

Sermon Outline and Questions

Pastor Dave – Sunday 7th January 2024

The Book of Ephesians – Where the rubber meets the road.

Sermon Title – Richness for The Church

Ephesians 1:1-14

Introduction to the new series this week.

As we look back on 2023, we may well be looking to 2024 and some of the challenges that we potentially will face in 2024.

Commentary writers – overall view of the book of Ephesians.

- Believers Bank
- Christians Cheque Book
- Richness that the Christian has in Christ.

Explained beautifully in the book of Ephesians.

Thinking of the movie – White Christmas and a song sung it.

“Count your blessings instead of sheep.”

*When I'm worried and I can't sleep
I count my blessings instead of sheep
And I fall asleep counting my blessings
When my bankroll is getting small
I think of when I had none at all
And I fall asleep counting my blessings*

- A secular song.

Better choice of song would be – **Count your many blessings.**

*1 When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,*

And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.*

*2 Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. [Refrain]*

*3 When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high. [Refrain]*

*4 So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. [Refrain]*

Baptist Hymnal, 1991

Ephesians – The blessings that we have in Christ.

2 Points –

- First part of the book of Ephesians - Theological – Doctrine.
- Second Part of the book of Ephesians – Practical application.

Many languages and ethnic groups found in the city of Ephesus.

A sexualised society – our society not that unlike Ephesus.

Doctrine should not be dry and boring!

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will:

To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus^[a] at Ephesus.^[b]

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Rich Blessings

3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. **4** For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.^[c] **5** He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace **8** that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding.^[d] **9** He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ **10** as a plan for the right time^[e]—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.

11 In him we have also received an inheritance,^[f] because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, **12** so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory.

13 In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. **14** The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

- In the Greek this portion of scripture would be one long sentence.

There is one particular statement/phrase to pay attention to through this passage of scripture and note how many times it is used is...

- The doctrinal content alone in this portion of scripture.

This was written to Ephesian Christians – there are similarities word for word made in the book of Colossians.

The book of Ephesians was written between AD 60 and 62 – by the apostle Paul in prison, in Rome.

Considered a treasure house of the bible.

- Adaption as be Redemption – Forgiveness of Sins – sealing of the Holy Spirit we have.

“In Christ” or “In the beloved one” – mentions several times throughout the first 14 verses.

This letter being written to believers in Asia Minor – but for believers at large.

Ephesus was a major trading place – central for Jews and Gentiles alike.

- One of seven wonders of the world being in Ephesus.

The **Temple of Artemis** or **Artemision** ([Greek](#): Ἀρτεμίσιον; [Turkish](#): *Artemis Tapınağı*), also known as the **Temple of Diana**,

- Temple to a pagan god.
- Containing 100 temple prostitutes to the worship of Diana.
- A reputation of promiscuity.

It should not be a huge surprise to us in the book. This having a huge impact on us today.

Focus - Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul and his writing.

- By God's will – he was an apostle – not seeking to be an apostle by his own will.

His claim as an apostle, is not to rise above others.

“By God's will” – this is an important statement.

- God does the work.
- Paul is the imitator.
- Sovereign over these things.
- This is not something he is doing for himself.

Acts 9 – Paul's Conversion.

Acts 9 Christian Standard Bible

The Damascus Road

9 Now Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest ² and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. ⁴ Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁵ “Who are you, Lord?” Saul said.

“I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting,” he replied. ⁶ “But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the sound but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹ He was unable to see for three days and did not eat or drink.

- Zealous for God.,
- Persecuting Christians.
- Heading to Damascus to arrest people and have them stand before the Sanhedrin.

Paul – I am an apostle by God's will not mine.

- God called him to be an apostle.

Speaking authoritatively to...

- Instruct believers.
- Doctrinally.
- Practically.

"To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus".

As we look back to 2023 and in to 2024 – the study of Ephesians will challenge us – how is it that we are going to live out our faith in 2024.

3 Things to look at.

1. Christians are called Saints.

Question – Why is this significant?

Faith saints – there is a significance to this – reminding them of what saint means.

It is important what the bible says about saints – compared to what the world would say about saints.

- Sanctified – holy one.

2 Timothy 1:9 Christian Standard Bible

⁹ He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

It is by God's grace that we are saints – It is a state into which God has called us.

- Set apart from Sin.
- Set apart to God.

Sin should not be something that describes our life!

- We are to stay away from sin.

Flee – earthly passions and desires.

Flee – youthful lust.

1 Peter 1:15 Christian Standard Bible

¹⁵ But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct;

2 Peter 3:11 Christian Standard Bible

¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness

1 Peter 2:5-9 Christian Standard Bible

⁵ you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood^[a] to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

**See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and honored^[b] cornerstone,
and the one who believes in him
will never be put to shame.^[c]**

⁷ So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving,

**The stone that the builders rejected—
this one has become the cornerstone,^[d]**

⁸ and

**A stone to stumble over,
and a rock to trip over.^[e]**

They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.

