Study of Ephesians

Introduction

Paul the apostle is the author of this Book. The letter to the Colossians led to the Ephesians letter when Paul wrote to the Colossians to give them solid exposition of the Christian life. He then decided to write a general letter to all churches in and around Ephesus to build and defend the Christian faith against syncretism. This letter was not originally named Ephesians but it was identify with the name because it was sent to the churches within that geographical area. In this letter Paul was not dealing with a particular heresy or a particular issue in a church. Instead he was trying to expose believers to the real Christian faith and our responsibility for working out our salvation after we are saved by faith.

Nature of the Book

- To Stand Against Syncretism

Division of the Book

Chapter 1-3

- **Relationship to God**
  (In Christ)
- **Salvation Work** In
  (Doctrine)
- **What We Are Saved** By
  Forgiveness
  Justification
  Our Release
  Adoration
  Divine Sovereignty
- **His Purpose and Power**
  (Inside Church)

Chapter 4-3

Relationship to Others
(In the Lord)
Salvation Work Out
(Duty)
What We Are Saved For
Holiness
Sanctification
Our Response
Application
Human Responsibility
Our Walk and Warfare
(Outside Church)

Structure of Chapter 1-3

- **Worship & Praise**
  - Praise – 1, 3-14
  - Praying -1, 15-17
  - Preaching -1, 19-3, 13
  - Praying – 3, 14-19
  - Praise – 3, 20

Structure of Chapter 4-6

- **Our Walk in the Spirit (4:1-6,9)**
  - To walk in Humility – this is a secret to unity (pride break unity)
  - To walk in Unity – serving one God, one spirit and faith
  - To walk in Maturity – to come to the unity of the faith
  - To walk in integrity – to build a godly character
  - To walk in Charity – to concern for each other (forgiving each other)
  - To walk in Purity – to deal with an open heart
  - To walk in Docility – submitting to Christ authority
  - To walk in Responsibility – take the right action to portray the character of Christ

- **Our Warfare – (6:10-20)**
  - Protection
  - Prayer

Predestination – Jeremiah 18 –The Potter and the Clay

- It means God has decided a destiny for you but that does not mean he will force it on you
- It means if you respond to him the destiny he plan for you before the foundation of the world will be yours
- It means there is nothing else to suggest that if he predestine you to be something you can't help to be something
- To predestine means to decide the destiny before hand

Two Views of Predestination

- **To Salvation**
  - **Individual Persons** – chosen to be saved & others to perish
  - **Irresistible Grace** – that those who are chosen cannot resist God's grace
  - **A persons destiny** is determine by God's choice either to end up in heaven or hell
  - **The Lost** – not because of anything they've done but because he was not chosen
  - **Born Again** before Repenting & believing
  - **A Persons perseverance** in the faith is guarantee – because God's grace is irresistible

    Calvin- this notion is associated with Calvin but Calvin didn't teach that. It was his successor called Theodore Beza who thought that. Calvin thought that a man can lose his salvation

- **To Service**
  - **Corporate People** – people are elected
  - **Conditional Faith** – grace is resistible – a person can decide to reject God's offer of salvation
  - **A Persons Destiny of heaven and hell**– does not depend on God's choice but your choice
  - **A Person is Born** – after he believe in Christ and repent from his sins and not before
  - **A Persons Perseverance** – is required rather than guarantee – this is continuous believing – salvation by continuous believing

    Arminius - this notion is associated with a Arminius – a godly man who was never criticise until after his death

EPHESIANS 1. THE CHRISTIAN'S WEALTH

The greeting (1)
The grace. (2)

A. PURPOSE OF GOD (3-10)

1. The grace.
   a. Showered with blessings (3).
   b. Chosen for holiness (4).
   c. Destined as sons (5-6).
   d. Forgiven through blood (7-8).

2. The goal.
   a. Insight (9)
   b. Integration (10).

B. PRAISE OF GOD (11-14)

1. We - His purpose.
   Hoped, destined, appointed.

2. You - His promise.
   Heard, believed, sealed.

C. POWER OF GOD (15-23)

1. Paul prays (15-19).
   a. Wisdom of His mind.
   b. Wealth of His magnificence.
   c. Working of His might.

2. Paul preaches (20-22)
   a. Resurrection (ascension and exaltation).
   b. Realm (space and time).
   c. Rule (world and church).

