

*A Layman's Look  
At The Book Of  
Ephesians*

*By  
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## Introduction

The general theme of the book of Ephesians would be *in Christ, by Christ, of Christ*, and *through Christ*. There are some distinct messages given to the saints to which this book was written, one of which would be that of predestination, or chosen in Christ Jesus. Some argue that humans do not have a choice in where they are going, because God chooses who will go to Hell and who will go to Heaven. But in studying this book and its contents will show the opposite, that man does have a choice and God will not impose His own will on that of man.

Liberal theologians will say that this epistle was written, instead of to Ephesus, but rather to the city of Thessalonica, because the city of Ephesus was not located such as to be a major shipping port. The city itself was located on the western coastal water area, and was one of the cities visited by Paul on his journeys. Some have stated that instead of it being *to the saints at Ephesus*, it was an open letter to the Laodiceans and was to be read also by the Ephesians. This much is certain; it is strong in church truth, speaking of *his body, the church*, but little on church order of business.

The book opens with Paul's introduction, and has in it our position, our possession, our priority and our rest. It is more of an impersonal letter by Paul than his other epistles, but also has little on discipline, as there is in other letters he had written. Little if any rebuke is noted, making us believe that there was little dissension among those in the city.

The central and important theme of the book would be of course Ephesians 3:8-9, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*. As with other epistles Paul had written, there always seemed to be someone in the midst of any congregation who delighted in adding works to salvation, trying to bring in the aspects of the law as a requirement for one to "complete" their salvation. In Paul's day, it was circumcision; today it would be a multitude of things we must "do" in order to be saved, whether it be speaking in tongues, or baptism, or any other "work" of so-called righteousness.

This epistle is one of what is called the prison epistles, written by Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome, but it is a letter of encouragement for the believers rather than being a sob story of his difficulties. We would do well if we would look beyond our

“woe is me” attitude for our difficulties and see the needs of others, as did Paul, and be an encouragement to others.

It is my prayer that in reading this, you, as well as I, will see all that God has done for us, past, present and future, and live for him, as He lives in us.

Jerry W Jones PhD

# *The Book Of*

## *Ephesians*

### *Chapter One*

#### I. Salutation:

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ* (Ephesians 1:1-2). As was Paul's custom, he opens his letter with his personal salutation (II Thessalonians 5:17). It is for this reason some hold that the book of Hebrews was not written by Paul, because of its lack of that salutation. This letter is one of a quartet of letters written by Paul and designated as the "Prison Epistles," sent by him to four provinces of Asia Minor, carried by four men who were his messengers; 1) Epaphrus was from Philippi and he carried with him the letter to the Philippians, a letter full of encouragement and joy from Paul. 2) Tychicus was from Ephesus and carried this letter, which was again a letter of encouragement for these saints to understand the fullness of God's love and plan for their lives. 3) Epaphrus was from Colosse and carried with him the letter to the Colossian believers and carries the message of the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ. Had Rome known the significance of these letters, the four men would have been apprehended and the letters destroyed. But by God's providence, we have these as portion of the Canon of the Scriptures today.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3). This has to be one of the most uplifting verses of this epistle, showing all that God has in store for us, if we but claim His promise. I like it when someone says to me, "God bless you," for then I can reply, "He already has – Ephesians 1:3." They will look at me with a questionable look and then I can explain to them, "We already have all of God's blessings. All we have to do is claim them, not ask for them." What is more significant about this verse is that we declare God as blessed, but He makes us blessed in His Son. He imparts upon us something that we do not deserve, while we impart on Him what He most assuredly does deserve, and that is our declaration of Him as blessed.

You will note that the word *places* is in *Italics*, meaning it was added by the writers to better understand the verse, but taken in its entirety, we are *blessed...with all spiritual blessings in* [the heavens]. We will see later that we are seen as already setting in His presence, even though here on earth. That is the assured security of the believer, knowing that no matter what we may do here in this mortal body, that which is immortal is untainted by the curse of sin.

*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved* (Ephesians 1:4-6). Here is one of the most misunderstood sections of Scripture that anyone can read. To the Calvinist, it will tell them that God has already chosen all who will be saved, and who is condemned, so why bother go out and witness? It takes away man's free will. It is obvious that since God knows all things, because of His omniscience, He also knows how everything is going to come about in the end times. He knows whether you will obey His call and accept His plan of salvation, or if you will in the end reject it. But as John 3:17 says, we are condemned already, but there is still that moment in our life that we will have to make the ultimate decision; will you and I accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, or will we continue to want to get to Heaven our own way? It is like the doorway to Heaven; on one side it reads "Whosoever will may come," and on the other side, "*chosen in him before the foundation of the world*." My friend, God chose and planned for our salvation long before you and I were ever born. Jesus died for **all**, not just a chosen few. When you reject Him, it is **you**, not the Lord, who is committing double jeopardy, since the penalty has already been paid. Yes, Jesus paid it all, but not all will believe and receive His free gift.

J. Vernon McGee was speaking on this and had the following statement spoken by the great English preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon: God chose me before I came into the world, because if He'd waited until I got here, He never would have chosen me. That is why Romans 5:8 says, *But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Jesus told His disciples, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...* (John 15:16). He is the one responsible for saving us. Our choice is but to accept that free gift.

*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself* (Ephesians 1:7-9). Everything has been done on the basis of His grace, so that we can become His children, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ's blood on the cross of Calvary. We are not here to bring glory to ourselves, but to praise and glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There has been, therefore, a threefold work performed by God the Father. He chose us in Christ. He predestinated us to the place of sonship. He has made us accepted in the beloved. It is all to the praise of the glory of His grace. He is the One who gets the praise. He is the One who did it all.

Thru The Bible, with J. Vernon McGee, Vol. V, p218

## II. He Paid The Price:

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which*

*are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ* (Ephesians 1:7-12). Long before the birth of mankind, God, in His Trinitarian glory, planned for the salvation of all. He predestinated all to be born again. He made us chosen in the beloved. And all was for the praise of His glory, and especially to those who trust in Christ as their Savior and Lord. He will be glorified, even in those who have rejected His Son, because they too will ultimately bow before Him and acknowledge that He is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). Even the nemesis of all, the devil himself, will one day bow down and acknowledge that Jesus is the Creator and Lord of all.

Blessings have been made known to the believer by God making known to us all the *mystery of his will*. A *mystery* is something that has been kept secret and is now being explained. And this *mystery* is that at the culmination of time, when Christ shall sit down in His resplendent glory, He will *gather together in one all things*... And this is when we are given crowns for our service here on earth and given our Heavenly inheritance, simply because it was of His good pleasure to do all things *to the praise of his glory*. Why would anyone in their right mind refuse such a gift – eternal life, a home in Heaven, crowns for service which we have the privilege to cast back at His feet, and the final gift, the culmination of all knowledge of what He has done for us, simply for His glory? “Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.”

*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory* (Ephesians 1:13-14). It is the power of the Word of God that brings mankind to salvation. No amount of philosophical rant by man will convince another of his need to repent. You can argue until you are “blue in the face,” but to no avail. As Romans 10:13—17 says, *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (emphasis mine). It is the spoken or written Word of God that brings conviction to the soul of man, showing him his sinful plight and the awful consequences of that sin, eternal death in the lake of fire. And it is that same spoken or written Word that gives man hope, because it shows the love of God (Romans 5:8), that the penalty for sin has already been paid (Romans 10:9-10), and that all He has to do is believe, repent and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He died for his sins, and will accept him into His family as a child of God, simply by asking (Romans 10:13) and nothing more. My friend, that is the simplicity of the Gospel, so simple the finite mind of man cannot understand it until the Holy Spirit of God opens his heart to understand the love that God has for him. And to accept this simple truth, we have redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah for the cross!

