

PAUL'S IMPLIED EXHORTATION

Ephesians 1.1-2, Message 02: Be faithful, not just another saint!

Ephesians is a book about our lives “in Christ,” and that phrase (“in Christ”) is key to Ephesians.

- “In Christ” we have life: Spiritual life, new life, abundant life. We are no longer dead in sin.
- “In Christ” we are called to live a life that is different—a life that is worthy of the name we carry.
- Ephesians is going to teach us about that new life we have in Christ and about that new life we should live because we are in Christ.
- And we begin in our study of the Book of Ephesians with chapter 1...

In the first chapter of Ephesians, Paul reminds us of our new beginning in Christ...

- (v3) In Christ we have a new blessing: All spiritual blessing in Christ from moment of salvation.
- (v4) In Christ we have a new expectation: To be holy and without blame because we are in Christ.
- (v6-7) In Christ we have a new relationship with God: He has accepted us in Christ (vs. being enemies)!
- (v11) In Christ we have a new inheritance: God has predetermined that we should receive an inheritance.
- (v13-14) In Christ we have a new guarantee: In Christ we have received the seal of the Holy Spirit.
- (v1-2) In Christ we have also received a new life... a new life that we ought to live out each day...

Ephesians 1.1-2: Paul's simple greeting to the Ephesians carries a very profound exhortation...

- Paul addresses this Epistle to the saints and to the faithful, and we are going to see that those two words (*saints* and *faithful*) carry with them a implied exhortation to be different—to live faithful in Christ.

I. (v1b) The message of Ephesians is from Paul: It is authoritative, not a suggestion...

A. “Paul” is the first word: Pay attention to the first things God says (they are important)!

1. The first thing we ought to notice as we study this book is the first word God chose to begin the book.
2. There are many today who say that they like Paul's writings, but they “prefer” to “follow Christ” in the Gospels.
3. That sounds nice and spiritual on the surface, but it reveals an ignorance of God's plan that will result in false teaching and (eventually) bad living.
4. When the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah (first in the crucifixion and second in Acts 7 by stoning Stephen), God put His program with Israel on hold for about 2,000 years in order to raise up the Church among the Gentiles. When He did this, He raised up a new Apostle...

B. Paul is “an Apostle”—Paul is *our* Apostle

1. (Mat 10.1-2 cf. 10.5-7) An “apostle” is a disciple who is sent by the Lord with a specific mission.
 - a) The disciples of the Lord (v1) become apostles (v2) when they are sent with a mission (v5ff).
 - b) *Apostle* comes from the Greek and means the same thing as our word *missionary* (which come from the Latin). We don't call missionaries “apostles” because in the English language *apostle* has a more specific implication, just as we see in these verses.

2. Paul is an Apostle because he was sent with a very specific mission.
 - a) (Act 9.15) God called Paul and sent him *first* to the Gentiles (then to kings, then to Israel). The Twelve Apostles, before Paul, were sent *first* to Israel (then to the Gentiles).
 - b) (Gal 2.7-9) Paul is the Apostle that God sent to the Gentiles; Paul is the Apostle God sent to raise up the Church. Paul is the Apostle that God sent... *to us!*
3. We way all this about the words “Paul” and “Apostle” because we need to understand that Paul is *our* Apostle and he was sent to us *by the Lord* (which is what we see next).

C. Paul is an Apostle “of Jesus Christ” and “by the will of God.”

1. Paul has the authority to say what he says to us (Gentile Christians living during the Church Age) because he is *God's* representative—*God's* ambassador (*God's* “sent one”; *God's* Apostle to us).
2. Paul is an Apostle “of Jesus Christ”: Jesus sent Paul. Paul speaks to us “in the stead of” the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's words in the Book of Ephesians are the words the Lord gave him to speak.
3. Paul is an Apostle “by the will of God”: Paul did not choose to an Apostle; God chose Paul.
4. What follows in the Book of Ephesians is not some nice, personal letter that first-century theologian wrote to a church he founded. What follows in the Book of Ephesians is the message of God given to us through His Apostle to the Gentile Church, Paul.

D. Review: (v1b) The message of Ephesians is from Paul: It is authoritative, not a suggestion.

II. (v1b) The message of Ephesians is full of purpose: What you are, and how you should live...

A. Paul is writing to the “saints”: To all believers.

1. The word “saint” in the Bible never refers to a special group of super-spiritual dead believers. It refers to all those who are saved by the grace of God.
 - a) “Saint” comes from the same word as “sanctify” or “sanctification” and it means “holy.”
 - b) “Holy” or “sanctified” in the Bible simply means “set apart for God and His use.”
 - c) In Christ, God has set you apart for His pleasure and purpose: In Christ, you are set apart to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.
2. (Eph 4.11-12, 16) A “saint” in the Bible refers to a saved believer, one who is being perfected in order to participate in the word of edification (v12); all members of the Body of Christ are “saints” because they all participate in the work of edification (v16).
3. Paul is writing to the saints—he is writing to all saved believers (he is writing to us!).

