them in the first part of the chapter (vv. 1-3):

- 1) "But" in v. 4.
- 2) "For" in v. 8.
- 3) "For" in v. 10.

"But" introduces a contrast; "for," an explanation.

Vv. 4-7 give us the true, spiritual nature of salvation -- with a glimpse into the future. Vv. 8-10 give us the way of salvation -- with an emphasis upon its present objective or purpose.

In all 7 verses we are looking at salvation from God's point-of-view.

God has never done anything that is any greater than what He has done for the salvation of men. THIS IS HIS MASTERPIECE!

One thing that cannot fail to impress you about these verses is the positive, confident way in which the Apostle writes. There is no uncertainty here.

The certainty of vv. 4-7 is explained in vv. 8, 9, and vv. 8, 9 are elaborated on in v. 10. That is the reason Paul uses the word, "for," in vv. 8, 10.

I. GOD'S MASTERPIECE: THE WAY OF SALVATION (Eph. 2:8, 9).

God had to devise a way of salvation that would be within the reach of all men without violating His own righteous character. And He has done it!

Not a word is wasted here. Obviously Paul wants everyone to understand. He is writing, remember, to those who have already been saved -- he is not saying that this is true of everyone now.

"Grace" is God's part; "faith" is man's.

We have had "grace" in Eph. 1:6, 7; 2:5, 7 (Eph. 1:2 does not apply). (Describe both the negative and positive aspects of "grace.")

"Faith" is believing, trusting, God. It is the opposite of doing anything. It is opening your heart for God to do something for you.

But, in order that we will understand that salvation is a work of God from start to finish, he adds two negative statements:

- 1) "Not of yourselves."
- 2) "Not of works."

The first includes all that a man is -- or can be! The second: all that he can do! THAT OBVIOUSLY ELIMINATES EVERYTHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH MAN AS EVEN A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN SALVATION.

Therefore, salvation has to be "a gift of God," or, lit., THE gift of God. And He has designed it this way "lest any man should boast." AND HERE THE APOSTLE PAUL PUTS HIS FINGER ON THE MAIN REASON WHY MORE PEOPLE ARE NOT SAVED: MAN ALWAYS WANTS TO SHARE THE GLORY. Back in Isa. 42:8 the Lord said,

"I am the Lord: that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another . . ."

Until you and I are willing to be saved on those terms, we will not be saved!

Now -- all of this is built around the words, "are ye saved," or to state is more literally as it is: ye have been saved.

It is the same expression that we have in the parenthesis of v. 5.

It means at least three things:

- 1) It is a present possession.
- 2) It is so certain that it can be looked upon as being now completed.
- 3) The passive voice is that in which something is done for the subject, not by him. And so it emphasizes that man is not his own savior.

GET THESE TRUTHS FIRMLY IN MIND. THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF NO OTHER WAY OF SALVATION. THIS WILL POINT THE WAY FOR ANY WHO HAVE NOT BEEN SAVED; IT WILL ASSURE ALL WHO ARE!

But now let us go on to v. 10.

In v. 10 we see another reason why salvation is God's MASTERPIECE going beyond anything else that He has ever done -- or will do!

II. GOD'S MASTERPIECE: THE WALK OF THE SAVED (Eph. 2:10).

The way a saved person used to walk is stated in Eph. 2:2;

the details of the believer's walk will be given in Eph. 4 and 5.

Works are excluded as a means of salvation, but works are included as the present reason for salvation.

"Workmanship" -- used on 2x in the NT: here, and in Rom. 1:20 where it is translated, "the things that are made."

Thus, salvation is likened to what happened at creation.

And our text bears this out: "We are His workmanship creat-
ed . . ."

SO, salvation is just as much of a creation as the original creation was. Both are a work of God without any assistance from man -- a work with respect to men in which God had no-
thing more than "dust" to work with!

But to show you the glory of salvation . . . here is another interesting thing about the word, "workmanship": It is the Greek word ποιημα from which we get our word, POEM.

What is a poem in the highest sense of the word?

It is a work of art. It is writing with beauty and harmony. It contains rhythm. Ultimately it a work of perfection.

Solomon described the work of God when he wrote the words of Ecc. 3:14,

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever;
nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it;
and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

ALL OF THIS DESCRIBES US AND THE LIVES WHICH WE AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE TO LIVE.

Now note . . .

Two things are said:

- 1) God has prepared us for good works.
- 2) God has prepared the good works for us.

And the way this works out in our lives is like the harmony that exists between two lines of a poem which were obviously made for each other!

God has made us for our works, and He has made our works for us.

