

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Teacher Manual

Studies 1 - 10

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

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Stephen Nemeth Lectures

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion : Ephesians 1:1-14

The apostle Paul spent three years in Ephesus - **Acts 29, and 20:17-38**. As a result of his ministry, a church was established in the city. Ten years later, from his prison in Rome, he wrote this epistle and sent it by Tychicus to the Christians there.

Ephesians is a thrilling book because it tells us how we (or anyone) can become a Christian and how God wants us to live the Christian life.

Chapters 1-3 tell us of our **Wealth** in Christ.

Chapters 4-6 tell us of our **Walk** in Christ.

The **key verse** to the first three chapters is -

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

This introduces the theme of this first study. In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has made over to the believer, His whole estate of spiritual wealth. Without Christ, and apart from Him, we have nothing, we are nothing and we can do nothing.

John 15:5 - *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

As believers, God says to us -

Luke 15:31 - *And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*

How rich we are - yet how few of us realize our true wealth and ***possess our possessions!***

Obadiah 17 - *But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.*

God has made His Son the repository of all spiritual blessing.

The moment we receive Him as Saviour and Lord, all the blessings which are in Him become

ours. What are these blessings which are ours in Christ and which we need to appropriate and enjoy?

Ephesians 1:4-14 mentions seven blessings that are ours.

1. WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN IN CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

Ephesians 1:4 - *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:*

This is the great truth of **Election**. How wonderful that God should select us to be His very own! Notice when he chose us and why He chose us.

Compare -

John 15:16 - *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

1 Peter 1:15-16 - *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;
16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

What a marvel of sovereign grace is this! Our salvation was certainly no after-thought in the mind of God. The whole plan was conceived in eternity past. Believer, do you ever wonder whether, after all, you will be saved? Read and rest upon -

Ephesians 1:4 - *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:*

Cast away your doubts forever.

John 6:37-39 - *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.
39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

2. WE HAVE BEEN PREDESTINATED UNTO THE

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN.

Ephesians 1:4-5 - *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:*

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

This word *predestinate* means *to mark out beforehand*. In eternity, God not only chose us but He planned what He would do with us.

Election looks backward and tells us we were chosen, **verse 4**.

Predestination looks forward and tells us why we were chosen, **verse 5**.

God's purpose in choosing us is that we should be brought into His family and given the full status and privileges of sonship. Think of it - we who were lost and enemies have been chosen to be sons, members of the Royal Family of Heaven!

Compare -

1 John 3:1-3 - *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Romans 8:18-19 - *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Romans 8:23 - *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

3. WE HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.

Ephesians 1:6 - *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

This means that, whereas God could never accept us in our sinful, unregenerate condition, yet once we trust Christ as our Saviour, He does accept us in Him.

Compare -

Isaiah 64:6 - *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Ephesians 1:6 - *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

This should banish all my doubts. If I look at my sinful self, I doubt at once. But, if I look off unto Jesus -

Hebrews 12:2 - *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

in whom I am *accepted*, my doubts vanish because God has accepted the perfect life and the finished work of His Son. It is in Him that I find my acceptance.

4. WE HAVE BEEN REDEEMED AND ALL OUR SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN.

Ephesians 1:7 - *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

To redeem is to buy back, to release by ransom.

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;
19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
We were sold under sin -*

Romans 7:14 - *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

We have been *bought with a price* -

1 Corinthians 6:20 - *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Not only this, we have been *forgiven* -

Isaiah 44:22-23 - *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Psalms 103:12 - *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

Luke 7:47 - *Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

God has not only made us His own, but He has made us fit to live with Him for ever. How has He done this? *By His blood.* That is, by the sacrifice and atoning work of the Lord Jesus. Compare -

Matthew 20:28 - *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Hebrews 9:12 - *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

1 Peter 1:18 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

1 Peter 2:24 - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Revelation 1:5-6 - *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

5. WE HAVE BEEN INITIATED INTO THE DIVINE MYSTERY.

Ephesians 1:8-10 - *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
10 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:*

The word *mystery* refers to truth which was once undisclosed but which God has now revealed. The particular *disclosure* referred to in **verse 10** is that everything is moving towards the glorious consummation of all things when -

Philippians 2:10-11 - *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

will be a reality.

Where has God made known unto us the mystery of His will, **verse 9**?

In His Word, which is *the more sure word of prophecy*.

2 Peter 1:19 - *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

There we have God's glorious plan for the future, until time is no more and the saved are with Him for all eternity.

6. WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE.

Ephesians 1:11 - *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:

In Christ we have everything we need for time and for eternity. Compare -

1 Peter 1:4 - *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

Romans 8:17 - *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Romans 8:32 - *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 - *Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;*

2 Timothy 2:12 - *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*

Revelation 5:10 - *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

Inheritance speaks of riches, wealth, possession - and how rich we are in Him!

Ephesians 1:14 - *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

We already have the earnest, or the guarantee, of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit within us is the pledge that one day we shall enter into all that which already belongs to us in Christ.

Compare -

Ephesians 4:30 - *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

John 14:16-17 - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

7. WE HAVE BEEN SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE.

Ephesians 1:13-14 - *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,*

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

This divine sealing denotes ownership and security. We belong to Him. We shall always belong to Him! We have been sealed *unto the journey's end*.

Ephesians 4:30 - *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

These spiritual blessings belong to every Christian. They are only ours -

if we are *in Christ* -

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

if, having heard the gospel -

Ephesians 1:13a - *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:.....*

if we have believed -

Ephesians 1:13b - *.....in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

GOD'S PICTURE OF THE NATURAL MAN

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 2:1-12

2 Timothy 3:16 - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

The Bible, God's inspired Word, is a picture book, a kind of family album of the human race. The pictures in God's album are true to life. They are not touched-up. Therefore, they are sometimes very uncomplimentary.

By *the natural man* we mean the man who is not a Christian, who has never been born again and who is described in -

Ephesians 2:3 - *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.*

by the words *by nature*.....

Compare -

1 Corinthians 2:14 - *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

In this study we are to look at God's photograph of fallen humanity, of every man and woman who is not a Christian, and of ourselves, apart from the grace of God and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

But, before looking at God's life-sized portrait of ourselves in **Ephesians, chapter 2**, notice the following pictures of the *natural man* in -

Genesis 6:5 - *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Psalms 14:2-3 - *The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

3 *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Isaiah 1:5-6 - *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.*

6 *From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*

Isaiah 64:6 - *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Jeremiah 17:9 - *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Matthew 15:18-20 - *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

19 *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

20 *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

Also read **Romans 1:21-32**.

When we turn to **Ephesians 2:1-12**, we see what we were like before we were saved and what we are like now, apart from the Lord Jesus.