B. Paul is writing to the “faithful”: An implied exhortation to all believers.

1. Here is where we begin to get a feel for what Paul has to say to all believers (all saints) in the Book of Ephesians.
 - a) Many refuse to see the implied exhortation in this word, but we cannot deny there is one.
 - b) All believers are *saints* (in Christ), but all the saints are not *faithful* to their calling in Christ.
 - c) There is a big difference between being a saint and actually being faithful in Christ Jesus.
2. (Luke 19.11-27) Being faithful implies being responsible with what the Lord gave you.
 - a) (v13a) God has given to each of us the same thing: one “pound” of investment (He has given us the Word of God and the Spirit of God).
 - b) (v13b) And God has charged each and every one of us with the same thing: Take what He has given us and *occupy* ourselves in that until He returns.

- c) (v15) When He does come back, He will want to see a “return on the investment” He made.
 - (1) (v16-19) The *faithful* servant is the one who takes what the Lord has given him and “invests” it in order to bear fruit.
 - (2) (v20-22) The *unfaithful* servant is called “wicked” because simply did nothing with what the Lord gave him.
- d) Is there not a great difference between a “saint” and a “faithful saint”? Yes, there is!
- 3. Harvest Baptist Church is just one more church among hundreds in the Kansas City area.
 - a) Why did we start this church? What do we think will set us apart from the rest?
 - b) The difference that will make all the difference in the world is *faithfulness* in what God has given to us in Christ.
 - (1) We need to be faithful to the Word of God (not faithful to “results,” which is pragmatism; we need to be faithful to what the Word of God *says*, period).
 - (2) We need to be faithful to the Mission God has give us in Christ, through His Word: To be and make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c) If Harvest Baptist Church is going to make a difference, we must be different: We must first be *saints* (Eph 2.8-9) and then we must strive to be *faithful* in the work God called us to (Eph 2.10)—the work of evangelism and edification (salvation and sanctification; Eph 4.11-12).
 - (1) Christ's call is still the same as we see it in the Gospels: “Follow me!”
 - (2) That requires commitment; that requires sacrifice. That requires a conscious decision to make investments (with your time and resources) in eternity.
 - (3) God has given us much (in the Word and by His Spirit). Are we being faithful with that?

C. Review: (v1) The message of Ephesians...

- 1. (v1b) ...is from Paul: It is authoritative (from God's Apostle); it is not a suggestion.
- 2. (v1b) ...full of purpose: It is about what you are in Christ (you are a saint), and how you should live in Him (you should be faithful to the One who set you apart for Himself).
- 3. (v2) That means the message of Ephesians is a message for all of us—it's personal...

III. (v2) The message of Ephesians is personal: This is a message for each individual...

A. Ephesians is a message of grace for you in Jesus Christ.

- 1. God does not call us to be saints (saved) and to be faithful without giving us all that we need (and more) to be and do those things. His grace is sufficient! And His grace is abundant in Christ!
 - Grace is seen in two general contexts in the Bible: grace for *salvation* and grace for *service*.
- 2. (Titus 2.11) God has manifested His grace in and through Jesus Christ to *all men*. God offers salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to all men. None are excluded.
 - If you want to be saved, God will save you. But, He will not force you to be saved.
- 3. (2Cor 9.8) God will also give you sufficient grace each day to serve Him faithfully.
 - a) You will always have, each day, sufficient grace in Christ to abound in the good works to which He has called you: The works of the ministry (being and making disciples).
 - b) (Heb 4.16) But, just like with salvation, grace for faithful living in Jesus Christ is available to all who want it. If you want it, draw close to God in Jesus Christ through Scripture, prayer, and a close personal relationship (of love, submission, and obedience).
- 4. No one can make the decisions for you: You must choose. Do you want to be saved? Do you want to serve the Lord as His disciple? His grace is sufficient and He offers it to everyone.
 - For those who have God's grace in salvation and for service... there is peace...

B. Ephesians is a message of peace for you in Jesus Christ.

1. (Rom 5.1) There is *peace with God* available to all men, but only in Christ. Outside of Christ, there is only enmity (outside of Christ the sinner and God are enemies: Rom 5.10).
2. (Php 4.5-7) For those in Christ (the saints), there is also available the *peace of God*, but only for those who are faithful to the Lord, faithful in the mission of being and making disciples.
 - a) If we are living faithfully in Christ, we should not expect the peace of God but rather the discipline of God (which anything but peaceful).
 - b) If you are living faithfully, you will be living for things eternal. And in that, there is great peace because you know that nothing can take that away from you... ever.

Conclusion:

The message of the Book of Ephesians can be seen in the first two verse of “greeting”: Ephesians is a book about out lives in Christ.

1. In Christ we have new life: We are *saints* and no longer under the condemnation of sin.
2. In Christ we are called to live out that new life: We are to be *faithful* saints, living as our Lord desires.

The Book of Ephesians is written to us by Paul, our Apostle sent to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The message, instruction, and exhortation that we find in this book is not just a suggestion for “living well”; it is the authoritative instruction and exhortation that Jesus Christ gave us through Paul.

The Book of Ephesians, therefore, is personal message to and for you:

- In Ephesians, you can see and understand that God offers you *grace*: Grace for salvation and grace for service (in Christ, you have everything you need to be saved and live as God desires for you to live).
- In Ephesians, you can see and understand that God offers you *peace*: Peace with God (salvation in Christ) and the peace of God (if you will commit to serving Christ in the mission of being and making disciples).

The Difference:

- There is only way that Harvest Baptist Church will be different among the hundreds of churches in our city, and there is only way we will make a difference in this world: We need to be *faithful*.
- “Saints” are abundant. “Faithful saints” are few and far between. So, let's be different! Let's be faithful!