Questions:

1. How many "spiritual blessings" are mentioned in this chapter? Which of these have you not yet received?

2. When you pray for others, what do you ask God to do for them? What did Paul pray for the Ephesian Christians?

3. What is taught here about predestination? Why do people get so upset by this idea?

EPHESIANS 2. THE CHRISTIAN'S WORLD.

A. REDEMPTION (1-10) Individual

1. Sin (1-3)
   a. Its CHARACTER - death.
   b. Its CAUSE - the world.
      the devil.
      the flesh.
   c. Its CONSEQUENCE - wrath.

2. Salvation (4-10)
   a. Its CHARACTER - life.
   b. Its CAUSE - in mercy.
      by grace.
      through faith.
   c. Its CONSEQUENCE - works.

B. RECONCILIATION (11-22) Corporate.

1. Disunity in the flesh (11-12)
   a. ALIENS - separate from the Christ.
      the commonwealth
      the covenant.
   b. ATHEISTS - without the confidence.
      the Creator.

2. Unity in the Spirit (13-22).
   a. One BLOOD - acceptance withGod.
   b. One BODY - access to God.
   c. One BUILDING - accommodation for God.

Questions:

1. Are verses 1-3 an accurate description of your past life? Or of many people in Guildford today?

2. What would Paul say to those who believe they will go to heaven because they have :

   a. Done many good deeds?
   b. Done good deeds and believed in Jesus?
   c. Believed in Jesus, without doing any good deeds?

3. If the cross could reconcile Jew and Gentile, how can it overcome the deepest divisions today?

   a. Black and white in South Africa.
   b. Catholic and Protestant in Northern Ireland.
   c. Jew and Arab in the Middle East.

EPHESIANS 3. THE CHRISTIAN'S WISDOM

A. MYSTERY OF THE GENTILES (1-6)

1. Its communication (1-5)
   a. Prisoner.
   b. Steward.
   c. Apostle.

2. Its content. (6)
   a. Fellow-heirs.
   b. Members.
   c. Partakers.

B. MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL (7-13)

1. The preacher (7-8)
   a. The gift.
   b. The grace.

2. The plan (9-10)
   a. Hidden in the creator.
   b. Revealed through the church.
   c. Observed by the angels.

3. The purpose (11-12)
   a. Fact of Christ.
   b. Faith of Christians.

4. The price (13)
   a. What.
   b. Why.

5. The prayer (14-19)
   a. Strengthened.
   b. Indwelt.
   c. Established.
   d. Enlarged.
   e. Filled.

6. The power (20-21)
   a. His greatness.
   b. His glory.

Questions:

1. List the amazing claims Paul makes for himself and his message. Why do you think God chose Paul to be the steward (or trustee) of such things?

2. Since most of us are Gentiles, what should be our attitude to God's chosen people, the Jews?

3. Which verse from 14 to 21 is most exciting to you?

EPHESIANS 4. 1-16 THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK - in his Church

His authority and his appeal (1)

A. UNITY WITH DIVERSITY (2-12)

1. Unity (2-6)
   a. The PRACTICE (human and visible) vv.2-3
      Humility.
      Meekness. .. the ingredients of peace.
      Patience.
      Forbearance.

   b. The PRINCIPLE (Divine and invisible) vv.4-6
      The Spirit - one body, one hope.
      The Lord - one faith, one baptism.
      The Father - above, through, in all.

2. Diversity (7-11)
   a. The GIVER. Ascended and descended.
   b. The GIFTS. What? Apostles - whole church.
      Prophets - any church.
      Evangelists - no church.
      Pastor/teachers - one church.

      Why? Equipment.
      Service.
      Building.