All of us can say what David said as a summary of his life in Psa. 18:30,

"As for God, his way is perfect . . ."

Concl: Let me close with two illustrations of this -- one from the OT, and one from the NT:

- 1) From the OT: Joseph. Think of his life and how all of the things turned out. Read Gen. 45:4-13, esp. v. 8,
"So (by way of summary) now it was not you that sent me here, BUT GOD."
- 2) From the NT: Paul. What was said about Joseph was after most of the significant things had happened; with Paul, it was before. See Acts 9:15, 16 as the Lord spoke to Ananias,
"God thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

A supporting verse from the OT: Psa. 37:23,
"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in His way."

A supporting passage from the NT: 1 Cor. 3:21-23,
"Therefore, let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Everything about your salvation and mine -- how we got it, and how we grow in it -- is all A DIVINE MASTERPIECE.

THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE GENTILES
Eph. 2:11-13

Intro: (Read the text and pray.)

In the book of Acts there is a significant change from the third person, "they," to the first person, "we," in Acts 16:10. Before, in v. 8, we read,

"And they, passing by Mysia, came down to Troas."

But in the 10th verse we have,

"And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them."

This change is important historically because it means that the writer, Luke, joined them at this point.

There is a much more important change from the first person, "we" and "us," to the second person, "ye" and "you," here in the book of Ephesians.

We come to it first in Eph. 1:12, 13.

We see it again in Eph. 2:1, 2, with a change in v. 3.

We see it the third time when moving from Eph. 2:7 to 2:8, 9, and then it goes back again in v. 10, only to come out more strongly than ever in our text in v. 11.

Here the contrast is plainly defined:

- 1) Since the writer is a Jew, "we" either means we, Jews, or it refers to all believers, Jews and Gentiles alike.
- 2) "Ye" or "you" is a reference to the people who were receiving this Epistle -- obviously, now, Gentiles.

In fact, in our text, Paul actually starts to employ even the third person, referring to "the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands."

See "them" in v. 17.

The change from one to the other is explained so as to leave no doubt in Eph. 3:1.

This change is very significant in arriving at a proper understanding of this Epistle.

The point is this: The Jews have every reason to be thankful for the grace of God, but the Gentiles have an even greater reason to be thankful.

This is brought out in our verses which we want to consider -- vv. 11-13.

The thing that should impress us in v. 11 is that here we have:

I. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT IN THE EPISTLE: "Remember" (Eph. 2:11a).

This emphasizes the facts that:

- 1) Memory places an important place in a believer's life. There are things about the past that we must not forget.
- 2) We tend to forget certain things -- and so this is the reason why we are commanded to remember.

We have another thing to remember as we come to the Lord's Table this morning: the Lord Himself.

In the OT, think of:

- 1) Deut. 15:15.
- 2) Psa. 103:1, 2.

II. THE THINGS THEY WERE TO REMEMBER (Eph. 2:11b-13).

A. The attitude of the Jews (Eph. 2:11b).

Eph. 2:11 speaks of the scorn with which the Jews treated the Gentiles. The Gentiles were the uncircumcised -- which meant not only that they were:

- 1) Outside of salvation, but in the attitude of the Jews they were
- 2) Not able to be brought in! They were "dogs."

Add to this the fact that the Gospel had been perverted by the Jews. Circumcision was important as a sign of the covenant, but the Jews had corrupted it to the point that it was salvation. Paul says that their circumcision was only a circumcision "in the flesh made by hands."

Cf. the works of vv. 8, 9.

Cf. Rom. 2:28, 29.

Paul had felt this way. See Phil. 3:3-6.

Peter felt this way. Cf. Acts 10 and his call to the Gentiles.

Paul raises and answers an important question in Rom. 3:1, 2 after placing the Jews and Gentiles in the same place of need spiritually:

"What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God."

The scope of the problem:

- 1) They had been given the Word.
- 2) They did not want to give it to the Gentile.
- 3) They had corrupted it.

Therefore, it is plain to be seen that the possibility that Gentiles could be saved was very, very slight. "Remember" this!

The second thing they were to remember was this:

B. Their true, former condition (Eph. 2:12).

Whatever may have been the fault of the Jew, there was an element of truth in their attitude. Humanly speaking, they were hopeless!

The broad, general description is this: The Gentiles were "without Christ."

What an ominous statement!

IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT YOU CAN SAY IN A POSITIVE WAY ABOUT A PERSON, IF YOU HAVE TO SAY THAT HE IS "WITHOUT CHRIST," EVERYTHING OF A POSITIVE NATURE HAS BEEN CANCELLED OUT!

