



Introduction to Ephesians 1:1-2

Sunday, September 10, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

It is necessary from time to time to remember lofty, big picture ideas of the Christian faith. It is so easy to get lost in the minutia of life and the complexities of day-to-day circumstances. We can become preoccupied with our own lives and become seduced by self-importance. In all moments—but especially those moments—we need to remember who God is for us in Christ. We need to remember that He has given us every spiritual blessing, including life itself, and that He is ultimately uniting everything under Christ’s authority (Eph. 1:10).

Thankfully, God has given us Ephesians to accomplish just that. He reminds us of the great blessings we have received in Christ (election, adoption, forgiveness, grace). In all these things, we are reminded of the core message of Christianity—that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves by sending Jesus to die for us so that we could live. As we remember these things, we will live lives of gratitude in response and we will seek to obey everything that God has commanded us, which brings glory to God and is ultimately for our good.

Context

Ephesians is considered to be one of Paul’s “prison epistles” along with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. The story of Paul’s time in Ephesus can be surmised in part from the account written in Acts 19. There, the circumstances surrounding the misunderstanding of the role of the Spirit, the division over the idol statues, and other religious and socioeconomic factors set a helpful backdrop for understanding the profound theology of the spirit-world and the emphasis on unity for the people of God. Hopefully as we continue this study, we will all see more clearly what God is trying to communicate to us through Ephesians and may we truly understand and experience the love of Christ (Eph. 3:20).

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“Intro to Ephesians”

Read Ephesians 1:1-2; Acts 19:1-10, 21-41

Ephesians

- Author 1.1; 3.1

- City Great
Divided

Occasion

- 3.13 Discouraged

- 6.22 Encourage

Message

- 2.6 Sit

- 4.1 Walk

- 6.10 Stand

Discuss

- 1) Pastor Don began the sermon by talking about the difference between knowing about Christianity and experiencing God in Christ. How would you explain the difference between those two things? How have you seen the difference in your own life?

- 2) The Christian doctrine of providence says that God either initiates or allows everything that happens in the world. Nothing escapes His sovereignty over it. How does this affect the way you think about the events in your life? What about events in the broader world?

- 3) Pastor Don also said that gratitude for our position in Christ is the catalyst for obeying the commands in Scripture. Do you see your own growth as a Christian as rooted in gratitude to God for what He has done for you in Christ? Or do you see it more as God responding to you in gratitude for the good things that you do?

- 4) What is the greatest obstacle to unity in the local church today? At least what, in your experience, has been the greatest obstacle?

- 5) The beginning and ending of a book of the Bible tell us a lot. Ephesians begins and ends with grace and peace to the church at Ephesus. How can we be agents of grace and peace in our families, congregation, and community?