

PORTRAIT OF A CHURCH

Monday, April 8

Reading: Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1:11 *In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, **12** in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.*

The theme of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is Christ and His Church. The first three chapters tell us what Christ has done for us and in us. It explains our unity as His body and the revelation of the mystery of God's plan. The last three chapters focus on how all this works out in our lives. Paul gives instructions for daily living and engaging in the spiritual battle around us.

AUTHOR: Ephesians is the first of Paul's 'Prison Epistles.' These are letters to churches that Paul wrote while he was under 'house arrest' in Rome awaiting trial (see Acts 28). Paul had spent three years in Ephesus during his 3rd Missionary Journey. There is some evidence that this letter was intended to be circulated among all the churches in Asia Minor with Ephesus being the first stop.

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

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| (1) The Riches of His Grace | Ephesians 1:1 – 2:22 |
| - Blessings for the Christian | 1:3-14 |
| - Prayer for the Christian | 1:15-22 |
| - Salvation of the Christian | 2:1-22 |
| (2) The Riches of His Glory | Ephesians 3:1-21 |
| - Mystery of His Glorious Church | 3:1-13 |
| - Prayer to Our Glorious God | 3:14-21 |
| (3) The Reward of a Godly Walk | Ephesians 4:1 – 6:24 |
| - Walk Worthy | 4:1-16 |
| - Walk Differently | 4:17-32 |
| - Walk in Love | 5:1-7 |
| - Walk in Light | 5:8-14 |
| - Walk Carefully | 5:15-21 |
| - Walk in Submission | 5:22 -6:9 |
| - Walk in God's Power | 6:10-24 |

Sometimes we as Christians forget who we are! In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul does not let us forget our true identity – we are “IN CHRIST.” He repeats this little phrase 12 times in this short six-chapter letter. Add in the times Paul writes “in Him” and the total comes to over fifteen (6 times in chapter 1 alone)! What does it mean that believers are “in Christ”?

First, it means that He chose us (1:4,11). Second, He adopted us (1:5-6). Third, He redeemed us (1:7-8). Finally, He has made His will known to us (1:9-10). All these “spiritual blessings” are ours because we are “in Christ” – we belong to Him.

Paul also makes it clear WHY God did this. It is to accomplish His plan and purpose (1:9, 11); for His pleasure and praise (1:5-6, 12, 14). Our identity in Christ should bring God glory and further His purposes. That is why we were saved.

Do you have spiritual amnesia? How does your life bring glory to God and reveal God's loving plan to the world? Are you living “to the praise of His glory”?