

“The Family of God” (cont.)

Study in Ephesians

Ephesians 1

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Jeff: Well, welcome to the Brave Men Bible Study. And I'm glad that we can meet together, at least in some way over the next several weeks. It's going to be a bit difficult because part of the joy, a great part of the joy of doing this Bible study, is being with you men. And so I trust that you're looking forward to getting back together like I am. And so until that time these recordings will have to do.

And what we're going to do is that we're going to persist through the book of Ephesians. And I'm actually going to begin at the beginning and walk our way through the first lesson and try to condense it in some way and give it a recap, and then finish out the lesson. Part of the fun was all the discussion that these studies on Ephesians happened to generate. And so I wish that were the case. But perhaps that kind of discussion can be generated through other studies. Or perhaps we can put a discussion time in after we meet. And so you can take notes and we can wrestle through some topics that maybe this study brought up when we get back together. There are all kinds of things that we can do. But we'll do our best to work together as the Lord has appointed for now.

So what I want us to do is that I want us to pray. I'll read the Scriptures, and then we'll get to the study. And let's do that now.

Father in heaven, we are so thankful for the blessing of life in Christ wherein we find our security. We find our rest and our peace. And Father, when the world is ravaged by this virus, our hearts certainly go out to them. But we know that being Christians, our lives are hidden in Jesus Christ, and for that we are thankful. Father, we pray and ask that You will remind us continually as we study Your word of the firm footing upon which we stand in that Word and on Jesus Christ. Father, we pray that we would not only be folks who remember our security, but communicate that security to others.

And Father, with this state law order, we pray that Your word which is not chained or bound or under orders to stay home, would flourish and spread. Father, we pray and look forward to the time when life would return to normal. And yet we pray that it would not return to normal as it was in some cases, for in some ways our eyes were not fixed upon Christ, and we delighted in our sin. And we pray, Father, that during this time you will challenge us and convict us. We pray, Father, that You will humble us. We pray that we will repent of our sins, fix our eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and so normal will be a new normal for us. It will be a normal wherein Christ is the focus and center of our lives and the life of our families.

Father, we pray for Your protection to be upon us. But we know that that protection extends not just in the physical. But we pray, Father, for that which You've promised: that though the body be destroyed by death, the soul cannot perish. That's what we look to and find our strength in. And so give us a firm resolve to live in this life fearlessly. Help us to live boldly, without fear of death, knowing that our lives are indeed hidden in Jesus

“The Family of God” (cont.)

Christ. And so bless us, Father, as we contemplate that blessedness today, for we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Well, let me turn our attention to the Scriptures. And I’ll read Ephesians chapter 1 in its entirety. So listen to God’s word.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him—things in heaven and things on earth.

“In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

“In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” And that’s the word of God.

Let’s think together about three basic things. I want us to think together about *the background of the book of Ephesians*. I want us to think about *the blessed security we have*. And then I want us to think together about *how it is that we increase that security*. How is it that we increase our sense of being kept by the Lord? So those three things are the things that I want us to think about today.

So let’s start with some background. And first of all, let’s think about *the people in Ephesus*.

“The Family of God” (cont.)

Now I mentioned to you several weeks ago when we were together that there were a number of different folks in Ephesus, different people. For instance, the church of Ephesus had disciples of John the Baptist in it. In fact in Acts 18 these are the people who asked and who said to Paul and to his group that the only baptism they had was the baptism of John the Baptist. Now these were followers of John the Baptist.

Now I want you to think about that for just a minute. Now I know that this is a bit of a stereotype. And yet I want you to remember that when we emulate someone, when we admire someone, what we emulate about them is typically their weakest points. And when you think about John the Baptist, you think about an eccentric fellow. You think about a chap who came out of the wilderness eating locusts and wild honey and dressed in camel’s hair. You think about a man who had so much more to him than that. For instance, this was a teacher, a prophet, a man who understood the revelation of God.