It excludes money, health, security, good works, and any and everything else!

It means not only that you do not have Him, but you are excluded from Him and cannot get to Him. You are far worse off than Esther was trying to get into see King Ahasuerus.

But the Apostle breaks this down for us so that we will understand more fully what it means that the Gentiles are "without Christ."

It means:

1. They are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (v. 12a).

See this word "aliens" again in Eph. 4:18.

Actually this means that they were not citizens of the State of Israel. They were excluded from all of the privileges given to one who was a citizen.

This is a major handicap.

2. They were "strangers from the covenants of promise (v. 12m). Lit., this is from the covenants (pl.) of the promise (sing.).

There were several covenants, but just one promise. The promise had to do with the Messiah, the Redeemer.

And promise fits right in with the emphasis on faith in v. 8.

3. They had "no hope" (Eph. 2:12m).

Bishop Moule indicates that this means that they felt hopeless. They were conscious that they had no hope.

What despair is in these words. There is no hope except in Christ. Cf. Eph. 1:18; 1 John 3:3; 1 Cor. 15:19.

4. They were "without God in the world."

You see, if you are "without Christ," you are also "without God."

Cf. the Athenians and their altar to "the unknown God." They had many gods, but not the true God!

Such was the former desperate condition of every Ephesian believer -- and of all Gentiles before they are saved.

But, thank God, there is a third thing for them to remember:

C. Their present, changed condition (Eph. 2:13).

In v. 4 we had, "But God . . ." Here we have, "But now"!

"Far off" and "nigh" are terms used by Isaiah, the Prophet, to describe the Gentile and the Jew. Cf. Isa. 49:1; 57:19. To be "far off" is to be shut out, excluded.

Except for Christ we still would be.

To be brought "nigh" requires two things:

- 1) "The blood of Christ."
- 2) To be "in Christ Jesus" -- not just Christ (which could have meant only the Messiah, but in Messiah Jesus -- making it very pointed and specific).

Concl: It is obvious that the Jew is dependent upon the grace of God for salvation. It is even more obvious that the Gentile's only hope is Christ and the grace of God.

Do you know HIM?

For those of us who do, what excellent preparation this is for our time this morning at the Lord's Table!

ONE NEW MAN
Eph. 2:14-18

Intro: It seems that in vv. 11-13 Paul is seeking to humble the Gentiles. (Explain.)

This is the reason for the first commandment in the Epistle:
"Wherefore, remember . . ." See v. 11.

John Calvin once wrote,

" . . . if we do not consider in what plight God finds us before he stretches forth his hand to draw us to him, we shall never know how much we are indebted and bound to him, nor how great his mercy is towards us" (Sermons On Ephesians, p. 186).

In vv. 14-18 it seems that Paul is seeking to humble the Jews.

He does this by showing that:

- 1) The need of the Jew is the same as the need of the Gentile.
- 2) The answer to the Jew's need is identical with that of the answer to the Gentile's need.

Let us note the expression:

I. ONE NEW MAN (Eph. 2:15m).

This is what Paul mentioned for the first time at the end of chapter 1: "the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1:22b, 23a). This is the body of which Christ is the Head.

This is "new" because:

- 1) There had never been anything like it before.
- 2) It was even unheard of in Old Testament times.
- 3) It is unprecedented in all of God's dealings with man. His choice of Israel was very, very special, but this is something which even goes beyond that -- with its amazing relationship with Christ!

This means that this is all completely distinct from God's work with Israel in the OT, BUT IT IN NO WAY NULLIFIES WHAT GOD HAS DONE AND WILL DO FOR AND THROUGH ISRAEL!

To bring out the newness of this "one new man," Paul uses the word, "to make in himself," in v. 15m, which is the Gk word, to create. This "one new man" is just as new, just as novel, just as unprecedented, as the universe was when God created it!

Both of these words, create and "new," are used in 2 Cor. 5:17. The difference is that:

- 1) 2 Cor. 5:17 speaks of individual believers.
- 2) Eph. 2:15 speaks of all of us together as "one new man."

Now, in examining this passage of Scripture, we are ready to ask:

II. WHAT WAS REQUIRED FOR THE CREATION OF THIS "ONE NEW MAN"?

Our passage is very clear on this subject.

A. The death of Christ on the cross.

Note the expressions:

- 1) "By the blood of Christ" in v. 13b.
- 2) "In His flesh" in v. 15a.
- 3) "By the cross" in v. 16m.

This clearly indicates two things:

- 1) You cannot be a part of this "one new man," "the church, which is His body," until you are saved.
- 2) There never would have been a Church if Christ had not died!