1. THE NATURAL MAN IS DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS.

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

Compare -

Genesis 3:15-17 - *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

16 *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

17 *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast*

eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Romans 5:12 - *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

John 5:40 - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

1 John 3:14 - *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

1 John 5:11-12 - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Compare -

Ephesians 4:18 - *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:*

Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. By nature, we are all spiritually dead.

2. THE NATURAL MAN WALKS ACCORDING TO THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD.

Ephesians 2:2 - *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:*

That is, his conduct is according to the trend of the age in which he lives. The unregenerate person lives according to the standards of this world with regard, for example, to his attitude towards sin, pleasures, dress, desires.

Compare -

Matthew 7:13-14 - *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Psalms 1:1-6 - *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

3. THE NATURAL MAN WALKS -

Ephesians 2:2 - *.....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:*

In other words, by nature he is controlled by Satan. Our first parents listened to the lie of Satan. When they yielded to him, they became dominated by him.

Read **Genesis 3:1-13**.

We are likewise under the control of the enemy of our souls. Satan is a real person whose domain is in the air. He is tremendously active.

1 John 5:19 - *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

4. THE NATURAL MAN IS A CHILD OF DISOBEDIENCE.

Ephesians 2:2 -*the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Our first parents disobeyed God and we have inherited their fallen nature. Consequently our natural tendency is to disobey the Lord.

Psalm 51:5 - *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

The word *shapen* tells us that, by nature, our tendency is to commit sin.

5. THE NATURAL MAN WALKS -

Ephesians 2:3 -*in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;*

The word *lust* does not, of necessity, refer to that which is revolting and impure, but to that which we naturally desire. Because we are spiritually dead and controlled by Satan, our desires are fleshly, perverted, often sensual. Notice the word *flesh* in **verse 3**. Read -

John 3:6 - *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Romans 7:18 - *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

Romans 8:8 - *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

6. THE NATURAL MAN IS A CHILD OF WRATH.

Ephesians 2:3 -*by nature the children of wrath,.....*

This means that, by nature, men and women are condemned and are under the sentence of death. Read the following references and notice how forcibly this truth is brought out.

John 3:18-19 - *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 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 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Romans 1:18-20 - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

How solemn this is! Everyone who is not a Christian is condemned already and is under the wrath of God.

7. THE NATURAL MAN IS WITHOUT CHRIST.

Ephesians 2:12 - *That at that time ye were without Christ,.....*

See what the Lord Jesus said in -

John 14:6 - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

What a solemn thing it is to be *without Christ*! Millions around the world today are without Christ, the only Saviour of men.

Acts 4:12 - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

8. THE NATURAL MAN IS AN ALIEN.

Ephesians 2:12 - *.....being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,.....*

To be unregenerate is to be a poor wandering outcast, a spiritually displaced person. It is to have no country, no Heavenly Home.

John 14:1-3 - *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

This is the position of everyone who is not a Christian.

9. THE NATURAL MAN IS A STRANGER.

Ephesians 2:12 - *.....and strangers from the covenants of promise,.....*

A stranger has no claim whatsoever upon God. Only those who are related to God through faith in Christ Jesus who are, therefore, members of His family, have any claim on Him at all. Compare -

Matthew 22:11-13 - *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:*

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 13:25-26 - *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

10. THE NATURAL MAN IS WITHOUT HOPE.

Ephesians 2:12 - *.....having no hope,.....*

He is helpless and, apart from Christ, his state is hopeless. Sometimes a doctor has to tell his patient that his case is hopeless - physically hopeless. But God tells us that, apart from Christ,

our condition is spiritually hopeless.

John 8:21 - *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

John 8:24 - *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

11. THE NATURAL MAN IS WITHOUT GOD.

Ephesians 2:12 - *.....and without God in the world:*

He is a Godless man, like the rich farmer of whom we read in -

Luke 12:16-21 - *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:*

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Compare -

Luke 12:24 - *Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?*

where we read of the ravens who had no barns but they had God, and -

Luke 12:18 - *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.*

where we read of the farmer who had barns but who had no God.

12. THE NATURAL MAN IS AN ENEMY OF GOD.

Ephesians 2:15-16 - *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; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

By nature we hate God.

Psalms 14:1 - *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

which literally reads *No God for me!*

Here, then, is God's picture of the Natural Man. According to God's estimate, man, by nature, is lost, helpless, completely ruined by sin, under the domination of Satan, and is, therefore, in need of a Saviour and of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

How very wonderful it is that, in spite of all that we are by nature, God loves us and wants us. Read and revel in the glorious truth of -

Ephesians 2:4-7 - *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 2:13-22

We are given God's terrible but true description of fallen humanity in -

Ephesians 2:1-3 - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:
2 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:
3 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 2:12 - *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:*

Apart from Christ we are -

(1) deceived by the world.

Ephesians 2:2 - *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world,.....*

(2) dominated by Satan -

Ephesians 2:2 - *.....according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

(3) degenerate in our living -

Ephesians 2:3 - *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;.....*

(4) and doomed to punishment -

Ephesians 2:3 -and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Left to ourselves we are utterly lost, helpless and hopeless. The world does not accept this description, but God declares it.

Romans 3:10-18 - *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

What is God's attitude towards fallen humanity? We certainly have no claim on God and our completely bankrupt, destitute and disobedient state would justify Him in having nothing more to do with us. What is His attitude towards us?

Notice in **Ephesians 2** that there are two wonderful *but*s which reveal to us the amazing love of God in Christ Jesus.

The first of these is in -

Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

The second is in -

Ephesians 2:13 - *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

The Lord Jesus, by His death on Calvary's cross, has brought us back into full fellowship with God. All that was lost by sin and the Fall has been regained and fully restored. We (who believe) have been *made nigh*.....

What exactly does this mean? It means at least seven wonderful things.

1. WE HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN AND HAVE RECEIVED ETERNAL LIFE.

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

Ephesians 2:5 - *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

We who were spiritually dead because of sin, have been quickened, or made alive, by the miracle of the new birth.

John 3:3 - *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 3:5 - *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

The moment we believed on Christ and received Him as our Saviour -

John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

we were born of God.

John 1:13 - *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Having received the Lord Jesus Christ we became possessors of eternal life.

1 John 5:11-12 - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

We have become partakers of the divine nature.

2 Peter 1:4 - *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

2. WE HAVE BEEN RAISED TO SIT IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST.

Ephesians 2:6 - *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

And what does this mean? It does not mean that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places. The verse does not say that. We are seated in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*.

This means that, through faith, we are united to and with Christ who has been raised and exalted to the highest heights in glory. We who were down in the lowest depths have been raised up to the highest heights in Christ!

