

EPHESIANS

*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Ephesians 1:1-2

These are the first two verses in Paul’s letter to the faithful “saints” in Ephesus. I have been feeling lately that we need to do a book study. Studying books of the bible is essential to our spiritual growth. I was talking to one of our members this week and we were thinking about how many mature Christians still allow “worldly” ways in their words and deeds. I thought of Ephesians right away and how Paul encourages these powerful emerging leaders of the gospel to no longer live as the “pagans” do in the futility of their thinking. If we are going to be followers of Christ then our mindset must be changed because as you think, you live.

But there is also another reason for looking at Ephesians. This book was not written to combat controversy or to expose false teaching in the church like some of his other writings. Paul’s aim was much higher. He rose above the battlefield and “seated in heavenly places” he captures a view of God’s sovereign plan for the church. I have to admit, the daily battle can leave you with a view of the bitter fight rather than the sweet victory already won. But Paul encourages us since we have been “raised up with Christ” and been “seated with Him in the heavenly realms” to see the “incomparable riches of His grace.”

Paul is beckoning us to rise above, transcend this world and see the big picture. Let’s go to the heavenlies together and see what Jesus sees. Do you remember that Jesus said that He only did what He saw the Father doing? Jesus had a heavenly view. The Holy Spirit’s cry to the apostle John was to “come up here” (read Revelation 4:1-2). John was transported in spirit through a door that he saw open in heaven and by the same Spirit whose word is life and breathe, we can transcend into this spiritual dimension. Ready to go? Ready to see differently?

We will simply start with Paul’s opening address to us. In the first two verses, let’s pick up this mentality as if Paul were writing the letter directly to us. He calls us “saints” and he calls us “faithful.” We need to see ourselves as the Father sees us. The word translated saint in English comes from a Greek term that means holy one. That is the view from heaven. Since Christ died for us we have become a new life creation. We are no longer viewed by God as fleshy carnal sin-stained beings. We are new creations. The view the Father has of us is not just how He sees us but it is actually who we are. The holy nature of the creator is in us and influences our lives daily. If anyone asked you to describe yourself would you say to them, “I am holy?” Guess what. If you do not see yourself as this new being, you will not live that way! I can tell you that inside of you there is a pull, a tug upon your heart to live like a holy one. A holy one is a “faithful” one. We live by the presence and the values of the Holy Spirit who also lives in us. Let me ask you, can you live like a duck? Oh, pastor, of course not! Well, then we can no longer live as the pagans (unbelievers) do either. If we do not live according to our new nature we will be miserable. In closing read Galatians 5:16-30 and learn how to really live it up!