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church; Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all* (Ephesians 1:15-23). This is one complete statement, needing to be taken as a whole. It shows the continued attitude of the apostle towards these saints for their welfare and growth. It was the church at Ephesus that was first mentioned in the book of Revelation, showing their work, patience and labor; yet it was their love that had begun to fade away, and it was their *love unto all the saints*, that Paul had prayed for, seemingly in a continual attitude he had toward them and prayer to God. It is our love that first begins to fade after our salvation. We will have a zeal to tell the world at first, and then, for reasons sometimes unknown and sometimes because of others, that love towards the lost diminishes.

It is because of the faith of these Christians, and their love toward the saved that Paul speaks of his prayers on their behalf, calling upon the Lord to understanding, to know *what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power...* The *hope* here is an anticipation of what God has for us in the future, not some whimsical longing for something we think is beyond our reach. Hope is an earnest expectation; it is the young lass waiting for the arrival of her love to whisk her away in his arms, to be wed and live together forever. It is the saved, waiting for the arrival of the Heavenly Bridegroom, and that wedding supper of the Lamb of God in Heaven. All because God raised Jesus from the dead, and He is now sat down in Heaven, waiting for the time when we either pass through the portal of death or He comes back to call us home. He is the fullness of all.

Think of this, my friend. Jesus is sat down in the presence of Almighty God, but when Stephen was martyred, He saw Jesus standing in His resplendent glory (Acts 7:46). When the saints of God are asleep in the grave, their soul and spirit go to be with the Lord, and He greets us, standing, and waiting there for us. Is that not enough reason for us to want to serve Him more? That should make us want to sing even the more, "I wish I had given Him more."

## Chapter Two

### 1. Dead In Our Sins: Alive Unto God

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others* (Ephesians 2:1-3). What a stark contrast between those who are *dead in trespasses and sins*, and we who have been “made alive.” The lost walk *according to the course of this world*, in the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (First John 2:15), and under control of the *prince of the power of the air*, the devil himself, were totally disobedient to the things of God, had their *conversation*, or manner of life in nothing but the lusts and the flesh and mind, *and were by nature the children of wrath*. But when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in and abides within the heart and soul of the one who believes, repents, confesses and accepts the free gift of salvation, all those things are past.

*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:4-7). Again, thank God for conjunctions; *But God...* That changes everything. We were totally disobedient, but God... We lived to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but God... We were children of wrath, but God... He has *quickened* (v. 1 and 5) us. He has (past tense) *raised us up* and in His sight, we already *sit together* with our Lord and Savior. So while we are here in our bodies of flesh, in the sight of Almighty God, we are already in Heaven, enjoying the bliss and blessings of eternal life, while those who are still living in sin are as though they are already dead and Hell bound. John 3:18 tells us they are *condemned already*. That is the final future of the doomed who reject God’s free gift of salvation. And what is the eternal purpose in our salvation? *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus* (v.7). We are for one purpose, and that is to bring honor and glory through our witnessing to others about the wonders of God’s love, mercy and grace.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Perhaps the two most important verses in Scripture shows us God’s part in salvation and our response. His part was to provide eternal life through His grace. All we had to do is have the faith to believe. As I have quoted many times over, “Faith is just believing what God says, He will do.” My friend, it is free. You cannot earn it, because if you could, you would trot around Heaven boasting of what you had done to “earn” your salvation. Eternal life cannot be earned. Salvation is not in **do**, but is **done**. Everything that was needed was

provided in the death, burial and resurrection of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe. Sin had left a guilty stain. He washed it white as snow."

## 2. The Creation Of God:

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:10). If verses eight and nine are perhaps quoted nearly as often as John 3:16, verse ten has to be one of the most neglected, yet goes hand-in-hand with verses eight and nine. The *workmanship* spoken of here is an interesting word. It comes from the Greek ποιημα, from which we get our English transliteration, "poem." We are God's poetry, something He has made for beauty and here is where our *good works* comes in; not before we were saved, but after He has regenerated us in Christ Jesus, so that we would walk with Him, talk with Him and tell others about Him. For what, then, are we *created in Christ Jesus*? It is *unto good works*. While we are told we are seated in the heavens, we are to live down here on earth to walk in the light of His fellowship.

## 3. The Construction Of God:

*Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ* (Ephesians 2:11-13). Paul reminds these believers that they were outside the original covenant of God, made with the nation of Israel, and as such were not only uncircumcised in the flesh, but also in the heart. There was no promise or guarantee of anything promised for the Gentile nation other than that which God had given in his prophecies of Gentiles being also included in the household of God, such a promise that was totally misunderstood by the nation of Israel. But having been *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*, the Gentile believers, before salvation had no hope at all, and being without God's blessing in the world.

*But now...* again such a blessing of such a conjunction. It changes everything. Having been without Christ Jesus, now we are recipients of the promises given by God. We were far off and unable to obtain any favors of the trinity, but now are *made nigh by the blood of Christ*. We should always remember that it is the shedding of blood by the Savior that brought about our salvation. Any "religion" that takes away from the blood sacrifice and propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ is watering down the Scripture. As is said by Hebrews 9:22 tells us, *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission*. What can wash away our sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

We were without Christ. We were aliens. We were strangers. But now, we are the children of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:14-17). Let us live in the light of that transformation, so that we bring honor and glory to His name.

#### 4. The Containment Of God:

*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh* (Ephesians 2:14-17). Here is the *mystery* that Paul had spoken of earlier in Ephesians 1:9-12, *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.* It was a thing unheard of among the Jewish population, to think that these “outsiders” could be joint heirs in Christ, and to enjoy the benefits of eternal life through the shed blood of Christ Jesus. Here, all the Old Testament commandments were done away, when Jesus cried, *It is finished.* It was a word meaning everything had been perfected that Almighty God had planned from the beginning of time itself, that Jesus could reconcile, or change completely all that Israel had thought was pertaining to them alone. Here, Jesus Christ combined, Jew and Gentile into a new and entirely different people, the “church,” the local body of believers who were one in the Lord, taking away the hatred that had been there, bringing about a peace that passeth all understanding.

#### 4. The Construction Of God:

*For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:18-22). Here, the individual believers who comprise what is call the “church” are considered as a city. We are *fellowcitizens*; we are the *household of God*; and are a part of the total building, with the foundation being the apostles and prophets, with God’s Son, Jesus Christ, *being the chief corner stone.* It was this stone that Jesus Christ referred to in Matthew 21:42-44, *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* And when this was declared to the Pharisees, they understood that He was speaking of the time when the Gospel would be taken from the Jews and the Gentiles would accept it, and it would be this new foundation that would propagate the Gospel to the world. How wonderful to know that salvation is also for the Gentiles.