This is our new position through grace. We are now *citizens of Heaven*.

Philippians 3:20 - *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

2. WE HAVE BEEN SAVED BY HIS GRACE.

What a great word is this word *saved*! It includes all the blessings which become ours through faith in Christ. Notice in -

Ephesians 2:8-10 - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- a. *salvation is a present possession*
- b. *salvation is altogether by grace*
- c. *salvation is a gift received by faith alone*
- d. *salvation is unto good works*

4. WE HAVE BEEN RECONCILED AND ARE NOW AT PEACE WITH GOD.

Ephesians 2:14-17 - *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

15 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;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

We, who were enemies, have been reconciled to God through the blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is blessedly true that through Christ all racial and social barriers have been broken down.

But the greatest barrier of all is that which existed between ourselves and God has been completely swept away in the Person and through the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

Meditate upon the words in -

Ephesians 2:14 - *For he is our peace,.....*

and compare with -

Romans 5:1 - *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

5. WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Ephesians 2:18 - *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Each word in this verse is worth pondering.

.....*through Him* refers to our Lord Jesus Christ.

.....*both* means Jew and Gentile.

.....*access* means an entrance and a welcome.

.....*one Spirit* refers to the Holy Spirit.

Now notice the important ending to the verse -

.....*unto the Father*

The moment we are *made nigh*, we know God not only as the holy and just God and the powerful Creator, but as our gracious, loving heavenly Father.

6. WE HAVE BEEN MADE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

Ephesians 2:19 - *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

The *household of God* is the Church. How do we become members of the Church? By the baptism of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 - *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

The Lord Jesus is the foundation of the Church.

1 Corinthians 3:11 - *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus*

Christ.

Paul tells us here that the apostles and the New Testament prophets are foundation members, for it was through their ministry that the Church became *fitly framed together* and started to grow *unto an holy temple in the Lord.*

Ephesians 2:21 - *In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

7. WE HAVE BEEN MADE FIT DWELLING PLACES FOR GOD.

Ephesians 2:22 - *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

The Church is God's holy temple, built by the Holy Spirit. Believers are living stones by which the temple has been built through the years. Soon God's temple will be complete. Then will end the day of grace and we shall be raptured into His presence to be forever with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

But notice that the Church is -

Ephesians 2:22 - *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

This is true of each individual member.

1 Corinthians 6:19 - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*By nature and by practice far - How very far from God!
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him, Through faith in Jesus' blood.*

*So nigh, so very nigh to God, I cannot nearer be
I am as near as He.*

For in the Person of His Son

*So dear, so very dear to God, More dear I cannot be.
He loves the Son - Such is His love to me!*

The love wherewith

SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT THE CHURCH

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 3:1-12

In these verses we are told seven truths about the Church. It is very important for us to understand these.

1. THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH.

The word *mystery* occurs in -

Ephesians 3:3-4 - *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Ephesians 3:9 - *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:*

It does not mean that which is obscure or unintelligible. It means a divine secret which is known only to those to whom it is revealed. Note **verse 3** and compare -

1 Corinthians 2:7-12 - *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The special revelation of the truth of the Church was first made to Paul. But he would not have understood the dispensational significance of the *mystery* of the Church apart from the

revelation given to him by God.

Likewise, we cannot understand the significance of the *mystery* without the help and illumination of the Holy Spirit.

For further study read -

Romans 11:25 - *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

1 Corinthians 15:51 - *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

Ephesians 3:3-4 - *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

Ephesians 6:19 - *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,*

1 Timothy 3:9 - *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

1 Timothy 3:16 - *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

2 Thessalonians 2:7 - *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

2. THE MEANING OF THE CHURCH.

What do we mean when we speak of the Church? What does God mean?

We are not thinking about a church, that is, a building; we are thinking about *the* Church.

Ephesians 3:10 - *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*

Ephesians 3:6 - *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

tells us what the Church is and how it is composed. The key word here is the word *Body*. The Church, then, is the Body of Christ

Compare -

Ephesians 4:12 - *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Ephesians 4:15-16 - *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

16 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.

Colossians 1:18 - *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

If the Church is the Body of Christ and He is the Head of the Body, who are the members of the Church and how do they become members?

3. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

Ephesians 3:6 - *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

tells us that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is composed of Jews and Gentiles. This is the *mystery* - that Jew and Gentile were to be united in one body was an entirely new thing.

But, how is the *Body*, the Church, formed? It is formed by *the gospel* -

Ephesians 3:6 - *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

that is, by the preaching of the gospel. When the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit convicts and converts, souls are born again - Jews and Gentiles - and are baptized into the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 - *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews*

or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This is what the Holy Spirit is doing today -

Acts 15:13-14 - *And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:*

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Only those who have been born again and washed in the precious blood of Christ are true members of the Church, which is His Body.

4. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

What is the function of the Church in the world? It is a two-fold function as the following scriptures make clear.

Ephesians 3:8 - *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;*

Ephesians 3:10 - *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*

The purpose and ministry of the Church in the world is that men may hear the gospel and, that to the angels and unseen hosts, may be made known the manifold wisdom of God.

Note the Church's message - *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, and *the manifold wisdom of God*- not merely ethics, morality, philosophy or politics!

The mission of the Church is not just to gather people together for *religious* purposes. It is not to compete with the world in worldly things, nor is it to convert the world. The mission of the Church is to evangelize the world.

Matthew 28:19 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

5. THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

Ephesians 3:7 - *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.*

tells us that Paul was a minister of the Church, therefore, of the gospel. But the word *minister* here is not used in any official sense. All true members of the Church are ministers of the Church and are responsible to take their share in proclaiming the gospel.

Notice how we become ministers -

If the question is asked, *How are ministers made?*, the answer is that God makes them!

Ephesians 4:11 - *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

6. THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH.

This portion of scripture tells us also some of the characteristics of those men and women, Jews and Gentiles, who are members of the Church. What are they like, or what should they be like?

Notice the following five marks which should characterize every member of the Body of Christ.

a. Captivity

Are we bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus?

Ephesians 3:1 - *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,*

b. Fellowship

The words *fellow heirs* and *partakers* remind us of that which we share in Christ.

Ephesians 3:6 - *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

c. Humility

Ephesians 3:8 - *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given,.....*

d. Testimony

Ephesians 3:8 - *..... that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

e. Acceptance

Ephesians 3:11-12 - *According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Underline the words *access*, *boldness*, *confidence* and *in Him*.

But who is sufficient for these things? Can we fulfil this high calling in our own strength? No!
Note finally -

7. THE MIGHT OF THE CHURCH.

This is indicated in -

Ephesians 3:7 - *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.*

in the words, *the gift of the grace of God given unto me*, and also in the words, *by the effectual working of His power*.

