

LESSON 26: EPHESIANS 1

JUNE 7, 2017

OVERVIEW

- . Introduction
- . Paul's thanksgiving – Ephesians 1:3-14
- . Paul's prayer – Ephesians 1:15-23

INTRODUCTION

- . Time and place of writing
 - . Paul states that he is writing this from prison – Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20
 - . Paul was imprisoned for two years in Caesarea, as well as for two years in Rome
 - . Most scholars date this writing to A.D. 60-61 putting him in Rome
- . To whom written
 - . Although the epistle is labeled Ephesians, it is believed the letter was intended to be a circular letter to all the churches of Asia who were begun during the time that Paul spent in Ephesus
 - . There is a general character to this letter vs. letters like Colossians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians where there are several personal references
- . Theme of Ephesians
 - . Ephesians carries Paul's teaching to the apex, revealing God's purpose in Christ for the universe and the place of the church in that purpose
 - . Ephesians emphasizes the relationship of the believer to Christ and through Him to the world
 - . At the core of this relationship is the believer's manifestation of Christ's glory
 - . Christ is God's instrument to fulfill God's purpose in the present world, as well in ages to come
 - . "Creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into glorious freedom of decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" – Romans 8:21
 - . In Ephesians God's purpose is to bring all creation to the point of finding its head in Christ
 - . The church has an important part to play, for the church is God's masterpiece of reconciliation

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING – EPHESIANS 1:3-14

- . Paul's thanksgiving sets the tone of the whole letter
 - . Paul blesses God because he and his readers are in Christ, sharing in His resurrection life
 - . A believer choosing to live by faith is enjoying in Christ every spiritual blessing
 - . Although a believer has access to these spiritual blessings, they continue to live on earth creating a special tension
- . From God according to His eternal purpose – Ephesians 1:3-6
 - . This relationship between God and a believer, through Christ, is part of God's eternal purpose
 - . It is part of God's purpose that a person be given the free will to choose God
 - . It is part of God's will that a believer aims for nothing short of sanctification
 - . God wants us to be Holy and blameless in His sight
 - . His eternal purpose will not be fully realized until the resurrection of the body – 1 John 3:2
 - . However, those who are in Christ, have participated in the divine nature – 2 Peter 1:4
 - . Jesus Christ in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit imparts a new power within the cleansed and justified believers so that they begin to live increasingly holy lives without blame before God
 - . We are adopted by God's grace through personal faith in Christ
- . We act as God's children by following the leading of His Spirit within us – Romans 8:14
- . Through the Son – Ephesians 1:7-12
 - . Redemption through his blood – Ephesians 1:7
 - . Redemption implies that our former condition was slavery – slavery to futility, slavery to sin, to sinful habits
 - . From the beginning of God's relationship with man there was a need to atone for one's sin through the shedding of blood, the sustainer of life
 - . With Christ's shedding of his own blood, we now have the perfect atonement
 - . Wisdom and insight to understand the mystery of His purpose Ephesians 1:8-10
 - . The believer also receives the gifts of spiritual wisdom and understanding
 - . When Paul refers to mystery he is referring to something that was previously not understood that has now been revealed to God's people through the Holy Spirit

- . Believers, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will increasingly experience the inward peace, the coordination of motives, emotions, thoughts and actions with one focal point – Christ, their Lord, ruling within them
- . The corporate Church, the body of Christ is a main pillar of God's plan
- . A believer needs to embrace the idea that they are born in to a new body, a selfless member of something bigger and more important than just them
 - . We don't lose what makes us unique; we just refocus our energies to direct those unique gifts to a higher purpose

PAUL'S PRAYER – EPHESIANS 1:15-23

- . The petition for spiritual illumination – Ephesians 1:15-18
 - . Paul asks that the Holy Spirit impart wisdom and revelations through an intimate knowledge of Him
- . Understanding the threefold truth – Ephesians 1:18-23
 - . God has wanted us in his presence since the beginning
 - . God wants a personal relationship with each of us and hope it becomes our heartfelt desire to want that relationship as well
 - . God wants us to embrace and enjoy the riches of the glory of our inheritance
 - . Embrace the robe of righteousness that has been provided for us
 - . Don't dwell on the scars of the past which makes one believe they will never be worthy of this robe
 - . To know the rich glory of His inheritance in me is to know my value to Him
 - . The incomparable greatness of His power – Ephesians 1:19-23
 - . The power of God, which resides in us through the Holy Spirit, gives us the means to overcome the power of sin and evil

NEXT LESSON: JUNE 21, 2017 – EPHESIANS 2-3