

Ephesians

Grace

freely given

&

life-changing

Day 1 - Paul.

Good morning (or afternoon, evening - I don't know)!

Many of us who have been around the Bible have heard the name Paul, but whether we have or not, it is worth reminding ourselves who this guy was. I mean, he did write the letter that we are going to read and so it makes sense that it would be useful to know something about him.

1) Paul was a Jew...and a good one. Paul is another name for Saul. Paul is his Greek/Roman name and Saul was his more Jewish-styled name. It might be a stretch, but I think it is similar to if "Luke" started doing ministry among people who spoke Spanish and went by "Lucas" around them. There is nothing in the Bible that says he changed his name, he was just known by both. – Anyhow, he was Jewish Pharisee right around the time of Jesus' death and resurrection. His family did things the right way. He was circumcised at the right time and he seems to be a Jew who can trace his ancestry (Phil 3:5-6). And he did things the right way, too! He was smart and capable, was accepted into a really good school, and was rising through the ranks as a future leader (Acts 21:3 - We still know about Gamaliel today. And fun note, he popped up earlier in Acts 5:34-39).

2) Paul was an enemy of the Church...a major one. Paul was one of the people who approved of the killing of Stephen - the first person in Scripture noted as being killed for preaching the message of Christ (Acts 7:59-8:1). This is not a great look. But Paul is not done. After Stephen's death, a major persecution breaks out. It is so bad that most of the new Church has to flee from Jerusalem. Paul is in on this and began to "destroy" the church. He basically hunted Christians down to persecute them. (Acts 8:1-3.)

3) Paul's life was changed...dramatically. One day, Paul changes his mind completely and starts professing that Jesus really was who He said He was. This is a crazy and unexpected change. This is such a dramatic shift that the Church continued to be frightened of him, scared that he was laying some kind of trap for them. But he was not. What happened? Well, the account of Paul's conversion is given three times in Acts (it is a pretty big deal) and so it is worth a look. Today, we are going to look at the first account.

4) Paul becomes a missionary...the most famous of all-time. God sends Paul out to preach the good news that Jesus really did come to reconcile people to God! And that He paid the full price for people to be able to do this. Paul is sent, and he goes! Some would call him the GOAT. He has the most famous missionary journeys of all-time; three are recorded in Acts and he may have done more. He spread the gospel, planted churches, and encouraged people in a very broad region, primarily north of the Mediterranean Sea. On top of this, he wrote 13 books of the New Testament (and we are not sure who wrote Hebrews).

Read: Acts 9:1-32

Day 1 Questions/Reflections

How does the story of Paul challenge how you think of others? (Are there people that you think of as hopeless? Are there people that you deem less valuable for one reason or another, not thinking about the plans God might have for their lives?)

Paul likely thought he was right with God, or could be right with God, by being “good” before he met Jesus. How do you identify with these feelings?

Do you believe that God has a plan for your life? And do you believe that seeking His plan for your life is the most fulfilling thing you can do? (Even if it seems like living a quiet life in a small town for His glory.)

Day 2 - The Ephesians.

To start, Ephesians are from the city of Ephesus. If you do not know this, the rest of this day could be confusing. 😊

1) Ephesus was an important city...and a big one. It was not a Jewish city and it was not in Israel. It was actually the capital of the Roman Province of Asia. It was located on the west-coast of modern-day Turkey. (Not the food. C'mon, people.) It would have been a big city for trade and commerce. It may have been the second or third largest city in the Roman Empire.

2) Ephesus has both Jews and Gentiles...and they both hear the gospel. When Paul arrives, he finds some Christians already there and tries to teach and equip them as an Apostle (a sent one) from Christ. He also spends time in the synagogue, trying to convince his fellow Jews that Jesus provides the way to be right with God, not their own efforts. Jesus was the Promised One Chosen by God! He kept preaching, after his time in the synagogues, in a local lecture hall. And though Ephesus was a big city, it is said that everyone heard the gospel. It had spread. People were hearing and getting a chance to investigate it and respond to it.