## Chapter Three

### *The Mystery*

#### 1. The Explanation:

*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:* (Ephesians 3:1-6). Paul considered his shackles as a gift from the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of the Roman government. He could have been despondent and bemoaned the fact that he was being hindered from his task of giving out the Gospel. But consider this; his imprisonment gave him the opportunity to write his epistles to various congregations (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Timothy) and guide them into the truth of the Scriptures.

Here is the *mystery* that Paul, through the Holy Spirit, revealed to these believers, and that mystery was something that had been hidden from the Jewish population, even though numerous passages in the Old Testament mentioned this very fact, *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* The three-fold mystery that was now being revealed was that those of the Gentile faith would be heirs with Christ, as again was stated in Romans 8:14-17, that they should be of the *same body*, those who make up the eternal dwellers and members in particular of local congregations of believers, and most of all, *partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* To think that the promise given to the nation of Israel of an eternal inheritance in Almighty God is now ours also. We have a home in Heaven (John 14:1-6), and one day, we will rule and reign with Christ.

*Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him* (Ephesians 2:7-12). This is one complete sentence, needing to be taken in its entirety to explain that which God had given to Paul; God's power, God's grace, God's *unsearchable riches*, the *fellowship of the mystery*, and God's *eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ*

**Jesus our Lord.** And through all this, Paul demonstrated his boldness in preaching the Gospel. Having seen the glory of eternity (II Corinthians 12), how could he have done anything less than urge upon those without Christ the necessity and need to realize their sinful state, repent of their sins, believe and acknowledge that Jesus Christ was crucified, died, was buried and rose again so that they might have eternal life. Should you and I have been able to witness such a manifestation, no doubt we would have the zeal to also tell of God's plan of salvation. My friend, we do have such a manifestation; it is called the Word of God, given to us to tell the world of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

**Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named...**(Ephesians 3:13-15). If you or I were in the same position as Paul (and remember, he is in a Roman dungeon), we would probably moan and groan, "Why has this happened to me? I can't serve the Lord in here, locked away from everyone." But Paul's attitude was that it was a glory for others for him to be in that place, because then it gave him ample opportunity to write his epistles and further explain the simplicity of the Gospel to the saints. Remember when Paul and Silas were shackled in the deepest part of the prison? What did they do? At midnight, they started to sing unto the Lord; the Lord caused an earthquake to break open the doors; the prison guard was about to kill himself, but instead he was gloriously saved, and then took the prisoners and washed their wounds and the Gospel was given to the guard's whole family. One could wonder what might have happened to them, had Paul and Silas not been imprisoned. You see, everything works toward the greater good; God's glory and your further maturity in Christ.

**That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.** (Ephesians 2:16-19). Let us realize that we do not ask Jesus Christ to come into our "life," but into our heart. Our life here is one of disappointment, sin and disobedience. But when we have the Savior living within our heart, we have the capacity to understand all the love of Jesus Christ, as well as being **filled with all the fulness of God**. We have the peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7). Though not all seem to have been enriched with the knowledge of Christ, yet everyone can have that knowledge imparted to them through the Word of God, by God's chosen ministers to explain the wisdom of the Scriptures.

**Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen** (Ephesians 3:20-21). It is befitting that any prayer to God should end with praise of God and His wonders that He has in store for His saints. He is able to do far above all that we ask or think. And this is because the glory of Jesus Christ was "from eternity past to eternity future." That is the fulness of the phrase, **throughout all ages, world without end**. It is the Greek, του αιωνος των αιωνων, "from eternity to eternity." These verses are not only a doxology but also a benediction of the wonders of God. To think that He could love such as we, full of sin and filthiness, yet willing to pour out His love on us by taking our vileness and pour it upon His own Son. That my friend is the love of Christ and the fulness of God.

# Chapter Four

## *The New Man*

### 1. The New Congregation

*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:1-3). The word *vocation* is a derivative of the word *called*. It is someone being selected for a specific goal, in this case that of walking in the Spirit, with a humble attitude and perseverance to “keep on keeping on,” no matter what may be the circumstance thrown your way. In this instance, Paul, in his subtle way, mentions once again his status as a minister of Christ, and that of being *the prisoner of the Lord*. He looked upon his imprisonment as something to challenge others to serve with more fervor. It was to the Philippians Christians that he told not to grieve because of his being arrested. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me* (Philippians 1:27-30). We can imagine what the Philippians thought when they heard of Paul being arrested. “Oh my! How can the Lord allow this to happen? What a terrible thing this must be to him, being locked away and unable to share the Gospel.” What was Paul’s reply. *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content* (Philippians 4:11). “Oh no, don’t worry about me. God has put me here for a purpose. It gives me the opportunity to pray more for the many congregations that I started, as well as writing to you and others.” Nothing was going to rob Paul of his joy in the Lord.

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all* (Ephesians 4:4-6). Here is the answer to those who will argue that there are many ways to Heaven, or many ways to be baptized. We are one body, and there is but one Spirit that dwells within us, even as there is but one Lord, and that is the eternal, sinless Son of God. There is but one faith, and that is in believing on the name of the only begotten Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is but one God. There is no Allah, there is no Muhammad, there is no Confucius, or any other of the many cults in this world today. As Paul told Timothy, *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time* (I Timothy 2:5-6). Of course, those who believe there are many ways to Heaven will not believe the Bible in the first place, and that is the basis of

salvation, the one faith in what Jesus Christ has done for all on the cross of Calvary. He is the one who paid the ultimate price for our redemption.

***But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*** (Ephesians 4:7-8). Every born again child of God has been given a specific gift, for their service unto the Lord. There are people born with natural abilities that may not specifically be gifts from God, and be able to use those gifts for other than bringing glory to the Lord. Some have a natural ability to sing with beautiful voices, but then turn around and use that talent for their own glory. Then there are others who, after being born again, take that talent and use it to bring honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. But whatever be the gift God has given, it is for His glory and not for man's gain.

Verse eight is a quotation from Psalm 68:18, ***Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.*** You will notice in Psalm 68:18, it reads, ***thou has received gifts for men***, and in Ephesians, ***and gave gifts unto men***. Is this a misquote, as some may want to argue? It is not a misquote at all. An author has the right to change the words of any sentence that may be given, and in this instant, the author is the Holy Spirit who is guiding the writer, Paul. Just as Jesus Christ seemingly misquoted Himself, when in Matthew 4:4, ***But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God***, and in Luke 4:4, ***And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*** He had the right to use the same as He seemed fit, and man has no reason to argue.

***When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*** When Jesus had died, the Scriptures tell us that he was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, where he preached to the Old Testament saints. ***For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison*** (I Peter 3:18-19). It was at this time they heard the Gospel, then after believing on Him, were taken into Heaven, throwing open the gates of Paradise to be expanded for the unbelievers. It could have been this that Isaiah 5:14 was speaking, when it said, ***Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.*** Those in Paradise were caught up with Christ upon His resurrection from the dead. They were no longer captive to the chains of Old Testament laws, but now were also given grace as were we.

***(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*** (Ephesians 4:9-10). Paul himself explained all that we do not understand about the three days and three nights that Jesus was witnessing to the Old Testament saints. He not only descended into the heart of the earth, but also is now ***ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things***. All power is in His hands (Matthew 28:18-20), and He has extended this power unto His witnesses while they are here on earth, to tell the good news of His salvation.