There are those who think that, because the witness of the Church today is often weak and ineffective, and many Christians are half-hearted, the Church will decline until she fades away altogether!

But, the Church will never fail because the Lord Jesus Christ is her Founder, her Foundation, her Builder. He has guaranteed that no power on earth or in hell will prevail against His Church.

Matthew 16:13-18 - *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 3:11 - *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

WALKING WORTHILY!

STUDY 5

Scripture Portions: Ephesians 4:1-3, 17-26

We now come to the second half of this letter.

Chapters 1-3 are Doctrinal. They emphasize our standing *in Christ*.

Chapters 4-6 are Practical. They emphasize our state down here in the world.

What we are in Christ must be related to what we are in the world. Doctrine must always issue in duty. Our creed must be seen in our conduct.

There are two dangers which we must always seek to avoid:

(1) **Teaching doctrine without relating it to duty.**

This will make for a mere intellectualism and a dead formalism.

(2) **Teaching duty which does not issue forth from doctrine.**

This will make for error, superficiality and spurious growth.

Notice how the apostle commences this second half of the epistle -

Ephesians 4:1 - *I therefore.....*

That is because of what has preceded in **chapters 1-3**.

Ephesians 4:1 - *.....beseech you that ye walk worthy.....*

For the first mark of a saved person is that his walk is different.

It used to be like -

Ephesians 2:2-3 - *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:*

3 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 4:17-19 - *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

18 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:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But now - what a change has taken place!

1. THE CONSTRAINT OF A WORTHY WALK.

What is it that constrains us to walk worthily?

We are constrained by a tender, loving appeal, as indicated in -

Ephesians 4:1 - *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

Paul had led these Ephesians to Christ. Now, from the prison in which he languishes, he writes to his spiritual children and says -

Ephesians 4:1 - *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

That is, that your conduct corresponds with your high calling in Christ Jesus.

Behind this written appeal from Paul, we hear the voice of our loving Lord beseeching us to *walk worthily*. Are we going to respond to His appeal? Or are we going to walk unworthily? The choice is left with us.

He has loved us and given Himself for us.

Galatians 2:20 - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Does His love constrain us to do as He bids and to be well-pleasing unto Him?

2 Corinthians 4:14 - *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A WORTHY WALK.

We read of Enoch -

Genesis 5:22-24 - *And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:*

23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

of Abraham -

Genesis 24:40 - *And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:*

In the Old Testament we find scores of other references to *walking*.

In the New Testament we come across -

Romans 13:13 - *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*

2 Corinthians 5:7 - *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

Galatians 5:16 - *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Ephesians 5:15 - *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

Colossians 2:6 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

1 John 1:7 - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with*

another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

3rd John 3 - *For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.*

All these references tell us the marks or characteristics of the Worthy Walk.

But if we confine ourselves to the verses in our portion, we see that -

a. A Worthy Walk is a HEAVENLY Walk

Ephesians 4:1 - *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

Our calling is a heavenly calling -

Hebrews 3:1 - *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

a high calling -

Philippians 3:14 - *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

and a holy calling -

2 Timothy 1:9 - *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

We are a heavenly people living upon the earth.

To walk worthily means just that - to live the heavenly life on earth!

b. A Worthy Walk is a HUMBLE Walk

Ephesians 4:2 - *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

The word *lowly* means to be selfless, utterly lacking in self-assertiveness.

Consider the word *meekness* -

Matthew 11:29 - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

2 Corinthians 10:1 - *Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:*

Galatians 6:1 - *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

Titus 3:2 - *To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.*

James 1:21 - *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

1 Peter 3:4 - *But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

The root meaning of the word is *a spirit that never takes offence* - that is, humility.

Therefore -

1 Peter 5:6 - *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

c. A Worthy Walk is a HELPFUL Walk

Ephesians 4:2 - *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

The word *longsuffering* means *to endure with an unruffled temper.*

Yes, to do that instead of being intolerant, impatient and critical!

The word *forbearing* is explained in -

Colossians 3:13 - *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

It means *lovingly putting up with what we don't like in other people!* And, for all this, *love* is the motivating power as is made plain in -

Ephesians 5:2 - *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.*

d. A Worthy Walk is a HARD Walk

Ephesians 4:3 - *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

The word *endeavouring* means *to strive with great earnestness and unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

God has wonderfully united all believers in the Body of Christ -

Ephesians 4:4-6 - *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The Holy Spirit dwells within us to make that unity real. Our responsibility as members of the Body is to maintain that unity.

Romans 12:18 - *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

e. A Worthy Walk is a HOLY Walk

Ephesians 4:3 - *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

The word *Spirit* refers to the Holy Spirit who indwells us and who is very easily grieved.

Ephesians 4:30 - *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

and with whom we are to be constantly filled.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*

In **Ephesians 4:17-16** we are given five injunctions which must be obeyed if we are to behave ourselves *holily*.

1 Thessalonians 2:10 - *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:*

(1) ***We are to WALK NOT.....***

Ephesians 4:17-19 - *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

18 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:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

(2) ***We are to PUT OFF....***

Ephesians 4:22 - *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

(3) ***We are to PUT ON.....***

Ephesians 4:24 - *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

(4) ***We are to PUT AWAY.....***

Ephesians 4:25 - *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

(5) ***We are to LET NOT.....***

Ephesians 4:26 - *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

3. *THE CONSUMMATION of a Worthy Walk.*

How long does this walk go on? Where and how does it end?

Ephesians 4:13 - *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 will be Glory!

*Then the end: Thy Church completed,
All Thy chosen gathered in.
With their King in glory seated,
Satan bound, and banished sin.*

*Gone for ever parting, weeping,
Hunger, sorrow, death and pain;
Lo! Her watch Thy Church is keeping.
Come, Lord Jesus, come to reign.*

GIFTS FROM THE ASCENDED LORD

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 4:4-16

Ephesians 4:4-6 - *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Emphasis is given here to those great fundamental facts of the Christian faith which are at once its unifying features. In -

Ephesians 4:7-16 - *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 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:

14 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;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 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.

the apostle writes of the diversity of gifts which characterize those who are members of Christ's Body, the Church. This is an intriguing theme.

We need also to refer to three other New Testament passages which deal with the subject of spiritual gifts.