3) Jews try to imitate Paul's power...but without connecting with Christ. Some Jews in that area tried to cast demons and evil spirits out of people. Since Paul was doing some pretty crazy miracles, they thought they would try to see if they could try to borrow some of that power for themselves. In short, they end up running away naked. Yeah, you will read this in our passage.

4) The Gentiles reject Paul...they choose money. They realize that following Jesus implies that Artemis is not really a goddess. Well, they have a big temple to Artemis in their city. It has a foothold there. Perhaps even part of the city's identity is connected with this "goddess." I think a light version of what we are talking about might be a city's identity with their sports teams. Cleveland is connected with the Browns or the Guardians...and they might take it personally if someone were to interfere with these teams or their success. There might be pride in the temple. Plus, having this temple, and having travelers spend money to travel to it and buying things associated with it, makes some people in the city a lot of money. So, these people decide they cannot have Jesus if he is going to interfere. They will shout their pride and defend their wealth. They sort of go crazy and drag some of Paul's companions into an amphitheatre and almost start a riot. Paul leaves the city soon after this.

There is more that we could say about the Ephesians. Some people even think that the Apostle John lived there for a period of time, perhaps in his later years. But this Acts passage is the main one we have in connection with Paul and probably the most relevant for reading the Book of Ephesians.

Read Acts 19:1-41

Day 2 Questions/Reflections

Paul speaks to Christians to encourage and strengthen them. He preaches in a Jewish synagogue. And then he reasons in a Gentile lecture hall. In what ways can we think of sharing the gospel in our city today?

We might say that these Jewish exorcists pretended to be connected with Jesus to borrow His power. Do you ever feel like you are pretending in your Christian walk? (Most of us have "imposter syndrome" in some way. This is not to discourage you. This is to help you process and pray to God about what you think and how you feel. And pray for God to help you truly seek Him each day!)

The Gentiles loved Artemis (or perhaps their traditions or their money) more than they wanted to learn the truth. What things sometimes compete with God as the most important thing in your life?

Day 3 - Blessed.

Welcome to the Book of Ephesians. And man, Paul starts off with a bang. I think this book contains one of the clearest expressions of God's loving heart towards us.

- 1) **Christians have been blessed with spiritual blessings...all of them.** I had a pastor who preached on this verse in Ephesians for weeks, if not months. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing!
- 2) **God calls us to be holy and blameless.** Do not let this seem like a burden. God did not go out and only accept the people who were holy and blameless for the "Salvation" track. No! He transforms His people to be holy and blameless. This is a blessing. Imagine being rid of all of your guilt. Imagine not having any shame. Imagine not being tempted to punch your sister in the face! You might think you would miss this, but it will be replaced with a love and a goodness and a fullness that is beyond us. God is inviting us to share in His character.
- 3) **God calls us His children.** This one is astonishing, but I know that it does not always hit us when we just read words on a page. God is offering Himself to us. It is His pleasure and His glory **to love us.** I think of Him in this passage as a gushing and proud Father. I imagine that someone asks God what He is proud about – and He says "I am proud of how much I love my kids!" And the reporters say "But You created the whole world/the whole universe. You are the wisest. You are the most powerful of all beings. You are undefeatable. Is this really what you are proud of?" And He says, "Yes!" It is His pleasure to save us and to "the praise of His glorious grace!" (Note: I am not claiming to know the mind of God or claiming that this at all can fully represent Him, but I believe that it at least gives us a small picture of something true).
- 4) **We are given the Holy Spirit.** God Himself comes to live with and in believers. He guides us. And here we see that He seals us. And He is a guarantor for us. Let His presence and guidance today build our faith in what is still yet to come, the final deliverance from all pain, sin, and death that has been promised by God through Christ!

Paul prays for the Ephesians in this section and I think it is good to see what he prays. He prays that the believers may know the hope of God, the wealth of the inheritance of the saints, and the greatness of God's power. This is some of what he will talk about in the upcoming sections.