***And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the***

*ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love* (Ephesians 4:11-16). Not all were given the same gifts. **Some** were given the gift of being apostles; those who were witnesses of Christ's earthly ministry and resurrection. **Some** were given the gift of being prophets, not only forth telling the truth of the Word of God and writing down the Scripture we have today, but also foretelling of things to come. **Some** were evangelists, which being interpreted means giver of the good news of God's plan of salvation. It is one sent forth by God for a special purpose. **Some** were given the gift of pastors and teachers, not only preaching the Word, but also teaching the Word, something many so-called "pastors" today lack the knowledge of giving to others. It is the gift of preaching from the Scriptures, plus also teaching the many tenets of doctrine.

As I had stated in another of my books, there once was an advertisement in a local newspaper by Youth For Christ, stating that they would be having Bible study in that town, then stating, "We will not be teaching doctrine." My friend, that is what the Bible is; doctrine. Second Timothy 3:16-17 says, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* You can't teach the Bible without teaching doctrine. The word doctrine itself means teaching and instructing. And that is the duty of every child of God, to teach the Word of God to those who need to be instructed into the tenets of the Scriptures.

The purpose of the pastor and teacher is: *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...* The word *for the work of the ministry*, is the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministry. The preacher is to instruct others, so they can go into the world and minister the Word to others. That is the perpetuation of the Gospel, as Paul instructed in Second Timothy 2:2 - *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* You teach one how to win souls to Christ, and he goes out, wins a soul to Christ, then teaches that one how to witness for the Lord, who in turn does the same. That is the perpetuation of the Gospel. There was a Christian group who came up with the slogan, "Each one reach one." That is our duty, to tell others so they can go tell others also.

*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness* (Ephesians 4:17-19). What a stark condemnation of the lost! They walk *in the vanity of their mind*, and remember, the word vanity or vain can be described as a "soap bubble." It is there for a fleeting moment, all brilliant and seemingly pretty, but then gone forever. The lost have their

*understanding darkened.* In Second Corinthians 4:3-4, Paul said, ***But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*** They cannot understand the Word of God because it is *spiritually discerned*. Therefore, the only thing we can do is explain the plan of salvation, allow the Spirit of God to convict them by the Word, and then show them how they may be saved from their sin.

Paul calls the lost Gentile world ignorant, blinded, full of lust, unclean and worst of all, greedy for personal gain. This is not to be the life of the believer in Christ.

***But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*** (Ephesians 4:20-24). Contrary to the life of the lost, Christians are to ***put off*** the behavior of the lost man and to ***put on the new man***, which God has created in righteousness (Gr. δικαιοσυνη - justified and proven right in the eyes of the Lord), and holy (‘οσιοτηως – hallowed; set apart). It is a striking contrast to that which used to be our lives, to see what we used to be and what God can make of us because of the Holy Spirit that indwells us.

Verses twenty-five through thirty-two, although completing one thought, must be taken singularly, because of the importance of each point Paul brings forward.

***Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another*** (Ephesians 4:25). Here is yet another contrast between the lost man and the child of God. The natural tendency of the unsaved is to “stretch the truth” with “little white lies.” Yet any lie is sin, no matter how insignificant or how great it may be. But the Christian is to speak the truth with other believers (and the lost as well), because of our fellowship we have with other believers. When the old man was nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ, all lying and deceit were left there. We have a new nature, one that should be full of honesty and love one for another. To continue in the paths of the old nature is carnality and dishonesty. We are members of the body of Christ and as such, we should live accordingly.

***Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil*** (Ephesians 4:26-27). Just because we are Christians, it does not mean we will not be subject to the powers of the flesh. Satan knows that we no longer belong to him, and will do everything in his power to keep us from serving the Lord. One of the main problems with man is his pride, and anger comes because our pride is damaged by something someone else says or does. Deal with it, forgive **and** forget. I once asked someone to forgive me for something I had done wrong, and they answered, “Well, I’ll forgive, but I won’t forget.” Then there was not true forgiveness then. To forgive is to be like Almighty God, to cast it away. Psalm 103:12 says, ***As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*** Start walking towards the sunrise in the east and you will find you will never meet the western sky. That is how far God has cast away our sins. So should it be with the Christian. We are to rebuke the devil (James 4:7), when he brings angry thoughts into our mind.

***Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*** (Ephesians

4:28). How many different ways can we steal? How about that office executive that sees a writing pen laying on a table, picks it up and puts it in his pocket? If it costs the company money, then that is stealing, even down to that lowly paperclip. How about our time? If we are to be at work from 8:00 to 5:00, then to sit around doing nothing for the last fifteen minutes of the day is theft of the company's time. And of course, I need not say anything about giving. Let us be sure that we are not stealing from God also in the time we spend reading magazines and newspapers, yet let the Bible go without being touched until we carry it with us on Sunday to service.

***Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*** (Ephesians 4:29). "Brother, I would like you to pray with me about so-and-so. I hear he has..." You fill in the blanks. Is that any worse than two old ladies talking across the fence about the new neighbor? Gossip in any form, whether it be in the guise of prayer or just downright spreading lies, is ***corrupt communication***. Whatever comes out of our mouth is suppose to be edifying to others, building them up in the ministry of the Gospel.

An uncontrollable tongue is a danger. The Epistle of James spends a chapter on the matter of the tongue, calling it a fire, a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, and unable to be tamed (James chapter three). There is a poem I heard many years ago, which applies perfect to this: "I watch the words I say; I keep them soft and sweet. I never know from day to day, which ones I'll have to eat." How many lives have been ruined simply because someone else could not control their tongue and began to spread malicious rumors that were untrue, but nevertheless caused untold damage?

***And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*** (Ephesians 4:30). Imagine a little boy or girl who is just about to drive their mother crazy. They have been in all kinds of mischief and no matter how many times the mother warned them, they would seemingly get into more trouble. Finally, exhausted, the mother sits down in a chair and begins to cry. The child sees this, comes over to the mother and asks, "What is wrong, Mommy?" She looks at them with tears in her eyes and says, "Don't you realize every time you disobey your mother or father, how much it grieves us?" Now imagine you or I, constantly disobeying the Lord and His Word, going on with our lives, living in sin and thinking nothing about it. How much do you think it grieves the Holy Spirit? The word itself means to put someone in distress; to cause great anguish of the heart. It is to provoke someone on purpose, to cause them to have anguish of their soul and heart. That is what our sin does. And to think it is the Holy Spirit who has put a guard in our soul that the devil himself cannot touch.

The word ***sealed*** is a financial term, speaking of ***the earnest*** of the Spirit, the "down payment" to seal a bid which cannot be broken. The Holy Spirit is the one who places a garrison around us, keeping us safe from the intrusion of Satan and his demonic emissaries. And it is the Holy Spirit who interprets our pitiful prayers (Romans chapter eight), takes them to Jesus Christ, who delivers them to the Heavenly Father. We read in Romans 8:26-27, ***Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he [Jesus] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God*** (Emphasis and inclusion mine). To have such a loving Father who has sent His Spirit to guide and protect us, then to think that we deliberately and with wanton

disregard turn around and sin against Him, it is no wonder the Bible says that in the end time, God shall wipe away all tears. Revelation 21:4 **says, *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*** I imagine when we pass on from this life, there will be a time when we will be crying because we see lost opportunities to be witnesses for Christ, and neglected to do so because we are living in sin. We will stand there and see our loved ones cast into the eternal lake of fire, and recall the opportunities we had to witness to them, and did not do so, because we were afraid to hurt their feelings. I wonder how often we hurt the feelings of the Holy Spirit?