⁹ But you are **a chosen race,^{[f][g]} a royal priesthood,^[h] a holy nation,^[i] a people for
his possession,^[j] so that you may proclaim the praises^{[k][l]} of the one who called you
out of darkness into his marvelous light.**

Set apart to God.

- To focus on serving God.
- Doing what God wants me to do.
- Saying what God wants me to say.
- Thinking what God wants me to think.

We are to be in the world, but not of the world.

Question – Are we sinless?

No – we are to confess our sin before a Holy God and repent.

Honouring God with our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

Key Thought – quote.

No one is justified who is not regenerated.

Saved by faith alone – not saved by faith which is alone.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Christian Standard Bible

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has^[a] come!

Ephesians 2 – Saved by grace.

- Not by good works
- For good works.

To God – to do the good works that God has lined up for us this year.

G.B. Stevens – Quote

It is evident that Hagias which is the word for saint and its kindred words express something more and higher than sacred – outwardly associated with God. Something more than a word in the Greek which means – worthy or honorable – something more than Hagino's which means pure and free from defilement.

Hagias which is the word for saint or sanctified – set apart – characteristically God likeness.

This is what we are called to be as believers.

Point # 2 – Christians are described as faithful.

Paul says – “To the faithful saints in Christ”.

Because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Biblical Faith.

- Content – of our faith.
- Confessions – of our faith.
- Commitment – to follow Christ all our days.

John 20:26-28 Christian Standard Bible

²⁶ A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don’t be faithless, but believe.”

²⁸ Thomas responded to him, “My Lord and my God!”

- Thomas had his doubts.

Perseverance and endurance are totally connected.

- When it comes to faithful Christians.

Reference made to how sometimes we may have two sons.

- One son maybe walking with God and one not.

One son coming to the knowledge of the truth – the other having had an experience.

Believers - they were persevering and faithful.

- Living their faith in community.
- Leading their children to a personal faith with Jesus Christ.
- Living from God’s word.
- Those who did good.

Question – How faithful was I in 2023?

Is our desire and commitment to be more faithful in 2024?

May we be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, but not lose our first love.

Lost their first love!

Revelation 2 Christian Standard Bible

The Letters to the Seven Churches

The Letter to Ephesus

2 “Write to the angel^[a] of the church in Ephesus: Thus says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lampstands: **2** I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. **3** I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. **5** Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you^[b] and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Christians – Saints.

- are to be fruitful – walking with Him.
- A desire to be increasingly more faithful.

Point # 3 – Christians are identified with Christ.

In our culture so many people identity is wrapped up in so many things.

- As Christians our identity is to be wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ.

Union with Christ is challenging and difficult for us to get our heads wrapped around.

Reread – Ephesians 1:1-14 and count the “In Christ’s” or similar statements and note how many there are.

Pictures painted in the New Testament of “In Christ.”

- Vine and the branches – John 15
- Bride and Groom in marriage – Christ and the church

Ephesians 5 – Paul mentions – picture of marriage – Christ and the church.

- Christ is the head of the body.

- We are in Christ and Christ is in us.

He leads – controls and guides us.

- We are to be dependent on Him.

James Boice – Quote.

“Apart from Christ our condition is absolutely hopeless – in Him our hope is glorious to the extreme.”

Lastly – “Grace to you and peace.”

- We have experienced the grace of God.
- Those of us who have put our faith and trust in Christ.

Then we have peace with God and from God.

We live in a community that desperately needs to experience the peace of God and his grace.

- PEACE – Shalom – completing us spiritually in every way.

Question – Are we sharing this grace and peace?

Read the wonderful words to this hymn.

Hymn - Living for Jesus a life that is truth.

1 *Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.*

*O Jesus, Lord and Savior,
I give myself to Thee,
For Thou, in Thy [redemption],*
Didst give Thyself for me;
I own no other Master,
My heart shall be Thy throne,
My life I give, henceforth to live,
O Christ, for Thee alone.*

- 2 *Living for Jesus who died in my place,
Bearing on Calv'ry my sin and disgrace;
Such love constrains me to answer His call,
Follow His leading and give Him my all.*

- 3 *Living for Jesus wherever I am,
Doing each duty in His holy name;
Willing to suffer affliction and loss,
Deeming each trial a part of my cross.*

- 4 *Living for Jesus through earth's little while,
My dearest treasure, the light of His smile;
Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem,
Bringing the weary to find rest in Him.*

Christian, can we say once again...

O Jesus, Lord and Savior,
I give myself to Thee,
For Thou, in Thy [redemption], *
Didst give Thyself for me;
I own no other Master,
My heart shall be Thy throne,
My life I give, henceforth to live,
O Christ, for Thee alone.

Question – Will we live this way in 2024?