And yet how is it that we remember him? We typically remember him by the way he dressed. We remember him by what he ate. And also we remember him as the one who doubted and asked Jesus if He was the One really to be sent. Typically we think of him as the Baptist. And that’s part of his name—John the Baptist. But when you think about it, you typically remember John the Baptist by those things that are either ancillary to him, (i.e., what he ate and what he wore), his weaknesses, (his doubt, his wonderment about whether Jesus was the Christ.)

And so it’s interesting. If that’s the way we remember him,—and we know that psychology teaches us that the things that we emulate about a person are the things that are probably their weakest traits,—one has to wonder. Of course this is speculation, but one has to wonder what the disciples of John the Baptist were like. And what were those folks like who were in Ephesus?

Well, that’s at least one group in Ephesus. The other people in Ephesus were people like Apollos the Alexandrian. Now here was a man who was eloquent. Here was a man who was new to the faith, and yet was able to reason and to reason well with what he knew.

Now it was Priscilla and Aquila who came alongside of him and who taught him and instructed him. And Priscilla and Aquila were in Ephesus. And they were in Ephesus because they were in exile. We think about the exile under Claudius, and how Claudius had expelled both the Jews and the Christians from Rome. And these two people, Priscilla and Aquila, were displaced Jews living in Ephesus, and they too were part of this group.

Now think about this. These were educated people. These were people that knew the revelation of God very well. In fact, when you think of them you don’t think of camel’s hair; you don’t think of wild honey. What you think of is that you think about this husband-and-wife team instructing this very eloquent person.

Now the other thing about it is this. You have to remember that Alexandria, where Apollos was from, was really a major city. It was a literary city; it had a wonderful library. In fact, it’s Alexandria that gives rise to one interpretive mode or way of looking at the Scriptures—not just the Scriptures, but other texts as well. And so Apollos was an educated figure, very well spoken and eloquent. And so you not only have the followers

“The Family of God” (cont.)

of John the Baptist, but you have folks like Priscilla and Aquila and Apollos and those kinds of people.

Now this also gives rise to an understanding of why Ephesians 2 is where it is. Ephesians 2 really does help us to understand that there’s an elephant in the room. And the elephant in the room is the tension between the Jews and the Gentiles. And that’s what Paul takes up when he takes up chapter 2. And it’s the experience of people like Priscilla and Aquila who have been driven out of Rome because of that very tension.

So there were tensions between Jews and Gentiles, not only those who had lived it and experienced the hardships of the exile because of it. But also we need to understand that within Ephesus there would have been a group of people who would have been experiencing this tension, and so Paul deals with it in this text.

There are also folks that we learn about from Acts 19, and they are magicians. They are those who practice the black arts. They are directly related to the Artemas cult, and they are people who have been converted out of that cult. What we’re going to find later on in our study is that Artemas had a lot to do with black magic. And so these are people who’ve been converted out of that. And they too are in the church. In fact, Acts 19 tells us that these folks had burned and destroyed a good deal of their magical texts, and so on. And so these are people who are in the church.

Now the question that we have to ask ourselves is this. How does Paul describe the church? How does he describe this church? And the answer to that question is that he calls them “*saints*.” He writes “*to the saints who are in Ephesus.*”

Now the question that we have to ask ourselves, and the one that we thought about quite a bit several weeks ago—and so I’ll only say a couple of things about it now,—the thing that we have to ask is this. *What is a saint?* Well, a saint is a holy one.

Now what’s a holy one? Well, it’s one who is sanctified. Now what does that mean? Well, it means two basic things. First of all it means one who is set apart, set apart from something. And that one that is set apart from something is also devoted to something. And so what we find is that a saint is set apart from the world and devoted to God. That’s a saint.