Read Ephesians 1:1-19

Day 3 Questions/Reflections

If you confess Jesus Christ as your God, Lord, and Savior, when was the last time you stopped and thanked Him for the amazing spiritual blessings He has given you? Take a few minutes to do that now.

Do you think of God as being inexplicably generous? Who is the most generous person you know? Reflect on them and imagine our God being even more generous.

We are given the Holy Spirit. Take the time to ask God to teach you when you read the Bible. Ask God to help guide you into obedience. And pay attention to if He brings anything to your mind (always being ready to test it with Scripture). Feel free to write your prayer here.

Day 4 - Alive.

We just read about the power that God has. And when we think of power, we might think of many things..We might think of people ripping apart phone books. We might think of the Hulk! We might think of the mighty warriors of old. But there was a great battle waged 2,000 years ago that showed the power of God in a way people did not expect. Jesus defeated death itself.

1) **We were dead.** Sometimes some of us might still look a little like zombies walking around, but that is because we are tired. If we are in Christ we are dead no more. But...we were dead. And that is a bad situation to be in. Death is strong. Death has defeated all of the great heroes of the past that you have ever known. Everyone dies. And when they die, death does not let them go. We, of course, for now are thinking physically, but the same is generally true spiritually. People, through and since Adam and Eve, have cut themselves off from the Source of Life and all of us were laying on the ground like lifeless branches. The power of death was unconquerable for us.

2) **But God made us alive.** We are made alive not because we somehow figured out how to defeat death. We could not. And we did not. But God, the Source of all life, put on humanity so that He could die on our behalf. And as God, the very Source of Life, Death could not hold Him. He is more powerful than death! And He broke down the walls of Death's prison and carried us out, resuscitated us, and breathed life into us. This was a gift from God to us. He had the power. We did not. He gave Himself for us, freely.

3) **We have work to do...good work.** And God did not only save us from our bad works, which led to death. He did not defeat death just so we could call ourselves "alive" and not do anything. Rather, He brought us to life and gave us the ability to live out and fulfill our purpose. We have a job to do! We have a life to live!

Read Ephesians 1:20-2:10

Day 4 Questions/Reflections

Sometimes we do not feel fully alive? Do you ever feel like this? If so, when? (And if you know, why?)

It is so easy to feel like we have to earn God's grace or favor. What are one or two ways you are tempted to do this?

Do you ever think the Christian life is boring? If so, you might have bought into the lie that being a Christian is about “not” doing things. This is missing the boat by a lot. How does it make you feel to see that God has a purpose and plan for you to really live?

Day 5 - Peace.

We saw that Paul prayed that the people of Ephesus might know the hope that is given to them from God. Well, being given salvation and new life from the dead is definitely part of this! We are going to talk even more about the hope that we have in Christ today.

- 1) **They were without hope...“Were,” past tense.** Paul seems to be directly addressing Gentiles here. The Gentiles were people who were sinful, as all people were, and they were people who did not know God! They were not part of God's chosen people. They did not have His laws, including the Ten Commandments. They did not know who God was. They did not know and were not part of the relational agreement (covenant) that God made with Israel. They could build idols and it would do them no good. They could try to be really good people. This would not do it. They were without hope.
- 2) **They were far away...but were brought near.** This is fairly shocking to the Jews, even early Jewish Christians, but God was saving Jewish and non-Jewish people! The new relational agreement with mankind was not through Old Testament law but through faith in Jesus. God was not only concerned with Israel, as some believed, but He is the Savior of the world! God loves people and does not show favoritism.
- 3) **Peace, peace...and peace.** The idea of peace is beyond what I know and definitely beyond what I can explain. It is big. And it is a big deal. God's peace includes the absence of conflict, but it is more than that. It might be said to include wholeness or completeness. A state in which nothing good or proper is lacking. The good news of peace was proclaimed to those who were far away and those who were near.
- 4) **Members of a household...God's household.** That we are called children was mentioned in chapter 1, but this is brought up again in a slightly different way. We are so much at peace with God that we were invited into His family. He is offering us His house, His yard, His inheritance, per se...maybe even the keys to the car and access to raid the fridge. This really is astonishingly kind and generous.