We can grieve the Holy Spirit, but we cannot grieve Him **away**, because the Lord Jesus Christ has said that we will never lose our salvation, no matter how often we sin. Now does that give us license to go and sin, because we are sealed? No! We who are saved from sin should not live in sin, simply because if we do not want to grieve our parents, how much so should we not want to grieve the Holy Spirit?

***Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*** (Ephesians 4:31-32). Once more, Paul contrasts the life of the sinner with that of the saint. The antithesis of bitterness is kindness; that of anger is tenderhearted; evil speaking is that of forgiveness, because if God so loved us, and sent Jesus Christ to shed His precious blood for the forgiveness of our sins, should we not also willingly forgive one another? One day, our bodies will find its solace in the joy of knowing that from the day we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, we will rest in the bliss of eternal Heaven.

Someone once told me that he thought it would be boring spending eternity in heaven with nothing to do. Oh, but it will be a LOT better than spending an eternity in Hell, totally alone, in eternal darkness and pain, knowing we could have had the joys of being in the presence of the Savior, had we not asked Christ Jesus to come into our hearts as both Lord and Savior. My friend, I trust you have done just that.

# Chapter Four

## Submission

### 1. Spiritual Discernment:

***Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour*** (Ephesians 5:1-2). Someone could say that the difference between a tithe and an offering is that the tithe you may be compelled to give, but an offering is given above and beyond what you may consider the tithe. That is what Jesus Christ our Savior did; He gave above and beyond what anyone else would have done. That is why Romans 5:8 says, ***But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us***, and why John 3:16 says, ***For God so loved the world that he gave...***

Once again, remember that when you see a ***therefore***, find out what it is “there for.” It always refers back to what was in the context preceding the sentence, in this case, the exhortation toward kindness, tender heartedness and forgiveness. The Holy Spirit, who has sealed us and indwells us, can be grieved. ***Therefore***, we are to follow the guidance of Almighty God, have a loving walk among others, and remember to whom we have to give answer for everything we do here on earth. Let us not be ashamed before him at His coming (I John 2:28).

***But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks*** (Ephesians 5:3-4). Such a high and lofting example we have of the unsaved; full of lust, filthiness, envy, filthiness, full of shocking and vulgar jokes, and lightheartedness, without thinking of the consequences of their actions when they bow before God and are finally hurled into the lake of fire for rejecting His promise of salvation. ***...but rather...*** Again we have the opposite; give thanks – not only for salvation but also for the opportunity to be of service to the Lord while here on earth.

Just as Paul indicates specific areas of sin, so we need to go to God and confess specific sins. If your sin is that of anger, go to the Lord and confess *that* sin, so that you can have restoration and forgiveness of that sin. So many think they can go to God and bundle up all their sins in one big bag and hand them to Him and expect He will forgive them.

***For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them*** (Ephesians 5:5-7). Again, specific areas of sin are enumerated. Whatever area is your weakness, be sure to go to the Lord and lay that at the altar of forgiveness. And when it is laid there, do not come later and try to reclaim it. As the song says, “Take your

burdens to the Lord and leave them there.” To go back to that sin means you have never really given it fully to the Lord. He can and will give forgiveness and victory, but you have to remember that you are responsible for never claiming it again. These are sins of the unregenerate world, and as such, if a Christian practices them, he is saying that he is no better than the lost, and has no testimony to the world.

***For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*** (Ephesians 5:8-10). Notice, it does not say we were in darkness, but we were darkness. We are not walking in light, but we are light. And as light, we are to shine to the world of darkness, those who are living in sin.

I have told this story before, but it bears repeating. There was a pastor who took his young son one Saturday evening and they rode into town and parked in the slum part of the city, walked down the street and into a bar. Upon opening the door, they just stood there and looked around and then exited and went back to their car. The father did not say anything, but waited as he could see his son pondering something in his mind. “Dad,” he asked, “Why was it so dark in there?” The father looked at him and said, “It is because the Bible says, ***And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*** (John 3:19). Wherever there is darkness, it is because of the sin of the world. The Bible says ***God is light***. Jesus said, ***I am the light of the world***. And wherever there is light, darkness flees. Since we are light, let us shine so that others may either be drawn to that light or flee because of their sins.

## 2. Spiritual Direction:

***And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret*** (Ephesians 5:11-12). Paul continues the thought previously mentioned, that of those who are living in sin and why Christians should avoid their lifestyle. Earlier, in the book of Romans chapter one, he mentioned how the sinner, specifically those who live in debauchery and homosexuality not only live that life, but how they have pleasure in others who are the same. In Romans 1:26-32 read, ***For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*** (emphasis mine). We are told that we are to ***reprove them***, to admonish them, literally to scold them for their sinful acts. Far too often, though, Christians are made to shun speaking of that life

of sin, because we are told it is “politically incorrect” to “judge” them. My friend, the Bible says we are to **reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine** (Second Timothy 4:2). Sin has to be named and those sinning must be told that they are violating God’s purpose for their life. And if the Christian doesn’t do it, then who will?

**But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light** (Ephesians 5:13-14). To **reprove** someone is to severely correct them in their presence, to make them aware that what they are doing is wrong. It is to bring about their conscience to be full of guilt and shame. This was the problem with those who were wantonly living in sin and enjoying it and those who participated with them. Once again, those who fault others for their sins are the ones who are making known the darkness of their soul with the light of the Gospel. A child of God simply cannot go along with works of darkness, because darkness and light cannot mix. As one evangelist stated it, “A Christian should fit in with the unsaved like a square peg in a round hole.” We just should not fit in.

The story has been told of a Christian who got a job working with a logging company, and others were wondering how he would manage, knowing his Christian character in their presence. When he returned from his job, they asked him how he got along with all those cursing and drinking men. His answer: “They never knew I was a Christian.” What kind of testimony is that supposed to be? We are the only light of the Gospel that Jesus Christ can use, and if we don’t tell others by words and deeds, then who will?

**See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil** (Ephesians 5:15-16). To **walk circumspectly** is to “look around” at the situation in your presence. Look for and pray for opportunity to witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When you are commuting on a bus, train or plane, ask God to bring someone to you, so you can witness to them about what Christ has done for you. Our time is short. It won’t be too long before the Lord returns, and we must be about the Lord’s business of reaching the lost, before it is eternally too late. How many times do you stop to buy something and do not give a smile when someone says, “How are you today?” And then ask, “I’m one day closer to Heaven. How about you?” And then when they cannot give an honest answer, ask for the opportunity to witness to them, or at least give them a tract to read, with your name, address and phone number on the back so they can contact you if they have further questions.

There is a small card that I have from a pastor in Florida, which has the likeness of the character in Monopoly, and on the front it says, “Get Out Of Hell Free,” and on the back the “Romans Road.” They fit neatly in the slots at ATM machines and gas pumps. A person has to remove them to use the slot for their credit cards, and then they will see the message and the Gospel reaches them. Or take tracts and place them in restaurants on tables, in rest rooms, everywhere you go. My friend, we are to be **...Redeeming the time, because the days are evil**. People need to hear and read the Gospel, so they can be convicted by the Holy Spirit, repent and ask Jesus Christ to forgive them of their sins, before it is too late.

