

INTRODUCING EPHESIANS

Part 1

It's been encouraging to receive positive comments about us starting the series in the Book of Ephesians. People are literally excited when they hear we are studying this amazing book. It does my heart good to hear them still enthusiastic to understand more of God's grace and truth. When I tell some people what we're going to teach on, I see their eyes light up and hear positive comments ...

THE TRUTH IS, THERE IS MUCH MORE TO KNOW ABOUT OUR POSITION IN CHRIST & GOD'S PROVISION FOR US SINCE THE CROSS & RESURRECTION.

Being born again is just the beginning of an exciting journey of exploration ... a thrilling life of discovery ...

However, I have heard some Christians say things like, 'Jesus is the truth and I have Jesus, so I have all the truth I need', as they fall back into lethargy ...

One local pastor who was having trouble with the congregation being unmotivated, asked a fellow pastor for advice.

His friend asked him, 'Do you think the problem is ignorance or apathy?'

The pastor replied, 'I don't know and I don't care!'

Because we've found 'The Truth' (who is Jesus) ... we don't stop **seeking truth**, but we seek more of the truth we have found ...

THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO KNOW ABOUT THE ONE WE KNOW

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Colossians 3 encourages us **to seek out** things above where Christ is -

Colossians 3:1-2 **SLIDE**

*If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things** which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Once we taste that the Lord is good ... we develop a healthy appetite for more of Him and all His exquisite delicacies ...

NB Colossians directs our 'seeking' heavenward ... into the Heavenly Realms

... It is here our spiritual hunger will be satisfied.

This revelation cannot be found here on this Earth ... or in books, except they point us upward to God.

SO IT IS WITH EPHESIANS. EPHESIANS STARTS IN THE HEAVENLIES.

There is no easing into Ephesians ... There is no preamble ... no prelude!

SLIDE Paul unashamedly blasts us into the Heavenly Realms of the Risen Christ ...

HE USES THE PHRASE 'EPOURANIOIS' - 'IN THE HEAVENLIES' - 5 TIMES ...

Also meaning, 'Above the sky'

Ephesians 1:3 **SLIDE**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who HAS blessed us with every spiritual blessing **in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus!!!!*

Ephesians 1:20 ESV

*... He [God] raised Him [Christ] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand **in the heavenly places.***

Ephesians 2:6 **SLIDE**

*He [God] raised us up together, and made us sit together **in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 3:10 NLT

*God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities **in the heavenly places.***

SO, EPHESIANS IS HEAVENLY TRUTH ... EXALTED TRUTH ... TRUTH ABOVE
It reveals from **the starting gun** - We are 'In Christ' in Heavenly Realms ... with blessing after blessing ...

IT IS WRITTEN BY 'PAUL THE APOSTLE'

Ephesians 1:1 **SLIDE**

Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God ...

REMEMBER, THIS IS PAUL THE APOSTLE WHO HAD BEEN **TAKEN INTO THE 3RD HEAVEN** (GOD'S HEAVEN) (2 Cor 12:2)

There, he was shown a plethora of heavenly things that go far beyond all natural understanding and interpretation ...

2 Corinthians 12:4 Young's Literal

... He [Paul] was caught away to the paradise, and heard unutterable sayings [too sacred] that **it is not possible** for man to speak.

THERE ARE LAWS HERE PREVENTING THE UNDERSTANDING OF SUCH THINGS.
HERE WE ARE RESTRICTED ... HELD BEHIND HUMAN BOUNDARIES ...

For example: *According to a branch of theoretical physics, there are at least 10 dimensions of space, most of which are impossible for humans to perceive.*

Yet, here in Ephesians, Paul still unapologetically ... hurls us heavenward into heavenly truth which explodes in 'length, breadth, depth and height' (notice 4 dimensions) that no natural man could ever begin to understand ...

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Natural = from psuche = the mind ... **THIS IS THE UNREGENERATE MAN**
No amount of research or study can give you understanding into these truths.

THESE ARE HEAVENLY TRUTHS THAT ARE BEYOND ANYONE'S NATURAL ABILITY TO PERCEIVE.

YET THE BORN AGAIN BELIEVER CAN PERCEIVE THESE THINGS *SPIRITUALLY*.

SO HOW DOES THE BELIEVER BEGIN TO PERCEIVE THESE TRUTHS?

1. WE MUST KNOW WE HAVE SPIRITUAL EYES **SLIDE**
YOU RECEIVED SPIRITUAL SIGHT WHEN YOU WERE BORN AGAIN

John 3:3 NLT **SLIDE**

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

POSITIVELY APPLIED

When you **are** born again you **can** see the Kingdom of God.

As much as it's impossible for the unregenerate person to perceive these truths ... **it *is* entirely possible for the born again believer to see them.**

The born again believer has a divine ability to perceive ... to see beyond this physical realm ... to see into the Kingdom of God ... to see and perceive mysteries in the spirit.

YOU HAVE SPIRITUAL EYES ...

SLIDE In his poem, 'In No Strange Land', the British poet Francis Thompson expresses this brilliantly ...

*'Oh world invisible we view thee;
Oh world intangible we touch thee
Oh world unknowable we know thee;
Inapprehensible we clutch thee ...*

PAUL WRITES THESE TRUTHS TO BORN AGAIN SAINTS

Ephesians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus.

Paul knows we, as 'saints', are able to perceive these heavenly truths.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

... Eye has not seen ... ¹⁰*But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit ...*

SO HOW DOES THE BELIEVER BEGIN TO PERCEIVE THESE TRUTHS?