And this is our hope, that our conflict with God is wiped away. And one day, as we follow Him, He will make things as they should be. We shall live in a world with Him and in a world of fullness, wholeness, and peace. Sin and the conflict that it brings within us and outside of us will be gone. This all is offered to us through the blood of Jesus, which has made it so that God can act both justly and mercifully towards us. His grace is more than we could ever ask for or imagine.

Read Ephesians 2:11- 21

Day 5 Questions/Reflections

When have you felt helpless or hopeless? Did anyone come to help? How did that person make you feel?

In what areas in your life do you feel unsettled? Think about this and then take a moment to think of being offered God's peace. Write any thoughts you have.

How do you act differently at home than you do when you are somewhere else? What makes the difference? Can you imagine feeling at home with God?

Day 6 - Riches.

The Ephesians were worried about their riches. They did not want their riches to be affected by this "Jesus." They did not realize that they were rejecting the God who owns everything and was inviting them into His family to receive His inheritance! In chapter 3 we see Paul talk about the riches of Christ that are beyond the ability of anyone to even calculate. The riches of His salvation, the wisdom of His riches, and the riches of His love.

I cannot think of better words to say than what Paul has already used. God's riches cannot be calculated and His love cannot be understood (vs.19). If it were physical, you could not find its top, bottom, or either side. But, though Paul says that no one could understand it, he still takes the time to pray for people to do just that? Why?

The Book of Romans helps show that God's kindness is intended to lead us to repentance. Though there is death that exists for those outside of Christ, which is all that can await those who cut themselves off from Life, God often draws people to Himself by His love and mercy. He does not shy away from proclaiming sad and hard truths, but when we get a glimpse of His love, we should be drawn to Him. In His love He has come to save and transform us. His love comforts us. His love shows His character and desires. Paul desires people to be secure in their relationship with Christ and to be motivated by the love they see from God.

When the Ephesians were protecting their riches, little did they know they were forfeiting riches that were far more valuable.

Read Ephesians 3:1-21

Day 6 Questions/Reflections

Do you feel secure in your relationship with Christ? In what ways do you feel insecure?

What do we learn about God by what He loves and how He shows His love? (Suggestion: Reflect on Scripture.)

How does it affect us that God's love is infinite?

What are some things that you love? What can be learned about you from what you love?

Day 7 - Unified.

The second section of Ephesians consists of chapters 4-6. These chapters explain how the love of God will change the lives of those it touches. One of the first things that is mentioned is that followers of Christ are unified.

Notice that I did not say that they *should* be unified; they **ARE** unified. In Christ there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all! (Verses 4-6.) We are unified in and through Christ. Jesus is our head, the one who is our rightful ruler. He is our Lord and is the One who guides and directs us. We are now the Church, known as His Body, filled by His Spirit.

As we study, go to camps, and learn, let's consider the question, "Why?" Why do we learn? In order to build ourselves up? In order to boast about how much we know? In order to put a notch in our belt as something we have done for Christ? No!

As we learn and grow, and are at camps, etc. let's be thinking about how to apply the truths that we are learning to our lives. And then think about how to apply those truths in a way that will build up the people around us. Let us seek to be leaders, servants, in our Church. Not just leaders of others but leaders **for** others. This does not mean that we all have to be on a stage, but it does mean our actions, thoughts, and hearts should be directed towards the unity and strengthening of the Body of Christ.

If you are not thinking this way, ask God to help you! He loves prayers like that :) But do not do this to earn His favor, which only comes through Christ. Rather, if you already trust Christ, do this as an act of love for Christ and love for His followers. If you are lacking this relationship, turn to Christ today. Maybe read Ephesians 1-3 again and confess your brokenness and turn to Christ as your lord (boss, master, ruler, king) and Savior. And then tell someone of the decision you have made to follow Him!

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

Day 7 Questions/Reflections

How do some people use their abilities or resources to build themselves up rather than other people?