Romans 12:3-8 - *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 - *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

(Indeed, **1 Corinthians, chapters 12, 13 and 14.**)

1 Peter 4:10-11 - *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

*Let us confine our study to the teaching embodied in **Ephesians 4:4-16**. Notice the following.*

1. THE BESTOWER OF THE GIFTS.

This is brought out in -

Ephesians 4:7-8 - *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

Ephesians 4:11 - *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

We are told that Christ Himself bestows spiritual gifts upon the members of His Church. Especially notice -

Ephesians 4:8 - *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

which is a quotation from -

Psalms 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.*

The Lord Jesus went down into death, was raised and then ascended to Heaven. When He ascended, having conquered sin, death and hell, He *led a multitude of captives captive*. (These were the Old Testament saints who, up until the ascension, dwelt in Paradise.)

Then He received gifts from the Father in order that He might bestow these gifts upon the Church. But upon whom does He bestow these gifts?

2. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE GIFTS.

Are spiritual gifts only for a few members of the Body, the Church? Read -

Ephesians 4:7 - *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

Underline the words, *unto every one of us*. That refers to every true believer. Every Christian, without exception, has received some gift from the risen and exalted Lord.

Romans 12:4 - *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same*

office:

We are told that we all have some *office*, also.

1 Corinthians 12:4-5 - *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.*

1 Peter 4:10 - *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

It is wrong for any Christian to say, *There's nothing I can do*, or, *My days of service are over now!* But note this wonderful fact: every Christian is not only given *the gift of Christ* -

Ephesians 4:7 - *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

but also *grace according to the measure of the gift* -

Ephesians 4:7 - *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

You see, the nature of the gift determines the measure of grace that is supplied in order that we may exercise the gift. Grace is given to the preacher to preach, to the pray-er to pray, to the teacher to teach, to the helper to help, and so on.

1 Corinthians 12:18 - *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

But do all have the same gifts?

3. THE DIVERSITY OF THE GIFTS.

Ephesians 4:11 - *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.*

Here Paul mentions five special gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon His Church, or five kinds of men to whom are given these special gifts.

a. Apostles

b. Prophets

These were given for the purpose of laying the foundations of the Church as we are told in -

Ephesians 2:20 - *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

c. Evangelists

An evangelist's ministry is especially directed towards the unconverted.

2 Timothy 4:5 - *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

d. Pastors

This word means *shepherds*.

Compare -

John 21:15-17 - *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Acts 20:28 - *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

This is a caring ministry for the sheep in Christ's fold.

e. Teachers

The work of the teacher is to instruct the Church in the things of God, to give milk to the babes

-

1 Peter 2:2 - *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

and meat to those who are more mature -

1 Corinthians 3:2 - *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

in order that there may be growth and stability.

In -

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 - *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

and also **1 Corinthians 12:14-25**.

We read of other gifts beside those mentioned above. Perhaps yours is mentioned there?

Study this whole portion carefully, then notice the little word *helps* in -

1 Corinthians 12:28 - *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

Each gift is important and necessary. What is your gift? What are the gifts for?

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS.

Ephesians 4:12 - *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Ephesians 4:14 - *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;*

We are told of a three-fold purpose that the Lord has in bestowing these gifts upon His Church.

a. To fit us for SERVICE.

Ephesians 4:12 - *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Please omit the comma after the word *saints*. The meaning is this: The Lord has given evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.....*to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry.*

The evangelists, pastors and teachers are not to do all the ministry. But their chief task is that of getting the saints to function actively as members of the Body.

b. To help us to GROW.

Ephesians 4:12 - *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

goes on to say, *for the edifying of the Body of Christ*. God does not want us to remain as babies spiritually.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 - *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

He wants us to grow up.

2 Peter 3:18 - *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Therefore, He has bestowed gifts upon the Church in order that the members may grow.

Ephesians 4:15 - *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

c. To protect us from HARM.

The enemy is always ready to deceive even the *elect*.

Matthew 24:24 - *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

in order that we may be protected against his *false prophets* -

Mark 13:22 - *For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*

and their *damnable heresies* -

2 Peter 2:1 - *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

The Lord has placed teachers in the Church so that we may be instructed in the truth and know how to detect the devil's deadly counterfeits and lies!

The ultimate purpose that the Lord has in bestowing gifts upon His Church is indicated in -

Ephesians 4:13 - *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:*

This verse also tells us about -

5. THE DURATION OF THE GIFTS.

How long will the gifts be needed in the Church? Only until -

Ephesians 4:13 - *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:*

When we are with Christ, who is the Head of the Body, the Church, then He will be *all in all*.

Ephesians 1:23 - *Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

There will be no room for, or need of, gifts. He will be ALL!

*Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
Perfecting the saints below,
Hear us, who Thy nature share,
Who Thy mystic Body are.*

*Join us, in one Spirit join,
Let us still receive of Thine;
Still for more on Thee we call,
Thou who fillest all in all.*

*Move and actuate, and guide;
Diverse gifts to each divide;
Placed according to Thy will,
Let us all our work fulfil.*

SPIRITUAL INTOXICATION!

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 5:1-21

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

A contrast is made here between the person who is under the influence of alcohol and the person who is under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. We as Christians are not to be drunk with the wine that comes from any earthly vineyard but with the new wine of the Kingdom which comes from the heavenly vineyard, from Him who is the True Vine.

John 15:1 - *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

There is a purpose in setting these two commands in contrast. It was a pagan belief that God dwelt in the blood of the grape, so that in drinking wine man was drinking God into himself.

Drunkenness was therefore held to be a sacrament in which a man was supposed to be under the control of the god who filled him. Paul reminded the Christians at Ephesus of this pagan belief and then he pointed them to the true way of being God-possessed.

Concerning the Spirit-filled life, let us notice the following truths.

1. The Spirit-filled life is a command.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

There are two commands, both of which require obedience. They are not optional. They are imperative.

2. The Spirit-filled life is a command to every Christian.

The experience of the Holy Spirit's fulness is not for a select company of believers, but for every born-again person.

Notice the word *all* in -

Acts 2:4 - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 4:31 - *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

3. To be filled with the Spirit is more than being indwelt by the Spirit.

The Christians at Ephesus were *sealed* by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 - *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,*

Ephesians 4:30 - *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

Thus they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as is every Christian.

1 Corinthians 6:19 - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

But, we may be indwelt and not filled by Him. We may possess Him without His possessing us.

4. To be filled with the Spirit is not a matter of excess, but of sanity.

The word *excess* means *riot*. The most spiritually sane people in the world are those who are filled with God's Spirit. The Lord Jesus is our example.

5. The Spirit-filled life is to be the normal experience of God's

children.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

means*be ye habitually being filled.....* God's plan for every one of His children is that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they may live lives that are glorifying to Him in all their relationships -

a. Personal -

Ephesians 5:15-21 - *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

b. Domestic -

Ephesians 5:22-33 - *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

23 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.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 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.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 *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.*

32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

33 *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

c. Business -

Ephesians 6:5-9 - *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;*

6 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

7 *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

9 *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.*

6. Being filled with the Spirit is not our getting more of Him; it is His getting more of us.

The Holy Spirit is a Person. To be filled with Him means to allow Him to take full possession of our personalities.