2. WE MUST KNOW OUR OLD NATURE IS DEAD **SLIDE**

**EPHESIANS IS ALL ABOUT RESURRECTION TRUTH BUT ...
BEFORE WE EXPERIENCE 'THE RESURRECTION',
WE MUST KNOW WE DIED WITH CHRIST.**

Romans 6:5-6 Berean Literal Bible **SLIDE**

*For if we have become united in **the likeness of His death**, certainly also **we will be of the resurrection**, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him ...*

Colossians 3:2-3 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³**For you died**, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

BEFORE WE CAN SOAR WE NEED TO KNOW WE ALREADY DIED.

KNOWING I AM NO LONGER BOUND TO MY EARTHLY PAST SETS ME FREE TO SOAR INTO THESE HEAVENLY REALMS.

All my past failures have been forgiven the moment Jesus died upon that cross and **I BECAME A SPIRITUAL BEING.**

1 Corinthians 15:47

The first man [Adam] was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man [Christ] is the Lord from heaven.

KNOWING **WHO I'M NOT IN ADAM**
ALLOWS ME THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE WHO I AM IN CHRIST.

Yet some of us remain chained to our past ...

- *SOME OF US ARE LOCKED-UP IN THE PRISON OF CONDEMNATION & HIDE OUR HEADS IN SHAME –*

KNOW YOU DIED WITH CHRIST UPON THE CROSS

- *SOME OF US ARE BURIED UNDER RELIGIOUS RULES & DEMANDS ... STILL TRYING TO PERFECT OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ... TO KEEP THE LAW ... TO BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR GOD ... BLINDFOLDED BY GUILT & FEAR ...*
- LIKE THIS, WE CANNOT SOAR INTO THESE HEAVENLY REALMS

KNOW YOU DIED WITH CHRIST UPON THE CROSS

IF YOU DON'T SETTLE THE FINALITY OF THE CROSS ...
YOU CAN'T MOVE ON INTO THE GLORY OF HIS LIFE.

YOUR SINFUL LIFE ENDED THE MOMENT JESUS PROCLAIMED ... IT IS FINISHED

One pastor in Hong Kong wrote this about Ephesians -

*'About seven years ago I got our church in Hong Kong to study this book. To be honest, we weren't ready for it. **We were wearing the wrong glasses.** It is only since I have learned to read everything through the lens of **Jesus and His finished work** that this book really begins to make sense.'*

ACCEPT THE FINALITY OF THE CROSS.
THERE IS NO ONGOING WORK OF THE CROSS IN YOUR LIFE ...

THE CROSS HAS DONE ITS JOB ... KILLING WHO YOU WERE IN ADAM

NB: When Jesus said, 'Take up your cross and follow me', this was ...

- **NOT THE CROSS OF CHRIST ... but 'Your Cross'**
- **NOT ABOUT DYING TO SELF ... BUT DENYING OUR WAY OF LIFE**
- **NOT ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS ... BUT SERVICE**

JESUS & GOD HAVE FINISHED WITH THE CROSS

In fact ... the New Testament only teaches the Cross as a PAST event.

**THE ONLY VIEW WE HAVE NOW OF THE CROSS IS WHAT HAS ALREADY
HAPPENED IN THE PAST**

Galatians 6:14 Berean Literal Bible

*But for me, may it be never to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world **has been** crucified to me and I to the world.*

TODAY THE CROSS IS EMPTY

CHRIST'S BODY & YOURS HAVE BEEN TAKEN DOWN DEAD & BURIED

One guy said, 'As a catholic, Jesus was still on the cross and so was I'.

JESUS TOOK OUR CURSE ON THE CROSS.

**HE TOOK YOUR CURSE THAT YOU INHERITED FROM ADAM,
TO ALLOW YOU TO INHERIT HIS BLESSING. (LOOK AT THE BLESSING OF
EPHESIANS 1:3)**

JESUS TOOK OUR REJECTION ON THE CROSS.

**HE CRIED 'MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?'
WHICH MEANS THAT NOW WE HAVE LOVING ACCEPTANCE. (SEE EPHESIANS
1:6)**

**THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR YOU TO DO TO YOU THAT CHRIST HAS NOT
ALREADY DONE FOR YOU UPON THE CROSS.**

"Christianity begins, not with a big DO, but with a big DONE"

- page 14 'Sit, Walk, Stand' - Watchman Nee

Romans 6:11 tells you to RECKON YOURSELF DEAD ...

THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO SOAR ...

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THIS GLORIOUS MYSTERY -

3. WE MUST ALLOW OUR SPIRIT TO ILLUMINATE OUR MIND **SLIDE**

PAUL TELLS US IN HIS FIRST EPHESIANS PRAYER -

Ephesians 1:18

*[I pray,] the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, **that you may know** what is the hope of His calling, (and) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*

SLIDE I PRAY YOUR SPIRITUAL EYES MIGHT ENLIGHTEN /
BRIGHTEN YOUR MIND, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW ...
(paraphrased)

IT CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD IN ANY OTHER WAY THAN ... YOU HAVE A
'SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT'.

Luke 1:3

... Having had perfect understanding ...

1 Corinthians 2:16

... We have the mind of Christ.

PAUL'S SECOND PRAYER

Ephesians 3:18-19 **SLIDE**

¹⁴I bow my knees ...

*[That you] may be able **to comprehend** with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, ¹⁹**to know** the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

THE RESULT OF US KNOWING THESE MYSTERIES IS ... WE ARE FILLED WITH ALL HIS FULLNESS ... AGAIN & AGAIN & AGAIN ...

THIS IS DWELLING IN THE HEAVENLY HOUSE OF THE LORD ...

THIS IS FEASTING AT THE HEAVENLY TABLE OF THE LORD ...