What are a couple of things that you are good at? How can you use those to build others up?

Have you ever been tricked into thinking being a good Christian just meant knowing a lot of Bible stuff? What is one freeing thing about realizing this is not true? What is one challenging thing about realizing this is not true?

Day 8 -

Paul continues teaching how our lives will be changed by the gospel. Since God has reconciled us and set us free from the bondage we were in to follow our own inclinations - since He has made us new creations and has given us His Spirit - live like you are new! Live in a way that is consistent with your design and show others His love and goodness!

1) **Christians do not rejoice in what the world rejoices in.** We can see that Paul is telling Christians to avoid and not participate in the things that non-believers do - he says Gentiles, but he is clearly talking about those not saved. Why? Is Paul making new rules on how to be saved? No, we are saved by grace through faith. Read Eph 2:8-10 again if you need to. We reject things God rejects because we love God and because the love of God now infects us. We do not want the things of the world and we can see through them. They lie. They do not bring the satisfaction they claim to bring. They are not good.

2) **Christians care for others...even above themselves.** There is a temptation constantly lurking in this world to choose ourselves over others. This might look like a temptation to share a small lie about someone that makes you look better...or maybe even share a truth that makes them look worse that you did not at all need to share. After all, they did something mean to you once and perhaps they deserve it! Or perhaps our insecurities get us to be a bit, well, mean. We are not encouraging. We might be downright discouraging. Perhaps worse, we might ignore people completely and try to pretend as if they do not exist. Christians are not about this kind of life. God is a God of love, self-sacrificing love. Be kind and compassionate and forgive one another! And do not be passive in this; actively look for ways to live this out.

3) **Christians are still people.** If Christians are people changed by the Holy Spirit and the love of God, then why does Paul write so much on how to live? Is it necessary? Well, it seems that Christians are still people. They are still weak. They are still imperfect. They can still be deceived. And they are still responsible. People are not people until they are saved and then turned into nice little robots at the point of salvation. No, life is full of choices. Being saved does not make you less human. If anything, it makes you more human, more in line with how God created you. In a relationship with God more in accord with your humanity. This is exciting and great news! You are more free to be YOU than ever before, the you you were designed to be. BUT, we cannot go to sleep. We must remain aware. We must still choose daily that we will live for God.

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:21

Day 8 Questions/Reflections

Many think that having more power, money, popularity, or “freedom” (they mean being allowed to do what you want based on your temporal feelings) will make them happy. Which of these do you find the most tempting to believe?

How often do you think about how your parents and/or siblings are doing?

Christians are not perfect. Take the time to write out areas in which you still sin. Confess them to God, ask for forgiveness, and ask for His help.

Day 9 - Habits.

In chapters 4-6, Paul does not say “Get good habits,” but this could be one of the take-aways. Let’s consider some of the good and bad habits laid out in this section.

4:25 - Speak the truth. Before thinking, “I speak the truth,” consider when you are tempted to lie. Consider when you are tempted to make yourself sound just a little better. Consider the time you did not finish an assignment and you find yourself saying “I am just so busy” or “I had a lot of homework.” Not that you were not busy, but if you are honest, you know how much time you spent on texting, social media, movies, etc. and you could have finished the project. Adults do it when we are late to a meeting that we left at the last minute for by commenting on the traffic. “Man, the traffic!” Do we really think we are the only people who have to deal with traffic? Are we really the only people who have been busy or who have had homework? If you overcommit, that is a separate problem. Address that. But also train yourself to take responsibility and tell the truth. This is just one small example of when we might blur the lines of honesty.

4:26 - Don’t dwell on your anger. Do not sin in your anger. And do not sit in your anger. My friends used to think I was a bit of a hot head. I was not a fighter or violent, but I got mad quickly. This is not the reputation we want. It is likely a sign we are thinking about ourselves too much. Many times we are angry simply because things are not going the way we want. And even when there is injustice, are we responding in godly ways to it? Anger in itself is not always wrong, but we often are angry at the wrong things and respond in the wrong ways.