### 3. Spiritual Delight:

*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Ephesians 5:17-20). Our delight should be in the Word of God and the will of God. The phrase, *be filled with the Spirit* is a continual action verb, *filled*. It means to be continually walking so close to the Lord that His Spirit fills you with joy; such joy as to make your heart sing songs of praise to Him. It seems there is not a morning that I do not wake up with a song racing through my mind, and it stays there most of the day. More often than not, it is a Christian hymn that delights me. That is far better than waking up with a splitting headache and upset stomach from drunkenness the night before. It is far better to have the Spirit of God in the heart than to have the spirits of the devil in the stomach. Do you ever wonder why they call it “spirits?” Could it be that it is a tool of the devil to allow his demonic “spirits” to have control over the person intoxicated? That alone is enough to make the Christian be wary of liquor. Remember, Proverbs 20:1 says, *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise*. Habakkuk 2:15 says, *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!* Some will go so far as to commit acts they would not think of doing when sober. Liquor causes you to lose control of your actions, so that you are capable of committing the worse of actions, anything from incest to rape to murder. Whichever you allow, that is the one which will have control over you. If you drink and become drunk, then the liquor is that which controls your actions. But when you are controlled by the Spirit of God, then He fills you with goodness and love for others, till you can be a vessel fit for use in serving the Lord.

Music has been so misunderstood today, that the noises we hear around us are no longer any semblance to what is music. Music has three parts; melody, harmony and rhythm, and should never be taken out of that order. But today’s sound is the beat of the drum, very little harmony and the lead part so drowned out you cannot hear it. It is said that the heart has a constant beat of that of a waltz, one, two and three, one two and three, and any other sounds that are felt by the body will interrupt that until it can do physical damage, let alone the spiritual damage it does to the soul. That is why they Scriptures say that music is first of all the melody (Isaiah 23:16; 51:3; Amos 5:23 and above). The words harmony and rhythm are not even found in the Bible, so that should tell you which is of most significance.

### 4. Spiritual Deference:

Submission is one of the hardest things for a person to do. It is so difficult for one to be willing to be subject to another. That is the reason for so much dissension in work places, for it is so hard for one to be willing for another to tell them what to do. The same holds true for the home. Far too often it is the children who rule the roost, because parents are afraid to correct them. Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18). We are to submit ourselves unto our pastors, as those

who watch over our souls (Hebrews 13:17). And we are to submit ourselves to God, so we can have victory over the devil (James 4:7).

***Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing*** (Ephesians 5:22-24). Paul uses the analogy of the husband and wife to show our deference within the body of the believers. As the wife is submissive to the husband, so should each member be in submission to the guidance and spiritual direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Word tells us there is something that we must or must not do, it is our responsibility to be obedient to the Scriptures. “Well, I don’t see anything wrong with dancing.” Does not the Bible tell us, ... ***It is good for a man not to touch a woman*** (I Corinthians 7:1)? Then how can you dance without the physical touch? Yes, I know, today’s so-called “dance” is nothing but the gyrations of bodies to the beat of rock noise (I can’t call it music). But there alone it should tell us we should avoid dancing, as the movements of the body excite the imagination, and again, the Bible tells us to avoid ... ***the lust of the eyes*** (I John 2:15), let alone the lust of the flesh. “Well, what is wrong with a little drink now and then? Doctors will tell you that a beer now and then is good for you.” But do you stop with just one beer? Or do you stop with just one drink of whiskey? Remember Proverbs 20:1, because liquor deceives. And since we are the temple of the Holy Ghost, let us not abuse and grieve Him.

The word ***submit*** is totally different from what some people think means obey. To submit is a word of tenderness. Even though it means to be subordinate to another, it also is a term that signifies a willingness to surrender to another. In this case, the man is to show the love towards the wife that she needs. Until he is willing to say, “I love you,” he cannot expect or anticipate that she is going to respond the way she should.

I remember once in a service, they were asking men to give testimonies concerning their wives. One man stood up and said, “I told my wife once that I loved her and if I ever changed my mind, I would let her know.” What kind of response do you expect that man’s wife to give to such a remark? A man’s tender touch will do wonders to get a woman to yield to his desires, and that is where submission enters. So it is with our Savior. He showed the ultimate of love when He died on the cross for our sins, then asked His Heavenly Father to forgive us, and then lastly gave us His Word as a guide to our every day lives. That is why we submit to Him.

***Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*** (Ephesians 5:25-27). Did you know there is no verse in the Bible that tells a woman to love her husband, using the same Greek word as used in verse twenty-five. The word in Titus 2:4, where it says a woman is to ***love their husbands***, is the Greek word φιλονδρω, which is to be affectionate toward them. A man, as was Christ, is to have a sacrificial αγαπη, a love which gives without thought of it being reciprocated. Jesus Christ gave His all for you and me. God doesn’t expect any woman to submit to any man who doesn’t love her like this. She is to be separated unto him, kept clean from the filth of this world and have a love that he shows to no one else.

***So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*** (Ephesians 5:28-30). Jesus Christ said when two, a man and a woman, come together, they become one flesh. So the man is to love his wife as though she were his flesh and bones, just as we, the members of the Lord, are His flesh and bones. We are the only living samples of what Christians are to be, not only to our wives, but to the world. When we cherish something, it is of such value that we go to any length to make sure it is kept safe. A man can have a stash of gold coins and he will do everything he can to make sure they are protected from being stolen, or from becoming blemished by being handled in a wrong manner. Such should be the value of the wife to the husband. She is to be protected from being tainted by the sins of the world.

***For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband*** (Ephesians 5:31-33). The phrase, ***they two shall be one flesh*** is typifying the relationship between the man and the woman, and the result of that relationship, the birth of a child, who because of the two, becomes one flesh. The union of two bodies produces another body. So it is with the child of God in the body of Christ. When he or she tells another of the saving love and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that person is convicted of sin, repents and asks Jesus Christ to come into his heart, then he too becomes one flesh in Christ.

The man is to love his wife (ἀγαπή), and the wife is to reverence (φιλονδρω - to show intimate tenderness) toward her husband. I wonder how many Christians show such a tenderness toward the one who loved them so much He was willing to come down from the heights of Heaven, live in a body of flesh, be humiliated and crucified for our sins, and then give us eternal life? If He has such love for us, should we not have a tenderness of heart to serve Him?

## *Chapter Six*

### *The Battle*

#### 1. Discipline:

***Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth*** (Ephesians 6:1-3). One of the major battles that face anyone is the battle in the home, especially if the parents are Christians. Satan will do all within his power to destroy the harmony of the family, and he does it first of all with disobedience by the children. Whereas nowhere in the Scriptures is the wife told to obey her husband, but to reverence him, it is the duty and responsibility of children to be obedient. It is one of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, and is the only one which is attached with a promise. Children, do you want to have a long, happy and prosperous life? Then not only obey your parents, but honor them also. One thing I never did as a child or even later, was to call my mother or father “old lady,” or “old man.” That to me is the height of disrespect. Neither do I call my wife my “old lady.” She is my young and beautiful wife, friend and lover, and as such deserves my love and respect.