B. MATURITY WITH CHARITY (13-16)

1. Maturity (13-15a)
   a. The GOAL (13) - complete development.
   b. The GROUND (14-15a) - constant doctrine.

2. Charity (15b-16)
   a. The BRAIN (15)
   b. The BODY (16)

Questions:

1. What kind of "unity" do you think Paul had in mind? Are verses 4-6 still true today?

2. What can we learn here about "ministry" in the church?

3. What are the marks of Christian maturity?

EPHESIANS 4.17 - 5.20. THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK - in his SOCIETY

A. CONDITION (4.17-24)
1. Pagan (17-19) Ignorant.
Insensible.
Indecent.
Insatiable.

2. Christian (20-24) Revelation.
Repentance.
Renovation.
Regeneration.
Reformation.

B. CONDUCT (4.25 - 5.4)
1. Relationships - hurtful or helpful?
False or frank (4.25)
Gossiping or gracious (4.31-32).

2. Emotions - callous or caring?
Resentful or righteous (4.26)
Tempered or tender (4.31-32)

3. Ambitions - getting or giving?
Stealing or sharing (4.28)
Greed or gratitude (5.3-4)

4. Words - corrupt or constructive (4.29)?
Coarse or clean (5.4)
Silly or serious (5.4)

5. Characters - lustful or loving.
Sensuous or sacrificial (5.2-3)
Filthy or fragrant (5.2-3)

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Appeals - don't gratify the devil (4.27)
don't grieve the Spirit (4.30)

C. CONSEQUENCE (5.5-14)
1. Life or death (5-7)
2. Light or darkness (8-14)

D. CONSIDERATION (5.15-20)
1. Simple - intoxication - sorrows (15-18a)
2. Sensible - Inspiration - songs (18b-20)

Questions:

1. Of all the sins mentioned here, which do you think is the hardest to "put away"?

2. Verse 27 speaks of a personal devil. What is he trying to do?

3. In living the Christian life, what part is played by:
a. God? (see verses 4.24,32; 5.5,20)
b. Christ (see verses 4.20. 5.2, 14,20)
c. Holy Spirit? (see verses 4.30. 5.18)

EPHESIANS 5.21 - 6.4. THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK - in his HOME

v.21 What? subjection (in an age of democracy!)
Why? Fear (in an age of familiarity!)

A. HUSBANDS AND WIVES (5.22-33)

1. Husband is head (22-24) Direction does not mean dictatorship.
Intimacy does not mean insubordination.

2. Wife is Body (25-31) Love must be costly.
cleansing.
caring.
cleaving.

3. Head and body are ONE unit. (32-33) Like the Church and Christ.

B. PARENTS AND CHILDREN (6.1-4)

1. Children (1-3) What? Obedience.
Reverance.
Why? Right
Rewarding.

2. Parents (4) Not goading.
But guiding - instruction & admonition.

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EPHESIANS 6, 5-9. THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK - in his WORK.

A. EMPLOYEES (5-8)

What? Respectful obedience.
Conscientious loyalty.
Cheerful service.

Why? Regarded by the Lord.
Rewarded by the Lord.

B. EMPLOYERS (9)

What? Not exploitation.
But consideration.

Why? Power of the Lord.
Punishment of the Lord.

Questions:

1. Discuss the statement that "Marriage in the Bible is neither a democracy nor a dictatorship". How can Christ, who was not married, be the pattern of marriage?

2. Which do you think is most lacking in family life today - the discipline or the instruction? How can we achieve "obedience" in children?

3. How would you apply verses 5-9 in the following situations:

a. A Christian worker told to join an unofficial strike?
b. A Christian employer faced with inefficient staff?
c. A Christian working in a huge, impersonal organisation and with little direct supervision?

EPHESIANS 6. 10-24. THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE

A. THE ADVERSARY (11-12)

1. Satanic.
2. Supernatural.

B. THE ARMOUR (13-17)

1. Girdle - truth.
2. Breastplate - righteousness.
3. Sandals - peace.
4. Shield - faith.
5. Helmet - salvation.
6. Sword - inspiration.

C. THE ALERTNESS (18)

1. Prayer.
2. Perseverance.

D. THE AMBASSADOR (19-22)

1. Courage for him (19-20)
2. Comfort for them (21-22)

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The benediction (23-24)

Questions:

It is suggested that this final section be used after the series of house groups, as a devotional climax in one of two ways:

(i) The passage be used as the basis of a service of worship during Holy Week, with an expository sermon.

(ii) The individuals who have come to the group use the passage for a time of private meditation, going over all the studies and preparing for the spiritual warfare ahead.