7. The Spirit-filled life is marked by certain definite and easily discernible characteristics.

Just as a drunken man can easily be recognized, so can a Spirit-filled Christian be recognized. The same characteristics are true of both. What are they?

Look up those that are mentioned in -

Ephesians 5:14-21 - *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

15 *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

16 *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

17 *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

18 *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody*

in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Then consider the following.

1. A DRUNKARD IS POSSESSED BY AN IMMENSE SENSE OF WELL-BEING.

The Greeks have a word for it *euphoria*, which means *an immense sense of well-being*. The first Christians were accused of being drunk.

Acts 2:15 - *For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

The early disciples were noted for their intense joy.

Acts 13:52 - *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.*

2. A DRUNKARD IS RECOGNIZED BY HIS FACE.

So is a Spirit-filled Christian! Many of our faces are shadowed instead of shining! There should be a radiance about us, as there was -

with Moses -

Exodus 34:29 - *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.*

with Stephen -

Acts 6:15 - *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

with the Lord Jesus -

Luke 9:29 - *And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.*

Read -

Psalm 34:5 - *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*

Psalm 90:17 - *And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

and compare Psalm 40:3 with Ephesians 5:19, 20 -

Psalm 40:3 - *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.*

Ephesians 5:19, 20 - *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

3. A DRUNKARD HAS A CHARACTERISTIC SAVOR ABOUT HIM.

So does a Christian! You can smell a drunkard! Now look at -

Ephesians 5:2 - *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.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ was as holy incense before the Father and before the world. Christians, by being filled with His Spirit are to be, and may be, the same. The Spirit-filled life is God's provision for making our lives beautiful, graceful and gentle.

4. A DRUNKARD CAN BE DETECTED BY THE WAY HE WALKS.

So can a Spirit-filled Christian! Our walk is our manner of life. According to -

Ephesians 5:15 - *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.*

a drunkard's walk is careless, whereas the walk of the Spirit-filled man is very circumspect - that is, disciplined and consistent. A drunkard cannot walk straight, but the Spirit-filled Christian is enabled to live before God and the world in a way that is upright and honest in every respect.

5. A DRUNKARD IS BETRAYED BY THE WAY HE SPEAKS.

So is a Spirit-filled Christian! Many a drunkard has a stammering tongue. Often his speech is impure and foul. A Spirit-filled Christian will be very careful in the words he uses and in the matters of which he speaks.

Of course, a Spirit-filled Christian will be a testifying Christian.

Acts 4:20 - *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

6. A DRUNKARD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS.

Nor is a Christian! A drunkard does many foolish things because he cannot help it. A Christian, if he is filled with the Holy Spirit, will produce from his life -

fruit which is supernatural -

Galatians 5:22-23 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

and works which are, humanly speaking, impossible.

See what Peter said in -

Acts 3:12 - *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

7. A DRUNKARD IS KNOWN BY THE COMPANY HE KEEPS.

So it a Spirit-filled Christian! A drunkard will make his way quickly to the bar. The Spirit-filled Christian will seek the fellowship of God's people.

Acts 4:23 - *And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

How can we become Spirit-filled - possessed and controlled by the Holy Spirit?

Think of the drunkard again. How does he become a drunkard? By drinking, and drinking, and drinking again.

This drinking for us involves three things.

a. A Real Thirst

Isaiah 44:3 - *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:*

Matthew 5:6 - *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

John 7:37-39 - *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

b. A Great Capacity

Psalm 81:10 - *I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

c. A Simple Faith

Luke 11:13 - *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

1 John 5:14-15 - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

15 *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIPS

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-19

The importance of this subject is seen by the fact that the Holy Spirit has devoted such a large proportion of this epistle to the relationships which should exist between Christian husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants.

(1) *There is nothing more beautiful on earth than a Christian home.*

In this portion of scripture, we have an inspired picture of what God intends a Christian home to be and of what it is possible for it to be with His enabling.

(2) *The Christian life must be lived effectively first and foremost in the home.*

We are to carry our Christian experience into every relationship of life - personal, social, business, professional, recreational, etc. But first it must operate in the domestic sphere. Compare -

Mark 5:19 - *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*

Luke 8:39 - *Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.*

Our lives must tell and our lips must tell first in the home.

1 Timothy 5:4 - *But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.*

Titus 2:5 - *To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

(3) *The hardest place to live a really consistent life is in the home.*

This is because it is here that we most easily cast off restraint and, unless we have learned God's way of victory and God's plan for harmonious living, there is bound to be discord and friction.

(4) *The greatest testimony we can offer to the world is a happy, harmonious and peaceful Christian home.*

In the home, Christianity is seen in action.

2 Kings 4:8-10 - *And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.*

9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

(5) *God has made provision for every one of His children to live a consistent Christian life in the home.*

That provision is the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

God's ideal for a home is only possible of attainment by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. How, then, should believers deport themselves in the exacting relationships of domestic life? The answer is in -

Ephesians 5:21 - *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

In other words, the secret of a happy and a harmonious home is mutual submission; not proud resistance; not striving to stand up for one's rights, but a loving consideration of the other person; a mutual respect and loyalty; a Christ-like spirit.

Consider in detail the relationships mentioned.

1. WIVES, BE SUBJECT UNTO YOUR HUSBANDS.

Ephesians 5:22-24 - *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

23 *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.*

24 *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

Ephesians 5:33 - *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

These are not man's ideas. They are God's instructions. Wives are to submit themselves unto their husbands *as unto the Lord.....in every thing.*

The Lord is the Head of the Body, the Church, and thus He cares for the Church, provides for it and protects it. The husband is to do this for his wife. Thus the wife is to submit herself to him as her head.

It is not a question of the superiority of the husband and the inferiority of the wife, but of the respective positions that God, in His sovereign wisdom, has assigned to each. From creation this has been God's order.

Genesis 2:21-23 - *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;*

22 *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

23 *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

If the order is reversed there will always be trouble.

2. HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES.

Ephesians 5:25-33 - *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

27 *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.*

28 *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*
29 *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

31 *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.*

32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

33 *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

The husband is to love his wife *even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.* That is, with a love that is unselfish and sacrificial. How often there is lack of thoughtful consideration and of understanding on the part of the husband. How frequently this causes unhappiness in the home!

A husband's love for his wife must operate in every phase of the matrimonial, domestic and social life, which includes the more intimate relationships as well as those that are observed by others.

3. CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS.

Ephesians 6:1-3 - *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

2 *Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;*

3 *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

These verses give us God's order for a Christian home. It is the only kind of home that He recognizes. What a need there is today for children to give heed to **verse 2!**

2 Timothy 3:1-3 - *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

2 *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

3 *Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

Notice that disobedience to parents is one of the signs of the apostasy of *the last days*.

In our Lord Jesus Christ we have the perfect example of obedience.

Luke 2:51 - *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*

4. PARENTS, BRING YOUR CHILDREN UP FOR THE LORD.

Ephesians 6:4 - *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Notice that this verse begins with a note of warning. *Don't incite your children to anger!*

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 - *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

What a sacred ministry is entrusted to those who have children to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"!

Compare -

Proverbs 22:6 - *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

5. SERVANTS, BE OBEDIENT TO YOUR MASTERS.

Ephesians 6:5-6 - *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;*

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

In Ephesus there were slaves in most households. That is why the Holy Spirit has included this master-servant relationship here. What a high standard is expected from servants!

We are to work for our earthly master just as if he were our heavenly Master.

Ephesians 6:5 - *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;*

Ephesians 6:7 - *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

This means that we shall not watch the clock. We shall not be late, lazy or disloyal. And God will surely reward us.

Ephesians 6:8 - *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

6. MASTERS, CONSIDER THE WELFARE OF YOUR SERVANTS.

Ephesians 6:9 - *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.*

This means that employers are to give the same consideration as they expect and to which they are entitled from their employees. Here is food for thought for all employers!

These are God's rules for happy, holy and harmonious human relationships. They are only possible as we live in obedience to -

Ephesians 5:18 - *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

That is as wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, seek to live their lives under the control of and in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

OUR ENEMY AND OUR WARFARE

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 6:10-19

In his Epistles, the apostle Paul speaks of the Christian life under a number of suggestive metaphors. For example, in this letter to the Ephesians his favourite designation of the Christian life is that it is a **WALK**.

Compare -

Ephesians 2:2 - *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:*

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 4:1 - *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

Ephesians 4:17 - *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

Ephesians 5:2 - *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 5:8 - *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

Ephesians 5:15 - *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

In **chapters 5 and 6**, the following persons are told how to walk.

Wives -

Ephesians 5:22-24 - *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 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.*

24 *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

Husbands -

Ephesians 5:25-31 - *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

27 *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.*

28 *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

29 *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

31 *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.*

Children -

Ephesians 6:1-3 - *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

2 *Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;*

3 *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

Fathers -

Ephesians 6:4 - *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Servants -

Ephesians 6:5-8 - *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;*

6 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

7 *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

and Masters -

Ephesians 6:9 - *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.

But suddenly the apostle changes the metaphor. In -

Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

he introduces us to something of the sterner side of the Christian life. He tells us that there is a fight to be fought; that we have a powerful enemy to face; and that we can only be *more than conquerors* -

Romans 8:37 - *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

as we put on the whole armour of God.

As Christians, we are -

saints -

Ephesians 1:1 - *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:*

children -

Ephesians 1:5 - *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

believers -

Ephesians 1:13 - *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,*

servants -

Ephesians 6:5 - *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;*

But, we are also soldiers -

Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Compare with -

2 Timothy 2:3-4 - *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

4 *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

As soldiers, we are in a great conflict and have to fight.

1 Timothy 6:12 - *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

2 Timothy 4:7 - *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

We, as believers, are engaged in a **WARFARE**. In order that we may appreciate the necessity of putting on the whole armour of God if we are to be victorious soldiers in God's army, let us first consider the nature of the conflict, then the character of the enemy, and finally, the secret of victory.

1. THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT.

a. It is a real warfare

It is a literal fight against a literal enemy. Notice the word *against* occurs six times in -

Ephesians 6:11-12 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

12 *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.*

b. It is a conflict between real antagonists.

Who are they?

The Lord -

Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

The devil -

Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

The soldiers, or allies, of the Lord are *brethren* -

Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

and *we* (i.e. the saints) -

Ephesians 6:12 - *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.*

The allies of Satan are mentioned in -

Ephesians 6:12 - *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.*

c. *It is a fierce conflict*

Ponder **verse 12** and see how deadly a fight it is!

d. *It is a hand-to-hand conflict*

It is as literal as any battle against *flesh and blood*, but it is ten thousand times more deadly (**verse 12**) for it is a conflict not with the human and visible, but with the superhuman and invisible.

Luke 12:4-5 - *And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.*

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

This is not far-fetched or fanciful, but it is God's revealed truth. Let us accept it, for only by so doing, shall we be fortified for the fray and spurred on to -

Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

2. THE CHARACTER OF THE ENEMY.

a. *He is a real person*

The names given to Satan indicate personality. The actions attributed to him imply personality: deceiver, liar, murderer, accuser, tempter, prince, etc. Read the following.

Job 1:6 - *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.*

Isaiah 14:12 - *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

Matthew 4:10 - *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Matthew 6:13 - *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

Matthew 9:34 - *But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.*

Matthew 10:25 - *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

Matthew 25:41 - *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Luke 4:12 - *And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

John 8:44 - *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

John 12:31 - *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

2 Corinthians 2:11 - *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

1 Thessalonians 2:18 - *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.*

1 Thessalonians 3:5 - *For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.*

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 - *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

b. He occupies an exalted position

He is *the prince of the power of the air* -

Ephesians 2:2 - *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:*

indicating his control over evil spirits.

He is *the prince of this world* -

John 12:31 - *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

John 14:30 - *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

John 16:11 - *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

showing his domination in the lives of the *children of disobedience* -

Ephesians 2:2 - *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:*

He has a *kingdom* -

Matthew 12:26 - *And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?*

He is *the god of this world* -

2 Corinthians 4:4 - *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.*

He counterfeits true Christianity -

1 Corinthians 10:20-21 - *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.
21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*

2 Corinthians 11:14 - *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

1 Timothy 4:1 - *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

Revelation 2:9 - *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

c. *He is very powerful*

His power is subtle -

2 Corinthians 11:14 - *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

sinister -

Colossians 1:13 - *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

supernatural -

2 Thessalonians 2:9 - *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

and destructive -

Hebrews 2:14 - *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

Compare with -

Acts 26:18 - *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

3. THE SECRET OF VICTORY.

a. *We must recognize our standing in Christ*

Study -

Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

Notice that we are only strong *in the Lord*. There is no strength or ability to wage this warfare apart from the strength which is ours in Him. We are to stand and withstand, not in our own strength, but in His.

Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Ephesians 6:13-14 - *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.*

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

b. We must accept our protection from Christ

This protection, provided by Him for our use, is *the whole armour of God*.

Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Ephesians 6:13 - *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.*

There are five pieces for defensive warfare, and one only for offensive warfare. There is no protection for the back because (to change the figure) -

Luke 9:62 - *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Our part is to put on these pieces -

Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

(1) The girdle of truth.

Ephesians 6:14 - *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,.....*

As the girdle encompassed the waist of the soldier, so truth must encompass our whole life.

Psalms 51:6 - *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

John 8:32 - *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

3 John 4 - *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

There must be no hypocrisy, unreality, insincerity or compromise.

(2) ***The breastplate of righteousness***

Ephesians 6:14 - *.....and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

This covers very vital organs. We must stand firm in Christ who is our righteousness. We must be righteous in our life (i.e. right).

(3) ***The shoes of preparedness***

Ephesians 6:15 - *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

When tempted and tried, we are sustained by the experience of -

Philippians 4:7 - *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Isaiah 26:3 - *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

(4) ***The shield of faith***

Ephesians 6:16 - *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

Just as a shield can protect each part of the body, so faith must operate in respect to each part of our life.

(5) ***The helmet of salvation***

Ephesians 6:17 - *And take the helmet of salvation,.....*

An unprotected mind is a ready prey to Satan's deceptions, delusions and defilements.

(6) *The sword of the Spirit.*

Ephesians 6:17 -*and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

Compare -

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.*

Matthew 4:7 - *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Matthew 4:10 - *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

It is written.....

Hebrews 4:12 - *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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

b. *We must maintain our communion with Christ.*

Ephesians 6:18 - *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

This is essential for victory - *All prayer, at all seasons, with all perseverance.*

*Soldiers of Christ arise
And put your armour on.
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of Hosts
And in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror. (Charles Wesley)*

PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Ephesians 6:18-24

Paul was a man of prayer. Prayer was the secret of his life, of his amazing influence, of his suffering and endurance, of his burning passion for the souls of men. Consequently, he is the one man, apart from the Lord Jesus Himself, who is most qualified to instruct us in the holy art of praying.

In the verses before us there are seven vital truths about prayer.

1. PRAYER IS THE GREAT ESSENTIAL.

Paul speaks of the armour we are to put on, then he goes straight on without a break - *Praying at all times.....* It is tremendously important for a soldier to have on the right armour and to be equipped with a sword, but what is equally important is that the soldier should keep in constant communication with his Commander-in-Chief.

Hebrews 2:10 - *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

The Christian, while he is on the field of battle, is in direct touch with the throne of God. The prayer line of communication with our risen Lord must never be broken. Prayer is the great essential. It is certainly not option. **It is fundamental!**

Paul not only exhorts us to pray, but to pray always. This reminds us of -

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - *Pray without ceasing.*

We are to seek to live in the very atmosphere and attitude of prayer. It is most important that we should have set times for prayer -

like Daniel who prayed three times a day -

Daniel 6:10 - *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

like David who prayed three times a day -

Psalm 55:17 - *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*

He later told us that he prayed seven times a day -

Psalm 119:164 - *Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.*

and like the Saviour who constantly withdrew into the place of prayer -

Luke 6:12 - *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

Then, we may pray at special times. For instance -

when in trouble -

Psalm. 55:16 - *As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.*

when needing guidance -

James 1:5 - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

when tempted -

Psalm. 69:1 - *Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.*

when persecuted -

Psalm 7:1 - *O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:*

when disturbing letters arrive -

Isaiah 37:14 - *And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.*

when sickness threatens -

James 5:14 - *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*

and whenever there is a need of any kind -

Philippians 4:6 - *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

2. WE MUST EMPLOY ALL KINDS OF PRAYER.

All prayer means with all manner of prayer. That suggests that prayer may consist of: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, petition, supplication or intercession.

Consider the following three kinds of prayer -

individual prayer -

Matthew 6:6 - *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

the prayer of agreement -

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

and corporate prayer -

Acts 12:5 - *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

3. WE MUST KEEP ON PRAYING

We are to keep on praying -

Ephesians 6:18 - *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

Luke 18:1 - *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

Compare -

Luke 11:5-8 - *And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;*

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

We need persistence -

1 Kings 18:43 - *And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.*

The word *watching* indicates that there are perils in prayer - and so there are!

There is the peril of -

a. *Distraction*

How often other things crowd in and prevent us from praying!

b. *Disinclination*

This may be due to tiredness or to preoccupation with worldly things.

c. *Discouragement*

Perhaps we have prayed once, or even twice, then we have become impatient because the answer has not come!

d. *Despair*

The situation sometimes seems so impossible - even for God! So, instead of trusting Him, we

are overwhelmed with a sense of frustration and even of futility of prayer.

e. Defeat

Yes, overwhelming defeat!

Judges 16:20 - *And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.*

4. WE MUST PRAY FOR ALL SAINTS.

It is, of course, impossible to pray individually for all saints, yet in a general sense, and certainly in a systematic sense, we may do so. We may pray, for example, regularly and systematically for:

a. God's suffering saints.

b. God's sinning saints.

Do you ever pray for these? -

- for Christians who are tempted and overcome by the world, the flesh and the devil?

- for backsliders who have been tripped up by the wiles of the enemy?

c. God's shut-in saints.

So many who love the Lord are laid to one side by sickness, and such sickness has been permitted for the furtherance of the gospel.

Philippians 1:12 - *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*

These afflicted ones need prayer that they may receive grace to testify to the power and sufficiency of Christ.

4. For the new converts.

Acts 9:17 - *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

e. For workers to be thrust forth.

Matthew 9:38 - *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

5. For the printing of Christian literature.

Psalms 43:3 - *O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.*

Pray for open doors for the gospel -

1 Corinthians 16:9 - *For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*

g. For Satan's power to be broken

Luke 13:12-16 - *And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*

13 *And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*

14 *And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.*

15 *The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?*

16 *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?*

6. WE MUST PRAY FOR WORKERS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE BATTLE

Ephesians 6:19-20 - *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,*

20 *For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

The above scriptures teach us that those who are in prominent positions in Christian service are in special need of the prayers of God's people.

Acts 4:29 - *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,*

How should we pray for preachers, evangelists, teachers and leaders in God's harvest field? That they may have utterance, boldness and grace to preach the gospel.

7. ALL OUR PRAYING TO BE EFFECTIVE MUST BE IN THE SPIRIT.

Here is the secret of it all - *in the Spirit.*

Ephesians 6:18 - *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

Compare with -

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.*

It is gloriously true that, as William Cowper wrote, *Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.*

Alfred Lord Tennyson was right when he wrote -

*More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of, wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain before Me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep and goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?*