4:28 - Don’t steal...be generous. Instead of coveting (and perhaps taking) things that are not rightfully yours, look for opportunities to take things that are yours and give them to others!

4:29 - Use words intentionally...for good. We have a habit of overlooking when we pick on others, when we allow small insults, “jokes,” to slip out of our mouths. Or when we allow other discouraging or negative speech. These things do not lead to life. But our words have the opportunity to encourage: to strengthen people to try hard, worthwhile things; to let them know they are cared about; and to let them know they have value.

4:32 - Be kind and compassionate...forgiving each other. This can be tricky ground. The person might not be sorry. Reconciliation may not be a healthy option. But I am not talking about reconciliation. Forgiving someone is not the same as being reconciled with them in this broken world. But I think that you need to (1) leave judgment in God’s hands and (2) desire good for them. Desire that they submit to God and receive blessings from him. And desire for them to be changed and that going forward they no longer hurt people but bless others.

We are reminded again that our Christian life affects our lives. And I will be more specific in saying that it affects our attitudes, interactions, and relationships.

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:21 (Yes, we double dipped this one time. Check it out again.)

Day 9 Questions/Reflections

Do you think generosity is a big deal? Why or why not?

Here are some bad habits all of us probably deal with in one way or the other. Pick the top two (or add your own) that you deal with and think/pray through why you believe this is a struggle for you: Gossip, Favoritism, Screen Time, Lying, Bragging, Being Defensive, Making Excuses.

What makes you angry? How do you act when you are mad? What do you say?

How many of you have something that you are currently holding against someone else?

Challenge: Encourage one person today.

Day 10 - Close-up.

We already have seen that the gospel of Christ will affect our lives. A proper response to it will not just be to believe it is factual, it is to submit to Jesus as God and Lord of our lives, and seek to make His character our own.

Today, we see that this applies even to our closest and most private relationships. It is not just something we can display for acquaintances when we are “on,” it is something that seeps through us and changes who we are all the time.

We are called to love...and die. Husbands are called to lay their lives down for their wives. This is a lot different from the idea of getting married so that your spouse can serve you. Marriage is not a destination for our dreams of being lazy and someone else pampering us and telling us we are great all of the time to come true. We are still married in a broken world, as broken people, to broken people. Husbands are called to choose inconvenience for the sake of their wives. They are called to lay down their preferences when their preference would not help build up their wives. They are called to live everyday with her in mind and look out for her even above themselves.

We are called to respect...and submit. Wives are called to respect their husbands. Their husbands are laying down their lives for them and serving them, but marriage is not a vacation destination for wives either. Marriage still exists as part of “real life.” When there are disagreements, spouses talk and seek to find common ground. Husbands are called to lay their lives down for their wives. But when a husband is convicted and convinced of a direction, and it is not contrary to God’s revealed will, a wife is called to lay down her rights, so to speak, and submit to her husband. This is not because her husband is always right but because God directs her to do this as a picture of the Church.

Both husbands and wives should love and respect each other. Both also, in ways, should submit to one another (verse 21). But God designed each person to their own life of submission to Him. And for children, there is something horribly shocking...

Children...obey. Okay, this might not be shocking, but it can be hard. Children are called to obey their parents as if this is the way God designed families to work...because it is.

In the section we will look at today, Paul also talks about slaves and masters. Before going further, you cannot jump to the conclusion that Paul likes slavery because slaves are addressed. We do not have time to address all of this today, but for now let us consider that it would have been radical for Paul to even address slaves directly. Further, he points out that they are equals before God. There is no favoritism with God. God is not approving of a system that believes some people are better or more valuable than others.

Read: Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Day 10 Questions/Reflections

If marriage is not just the ultimate vacation, what good things do you think God is trying to do in marriage? (Do not forget to start by looking at Scripture)

Why is it sometimes hard to obey your parents? Why do you think this is what God calls children to do?