The same holds true when you are speaking of your Heavenly Father. This idea of calling Him “the old man upstairs” shows disrespect and does not render to Him the honor and glory due His name. He is the one who showed such great love that He sent His only begotten Son to die for your sins and mine. And as such, He deserves our total obedience and honor. I sometimes wonder if this is the reason some preachers seem to live a long life, while others who disregard His holy Word and replace it with the perverted versions of today are soon gone off the scene. You can holler and scream, “Something GOOD is going to happen to you today,” but then turn around and use the ASV, NIV, PDQ or any other perversion and you are dishonoring the God of the Bible. Show Him the honor He alone deserves.

***And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*** (Ephesians 6:4). Sometimes a child’s life seems to be frustrated, and it is because of inconsistency in the way they are disciplined. They can be punished one day for something they do wrong, and the next it is overlooked by the parents, especially by their father. That is the idea of being provoked, to frustrate to the point that they don’t know what to do or what not to do.

The word ***nurture*** has been so misused today that it does not hold the true meaning of discipline. It literally means to spank, by implication, disciplinary correction:--chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture. It is to take the child aside, alone, explain what he or she did wrong, and then to discipline accordingly. Sometimes it becomes physical discipline; other times it may call for something less, such as being “grounded” or given special tasks to perform in punishment for what they had done. But whatever the case, it calls for the father to show the child that they had been wrong and to bring about remorse on the part of that child, and to make sure it is done in the

*admonition of the Lord*, in other words, take them aside, find some Scriptural basis for showing them what they had done wrong and why it is necessary to discipline them, then to have them explain why it is necessary. Repentance for doing wrong is a part of their learning that they need to repent to God also.

## 2. Authority:

*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free* (Ephesians 6:5-8). Where slavery was a customary occurrence in the days of Paul, today we speak of a servant as one who works and is hired for his services. As such, you as a “servant” of your boss should render unto him the best of your ability, not doing such to get his praise, but the praise of your Savior. Far too often today, when a supervisor asks someone to do a task, the common reply is, “That is not in my job description.” Your “job description” is to do whatever your employer asks you to do, without complaining that it may be below your so-called “dignity.”

There was a story told of an employer who called in three of his best sales representatives, and told them he wanted them to come in regular work clothes the next day for a special task. The next morning, the three arrived in coveralls and work shoes and shirt. The employer then handed them shovels, took them to the back of the business and told them he wanted them to dig a hole and take the dirt and pile it up over against a fence. After completing the task, taking all day and two of them were complaining most of the time, they went on home. The next day, he asked them to take the dirt and fill in the hole they had dug. Once again the two complained throughout the whole process, while the other went about doing the work. The next day, the employer told them to once more dig the hole and pile the dirt up over against the fence. The two refused to do so, saying it was a menial, useless task, while the other picked up the shovel and went about digging the hole once more, with sweat running down his face. After he was done, the boss told them to again come to work the next day in their regular business suits. When they showed up, he told them the one who had not complained had won the job, because he did the work without complaining or asking why. That is the attitude workers should have in their jobs, no matter what it may be. You may not be rewarded by your boss, but your Heavenly Father sees and will reward accordingly.

*And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him* (Ephesians 6:9). Likewise, the employer is to treat their workers with due respect and with proper pay. Far too often the employer barely pays minimum wage, while they themselves live in luxury. When a corporate executive gets 300 million dollars a year, while workers get laid off because the company cannot afford to keep them, then there is something drastically wrong with their system. They need to be paid accordingly to their worth in the company.

### 3. Warfare:

***Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*** (Ephesians 6:10-12). There used to be a popular song, titled, *He's got the whole world in his hands*. Hold onto your hat, my friend. That song is not talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, nor to God Almighty. It is Satan who is ruling over the earth today, and will do so until the day the Lord Jesus Christ sets up His millennial kingdom. The Bible tells us that the devil is the god of this world. Second Corinthians 4:4 tells us, ***In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*** Remember what we read in Ephesians 2:2? Look at that verse again, and understand just who is in control. ***Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*** (emphasis mine).

The enemy we face is not flesh and blood, but the demonic, spiritual world that is all around us, constantly bombarding us with thoughts of evil and sin. It is no way we can defeat Satan and his emissaries of wickedness in our own strength. And there is only one way that we can defeat the devil.

***Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*** (Ephesians 6:13). There is a strength and protection that we have with us, and it is the only tool to be effective in our warfare against the *wiles of the devil*. The word *wiles* is from the Greek μεθοδεις, where we get our word "method." We have to understand the methods used by Satan to get us discouraged, despondent and defeated, and it all ends in his attack upon our mind. But the whole "body" must be protected, so we have the full armor given to us by God.

Notice that it says to be strengthened by ***the whole armour of God***. We cannot expect to be protected if any of the armor is missing. It is all needed to be an effective soldier in God's army.

***Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*** (Ephesians 6:14-17).

The ancient armor of the days of Paul was that which held everything together. Without it, there was no way to keep the rest of the uniform in its proper place. Without the girdle, everything would fall apart. The pants would fall down and you would be in a predicament where you could not defend yourself.

The breastplate was that which covered the chest, to keep it safe from darts and arrows that might be slung at you. It is the heart area that is needed to keep the whole body working effectively, hence, if you damage the heart, you slow down your ability to be an effective soldier. That is why the heart is mentioned so often in the Bible as the seat of wickedness. Jeremiah 17:9 says, ***The heart is deceitful above all things, and***

*desperately wicked: who can know it?* Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, ***For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies...*** He further stated in Mark 7:21-23, ***For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*** We need to understand that the heart as mentioned is not the mechanism within our bodies that pulses blood through our veins, but the soul and spirit that show what is in man.

***And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*** (Ephesians 6:15). Far too many have taken the “Go” out of the Gospel. The Scriptures call our feet beautiful (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15). The very word ***gospel*** means to evangelize. We are God’s “angels,” or messengers. The Greek word is εὐαγγέλιος, or good news. Jesus told His disciples, as well as us, ***Go ye...*** It means everyone who knows the truth of the plan of salvation is to be His ambassadors to a lost and dying world.

Shoes are a necessary foundation to proper function of the whole body. Without a proper balance, we might slip and fall. That is why in the Old Testament, when a nation was subdued, their enemy would take the king and cut off his big toes. From then on, the man could not walk in a necessary fashion, but would stumble with each step. Our “shoes” are the Word of God, for without it, we cannot properly tell others about Jesus Christ and how He has come into the world to be the Savior. That is where daily reading the Bible, memorization and witnessing to others is a necessity.

***Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*** (Ephesians 6:16). The shield was a valuable form of protection for the soldiers of that day. Sometimes the shield was as long and high as the soldier himself, causing total protection from any darts or arrows hurled his way. Our shield is our faith, and it is our faith that gives us victory over the temptations of Satan. Hebrews 11:6, in speaking of our faith in God, says, ***But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*** As the popular children’s chorus goes, “Faith is just believing what God says He will do.” Or to put it another way, “Faith is just believing, what God says, He will do.” The acronym for faith is “Forsaking All I Trust Him.” That is when we have full assurance in victory over sin, Satan and self.

***And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*** (Ephesians 6:17). It is reasonable to understand that the helmet is the protection given for the brain, which is the seat of knowledge. And since that is where knowledge is accumulated, ***the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*** is the fullness of any knowledge and wisdom given to man by Almighty God. Paul mentions the helmet of salvation also in First Thessalonians 5:8: ***But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*** The hope of continual safety and protection, built on the promises of God, to which the upright follower of Christ feels he has a Divine right, protects the understanding from being darkened, and the judgment from being confused by any temptations of Satan, or subtle arguments of the sophisticated ungodly.