That is the reason for the expression, "For HE is our peace." There is a real emphasis on this word in these verses. See:

- 1) V. 15b, "so making peace."
- 2) V. 17a, "And came and preached peace . . ."

Sin separates men; Christ brings them together again.

Secondly . . .

B. The removal of man-made barriers. See v. 14.

This verse bring out another misconception held by the Jews (as does v. 11) -- that they were better than the Gentiles because they, the Jews, had the Law!

The court of the Gentiles in the Temple spoke volumes about the attitude of the Jew toward the Gentile!

"The middle wall of partition" was placed there by the Jew, not by the Lord!

If we are to realize the oneness of the body of Christ, there can be no man-made barriers. Let us never be guilty of erecting any! We have no right to set up any conditions which God has not established.

Thirdly . . .

C. The complete satisfaction of every demand of the Law. See v. 15.

The word, "abolished," does not mean to do away with something altogether. It is used of:

- 1) Our old nature in Rom. 6:6.
- 2) The Devil in Heb. 2:14.

Instead it means to render powerless. The Law was not something for the Jew to boast about as though it gave him salvation. NO! IT CONDEMNED HIM! IT DEMANDED HIS DEATH! But the Lord satisfied those demands and so did away with the penalty of death for all who trust Him.

This is why Paul can add what he does in v. 16.

Although they are not mentioned in their usual order, before men can be at peace with each other, they have to be at peace with God. And there is no other way for men to be at peace with God except through faith in the work of Christ on the cross.

Finally . . .

- D. The recognition that there is only one way of salvation for all men -- whether Jew or Gentile (Eph. 2:17, 18).

God does not have one way for salvation for the Jew, and another for the Gentile.

He does not even have more than one possibility for anyone -- and He never has!

What is man's great need?

It is to get to God -- just like Esther needed to get into the presence of King Ahasuerus and have him extend his scepter to her.

Note how this is brought out in Eph. 2:18. See also John 14:6 and 1 Pet. 3:18 (which reads in part),
 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God . . ."

The message which men need to hear (v. 17) is described in v. 18 (of Eph. 2). Note how all of the Persons of the Godhead are mentioned. Our "access," or right to approach, is fully explained:

- 1) CHRIST is the Means, the Basis.
- 2) THE HOLY SPIRIT is the Agent. Without His intervention neither Jew nor Gentile would ever come.
- 3) THE FATHER (note that it is more than "God" as in v. 16) is the Goal, the Objective.

Concl: We will learn more of this "one new man" in Ephesians,

(Over)

but at this point Paul is concerned that we know:

- 1) That there is such a body, and
- 2) That we know how to become a part of it.

It does not mean that you have to be a Jew. Nor does it mean that that you have to be a Gentile. It does not mean that you have to keep the Law. It does not mean that you have to join any particular church. IT DOES MEAN THAT YOU NEED CHRIST. HE WILL BRING YOU INTO PEACE WITH GOD AND INTO THE MOST WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIMSELF.

THE HOUSE OF GOD
Eph. 2:19-22

Related Scriptures:

1 Pt. 2:1-8
1 Cor. 3:9-17

Intro: Speaking generally, there are two classifications into which all of the people of God may be placed:

- 1) Some are Jews.
- 2) The rest are Gentiles.

Anyone who has read the OT knows that in OT times special emphasis was given to the people of Israel.

That special place of privilege no longer exists when we come to the book of Acts and the NT Epistles. We believe that God will one day turn again to deal in a special way with the nation Israel. But for today among the people of God there is no special place of privilege given to either.

God is doing something in this dispensation that He never did before. It is this special work that Paul is writing about in his Epistle to the Ephesians -- and we are learning about it here in chapter 2!

Today when Jews and Gentiles are saved they become a part of a third group which did not exist until after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is THE CHURCH.

Paul speaks of the Church as a body in Eph. 1:22, 23, and again in Eph. 2:15, 16.

But, then, in our text for this morning, Eph. 2:19-22, he mixes his metaphors and introduces three other ideas to describe the Church:

- 1) We are citizens of a country, or kingdom -- in 2:19m.
- 2) We are members of the family of God -- in 2:19b.
- 3) We are the house of God -- in 2:20-22. Obviously the emphasis is upon this latter point.

But note:

- 1) There is just one kingdom.
- 2) There is just one family.
- 3) There is just one house.

All of this ties in with the idea that there is just one body.

Paul is not trying to confuse us, but he is seeking to illustrate in several ways the glory and wonder of this great truth.