Imagine that God wants children to seek how to honor and obey their parents beyond a bare minimum level. Brainstorm one thing you can do today that would show honor and obedience to your parents. (Ideas: Do a chore you were not asked to do. Write a letter to tell them you love them or appreciate them. Do both. Etc.)

Day 11 - The Enemy.

Here we are told to put on the full armor of God. Many of us have probably heard about this before, though this could be good for some of us. We will look at just a few things here:

People are not our enemy...the spiritual forces of evil are. There are people in this world who do not believe in God's message. They are not our enemies. We actually want them to come to know Jesus and become part of God's family with us. There are people who have hurt us. They are not our enemies. Again, we desire repentance and good lives for them. We remember that people are deceived. We hate evil. We hate sin. The sin in others...and the sin in us. Does this mean we will never be in conflict with other people, nations, or groups? No. But even in this conflict, let us not forget we are seeking to uphold justice, goodness, mercy, and love.

Satan is a liar. The first armor clothing listed is the belt of truth. If you are like me, you can get a little too caught up in the symbolism at times, but let us think logically. If we need an article of truth, this is probably because Satan is trying to throw lies at us. We need a shield of faith (trusting that God is true in what He says) so that we do not believe what Satan says instead. Satan is our enemy and his classic tactic is to lie. He wants us to erode our trust in God and get us to leave Him.

We do not just have armor...we have a sword. The Bible is our sword. It is what allows us to attack Satan and his lies. We can cut down his tactics, so to speak. Jesus used Scripture when tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4 and Luke 4). If we want to cling to God's Word, and not Satan's, we look and cling to the Bible and the truths in it.

Read Ephesians 6:10-24

Day 11 Questions/Reflections

Do you ever view other people as the enemy? How does seeing Satan, lies, and sin as the enemy affect things?

We think of Satan as trying to bring us down sometimes, but we might overlook his subtle lies. He might whisper “You don’t deserve these hard times.” “God does not really love you.” “No one would really love you.” “God, if He were real, would not let this happen.” And many other things. Have any of these lies, or one like them, been something you have struggled with before?

Are you ready to use the sword God has provided you? Do you know the promises He has made to His people that you can cling to? Do you know how to cling to what is true when getting attacked with lies?

Day 12 - Encore.

Sometime over the next few days, read the book of Ephesians again, keeping in mind some of the big picture things we have learned. Here is a reminder of what to keep in mind and look for again:

Chapters 1-3: The Gospel. God gives to us and blesses us when we do not deserve it.

- God chooses us and gives to us in a radical, unbelievable, way!
- We were dead and hopeless, but God used His power to come rescue us.
- God's riches cannot be calculated. God's love cannot be understood. But He pours it out on us. Learning more about the love God has for us is something Paul thinks will help us.

Chapters 4-6: The Gospel. We are saved, not just from something, but to something... God changes us and calls us to live changed lives now.

- We are united in Christ and are called to support that unity.
- We are called to build good, healthy habits into our lives. And we are called to rid ourselves of bad, harmful habits.
- We are called to treat other people as valuable and important. This affects all our relationships, including our closest ones. God has a good design He wants us to live out.
- We still live in a broken world and this will not be easy. We will struggle with sin. We might struggle with lies. We will not be perfect.
- But God offers us Himself, His Spirit, His Scripture, and His armor to us to protect us. We are not left defenseless. We are equipped and we are responsible to live out the gospel the best we can.

I hope that this look at Ephesians has been helpful to help you understand the book, help you see that you can understand the Bible, and even help you understand a little more about yourself, about God, and about your relationship with God. May God show you the measure of His love! May you be awed by it, fueled by it, and changed by it. May you have joy and life forevermore in the Designer, Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the world.

Overview Questions/Reflections

What questions do you have about salvation or your relationship with Christ?

What is something you learned from Ephesians that you would like to remember?

What is something that you learned from Ephesians you would like to share? Who will you share it with?

What questions do you still have about Ephesians? Will you write them down and ask them to someone? Your parents or a pastor? Etc.

What is one specific change you will try to make in your life based on what you have read?