And ***the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God***, is explained in that it is the only tool so adorned by the soldier that builds on offense. As every other part of the armament protects, the sword not only defends but is used to pierce the enemy. In

Hebrews 4:12, we read, *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* The sword, the Word of God, cuts to the quick the heart of the unbeliever and is what we use to bring conviction of sin, repentance toward God in faith, and forgiveness when the repentant soul humbles himself before the feet of God and asks Jesus Christ to forgive them of their sin.

If you will look at the armor, you will see that it is all front facing, and there seems to be nothing to protect the back of the soldier. That is because we are not to retreat, but to attack the enemy, the devil. When Jesus spoke of *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, in speaking of the church, we need to understand that a gate is a defense, and we as Christians are to storm the gates of hell and snatch the imprisoned souls before it is eternally too late. Jude verse twenty-three tells us, *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.* We are the victors, not Satan. Someday, even he will bow before the feet of Jesus Christ and acknowledge that Jesus and Jesus alone is Lord. Have you done this, my friend, cast yourself before God and trusted Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior?

*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak* (Ephesians 6:18-20). The one element that is utmost in importance, when it comes to defeat of the devil is prayer. Verbally quoting Scripture to cause the devil to flee is good, but first of all, we have to be in communication with our Savior. First Timothy 2:1 says, *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.* We need not only to go to the Lord in prayer for victory over temptations, but also to pray for the victory of others.

**Supplications:** What is your need? I didn't say what is your want. There are at times things that are a necessity, and you may find no way imaginable to receive them. That is when you go to the Lord and ask Him to *supply all your need* (Philippians 4:13).

The story is told of a little girl who was to stand in front of the congregation and quote Psalm chapter twenty-three. She had it a little wrong, but her version makes a lot of sense. She stood up, cleared her voice and said, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I have all I want." With the Lord on our side, we have all that He desires to give us. As I stated at the beginning of this book, we have all the blessings that God wants to give us. All we have to do is claim them.

**Prayers:** There are times when we just go to the Lord and talk with Him, not because we need something, but because of all He has done for us. As Paul said it, we are to be praying always.

**Intercessions:** We see the need to be in prayer on behalf of others who may be hurting, or having a spiritual need of their own. That is when we pray to God for them, to be a Comforter and help to them.

My wife is a midwife, and as such, she gets calls all times of the day and night, mostly by women who are having physical or mental problems concerning their coming birth of a child. Sometimes the woman is on the verge of a miscarriage, and my wife will

take the time right then to pray to God for them. I remember on one occasion she was telling me about a birth, where the child, after being born, was not breathing. No matter what she tried, the child would not breathe. So she asked the parents, who were by the way unsaved, if she could pray for the child and they gave permission. She said, "Lord, you brought this little one into the world, and now we need you to cause this child to live. Please give it the strength to start breathing." She didn't even get the chance to end the prayer in Christ's name, before the child let out a yell and began to cry. The father of the child said, "Boy, if I ever need something, I'll be sure to call **you**." I don't think the mother or father ever got saved, but I'm sure they will remember that occasion should the Lord bring to their remembrance the times my wife had told them of the Lord and her testimony.

***Giving of thanks:*** First Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, ***Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*** There are times when we see no rhyme nor reason for things that come upon us, but Paul states that even in those rough times, we are to rejoice in the Lord, to keep on praying and to give thanks to the Lord.

Ron Hamilton is a popular Christian songwriter and singer, who came down with cancer in his eye, and thought he might lose sight to both before surgery. He went to the Lord and gave it all into His hands. He then wrote the song, Rejoice In The Lord, where it says,

Oh rejoice in the Lord, He makes no mistake.  
He knoweth the end of each path that I take.  
For when I am tried, and purified,  
I shall come forth as gold.

We may never understand why we had that flat tire and we were in a hurry. But the Lord may have seen that car accident up ahead that He caused you to avoid. There are things that happen in our lives that cannot be explained. We just need to trust in the Lord, because He does not make any mistake.

And recall the verse, the ***giving of thanks***, was to ***be made for all men***. Can we truly thank the Lord for that person who is taunting us? How about those Christians over in India who have been forced from their homes because their house was set on fire? Can they give thanks? Can we give thanks for them? Their testimony will go down in the annals of time and in Heaven, they shall have their reward for sustaining their strength in God, despite the persecutions.

***And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak*** (Ephesians 6:19-20). Paul is ever reminding the various congregations of the need for them to pray for his ministry. It is essential for every pastor to have someone praying for him, as he will be the number one target of the devil. I wonder how many preachers' lives have been ruined through a lack of prayer by his people?

The story is told of a time when Charles J. Spurgeon was taking some men on a tour of his church building, and someone asked, "Where does all the power come from to ruin this place?" He told them to follow him, and he went into the basement to a small room adjacent to the boiler room. There, gathered together were several men, in prayer

for the pastor's ministry. "Here is where the power comes from," Spurgeon told them. The lack of prayer will bring about a lack of conviction on folks of their sin, whether they be back slidden, or sinners in need of repentance and faith in Christ. Just as many have taken the "go" out of the Gospel, true also is the fact that the "POW" is missing in many a sermon, simply because people lack prayer.

Just recently, there was a godly woman in a local congregation that had passed away. Some of the things she had done through the years (thirty-three of them as a widow), was to open her house to visiting preachers, missionaries, even a visiting policeman on one occasion, and she never failed to pray for them. I think there will be a good deal of godly women who will get the "preacher's crown" when they get to Heaven, simply because they prayed for their pastor's ministry, that God would use them to win many souls to Christ.

***But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts*** (Ephesians 6:21-22). Throughout Paul's ministry and letters to various congregations, he never fails to mention those who assisted in his preaching and teaching others the Gospel. Whereas it is not always necessary to do so, as many do not require or request it, the local pastor should at times be faithful to mention those who have assisted the congregation, whether it be song leading, singing solos, teaching class, or simply being one to bring food to visiting ministers, or opening their homes to help others. These people will get their reward when they meet at the Bema Seat of Christ, but it is also good to at times let others know they are appreciated. Tychicus is another of the many faithful servants of Christ who assisted Paul, in carrying his letter back to his own congregation and reporting on the status of Paul's imprisonment. It was because of the many faithful servants of the Lord that we have the Canon of the Scriptures today, the many epistles written either personally by Paul or on his behalf, because of his "thorn in the flesh." Whatever the case may be, here was the preacher of the congregation in Ephesus, personally carrying back this epistle to the brethren.

#### **4. Benediction:**

***Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*** (Ephesians 6:23-24). In Paul's letter to the saints at Galatia, he had a stern closing to his letter: ***From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus***. In this letter to Ephesians, Paul had not needed stern corrective measures, so his whole tone was one of the love of Christ, and closes with such love to these brethren in the Lord. I wonder how many pastors, when facing certain members of his own congregation, would feel like saying, "Let no man trouble me." Each one of his people should be those who uplift him, encourage him and pray for him. It is encouraging to a preacher for someone to come up and say, "I've been praying for you." What a challenge that would give to him, to know there is intercessory prayer for him going before the throne of grace.

Let us be such as would be uplifting our pastors, teachers, song leaders, or whatever service they are in, so they know there is a love for their ministry.