In chapter 2 we have the whole story of the Gospel:

- 1) It begins by depicting our hopeless condition in vv. 1-3.
- 2) Then Paul tells how we were saved in vv. 4-10.
- 3) Finally he shows how this has changed the relationship between the Jew and the Gentile in this present age.

As we come to v. 19 the question now to be answered is this:
WHAT IS THE LORD DOING TODAY WITH THOSE JEWS AND GENTILES WHO
ARE SAVED?

Let us think of the work that God is doing as it is here likened
to the building of a house:

- 1) In v. 19 we have the materials out of which the house is to be built.
- 2) In v. 20 we have the foundation and the chief corner stone.
- 3) In v. 21 we have the construction.
- 4) In v. 22 we have the general contractor and the owner of the house.

I. THE MATERIALS (Eph. 2:19).

To appreciate this we need to see that God is building us into a building. We are the material that He is using. And to recognize how little He has to work with we need to go back:

- 1) First, to 2:1-3.
- 2) Secondly, to 2:11, 12.

The "ye" in v. 19 points specifically to Gentile believers as Paul shows how all are citizens,
all are in the family of God.

Before we were "strangers" -- not known. We are "sojourners" -- we did not belong.

But now in Christ all of that has been changed.

We are "fellow citizens with the saints" (perhaps referring here to Jewish believers), and we are "of the household of God" -- members of His family.

Cf. 1 John 3:1.

No Jewish believer has any rights or blessings which we do not have. No Jewish is more a member of God's family than we who are Gentile believers. We are all on the same ground!

BUT -- think of our weaknesses, our failures, our sins, our resistance to the will of God even though we are His children!

For God to be able to do anything at all with us is nothing short of a miracle of the grace of God. Remember: "We are His workmanship."

II. THE FOUNDATION AND CHIEF CORNERSTONE (Eph. 2:20).

CF. EPH. 3:5

"The foundation" for this house was laid by "the apostles and (NT) prophets." See 1 Cor. 3:9-11.

What did they do? They were preachers and teachers.

What did they preach and teach? They preached Christ -- all about Him, from eternity to eternity. If you take Christ out of their preaching, nothing is left.

The teaching about Christ,
 His pre-existence,
 His incarnation,
 His Deity -- and therefore His perfection,
 His death,
 His bodily resurrection,
 His present ministry in heaven,
 His return --

all of these form the foundation for the house that God is building out of His people. To deny what the Scriptures teach about Jesus Christ is to declare that you are not a part of that house!

"The chief corner stone" is the first one that is laid. It sets the position of the building since every stone in the building is related to the "corner stone." Such is the place that "Jesus Christ" has in the building.

Regardless of whatever else can be said about you, you must be founded upon Christ, Christ must be your Savior, or you are not a part of the work of God in this day!

III. THE CONSTRUCTION (Eph. 2:21).

Two things need to be noted here:

A. The way the parts of the house fit together. Believers are "fitly framed together." They fit. They go together. They are made for each other.

Ill.: When the beam was put in the ceiling of our bedroom. It fit perfectly.

B. This is a growing building. Peter in 1 Pet. 2:5 speaks of "living stones."

It is true that it grows numerically, but that is not the main thought here. Note: It "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

"Holy" and "saints" (v. 19) are related words. More and more it becomes evident that we are set apart from the

world with all of its sin, and set apart for God!

This is what Eph. 1:4 teaches us.

This is the object of all spiritual growth. If God is to have a holy house He must have holy people because we are His house. If the house is to grow in holiness, it can only be such as the individuals that make up the house become more holy!

This is our greatest need today!

But let us look finally at

IV. THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND THE OWNER (Eph. 2:22).

This is one of those special verses which speaks of all three members of the Godhead.

Perhaps we ought to say that it speaks of Christ in a special way, too. V. 21 begins and ends with Christ! It is only because of our living union with Him that any of this can be done.

A. Who is the GENERAL CONTRACTOR?

If we rearrange the words, you will see it. Note the "ye" again. We can read it this way:

"Ye are built together by the Spirit for an habitation of God."

There would be no Church without the Holy Spirit. Think of:

- 1) How you were convicted of your sin.
- 2) How you were born again.
- 3) How you got into the body of Christ -- 1 Cor. 12:13.
- 4) Who revealed it all?

B. Who is THE OWNER?

God is! This is where He is living today.

Can we possibly grasp such a truth? If Solomon was overwhelmed, should not we be overwhelmed also?

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27).

Concl: What should all of this teach us? At least three things:

- 1) How much God wants to be with us.
- 2) How important it is for us to be holy.
- 3) How devoted we should be to the Lord Jesus Christ.