And so what Paul is saying is that this group of people, this conglomerate of saints, they’ve been taken from their perspective context in the world and they’ve all been devoted to God. And they are all in different places in terms of their maturity, in terms of their walk, in terms of the way in which they’re growing up in Jesus Christ. But one of the things that we have to understand is that they are indeed growing.

Now we have to understand that they experienced difficulty. These saints experienced difficulty. In fact, one of the things that we understand is that the saints in Ephesus—and we learn this from the book of Acts—one of the things that we learn about them is this. We learn that they were not respected. We learn that they were certainly not loved in Ephesus.

Now why is that? Well, that’s because what was happening was as they were being converted, people were coming out of the Artemas temple, out of the cult of Artemas, and they were turning from that particular Greek god of the Olympian few, and they were turning to Christ. And what was happening was that the sale of Artemas idols was on the

“The Family of God” (cont.)

decline. And so Demetrius the silversmith recognizes that this Christianity is cutting into his profits. And so he begins to complain about it. He begins to incite the authorities against those who we find converting to Christianity.

And so one of the things that I would have you note is this. It’s not necessarily about the uproar, but something I want you to notice that’s behind the uproar. In other words, what I want you to think about is not necessarily Demetrius, not necessarily the silversmiths, and so on. What I want you to think about is what’s behind them, what’s motivating them. And Paul is going to talk about *“powers.”*

Now the interesting thing about this whole idea of powers is this. Paul recognizes that we don’t fight against flesh and blood. There are powers that stand behind what we see, and we’re really fighting against them. And we’re going to find that basically Paul is acknowledging this, and telling us that there is a Power greater than these powers. And of course that power is from the triune God.

But I want you to see this. Look in 1:21 for a minute. There you notice that *“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come,”* that’s God. God is above all the powers of this present age.

And then in chapter 2 verse 2, notice this: that there was a time when we followed *“the prince of the power of the air.”* And then in 3:10 notice this. *“So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”* And so notice that the wisdom of God is known to these powers.

And then notice 6:11 and 12. It says, *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

Now what I want you to understand is this. What I want you to understand is that what Paul is telling us is yes, we do fight against powers that are unseen, not against flesh and blood. But the power that triumphs over these powers is the power that God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Now here’s something that I think is absolutely wonderful. We’re again reminded that God is over all things that are named. That’s an ancient consideration. The thing that is named by another, well, that thing is under the dominion of the person that names it. And so what Paul is telling us is that everything that is named is under God, under His dominion and power.

Now of course that’s a ministry to these folks in Ephesus because Artemas is a god that is named, and therefore a false god under the dominion of God Himself. And yet today, when we think about our own situation with Covid 19, that’s a thing named; it’s part of the creation. It’s a part of creation gone awry. But the thing about it, the point that I would make, is that it is under God’s dominion. It is that which is subdued beneath His feet.

And so one of the things that I would say to you is that this book is about the powers of the world, and the powers that seem to cause us to fear. And yet, if we have a right

“The Family of God” (cont.)

understanding of the book of Ephesians, then we will not fear because we will understand that God is the God of all power and dominion and authority.

Now I want you to notice a couple of texts, because these texts will help us and give us a grid for thinking about the rest of the book of Ephesians. In fact, if we understand this structure, we'll understand a lot of Paul's statements in the book of Ephesians. So I want you to look with me at Ephesians 1:10. And in 1:10 it says this. It says this about Christ and about His revelation. *“As a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him—things in heaven and things on earth.”*

And then I want you to look at 1:22 and 23. And look at what it says. It says, *“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him as Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*

Now what is it about those two statements that we need to pay attention to? Well, notice the first statement in 1:10. It talks about the plan to place all things under Him, under Christ. But notice that Ephesians 1:22 and 23 talks as if all things have been placed under His dominion, under His feet and rule.

What's going on there? One verse talks as if it hasn't happened yet but will, and another verse talks as if it has already happened. Well, that's a clear use of what we call “the already but not yet” in Scripture. In other words, one of the things that we need to understand is that the Scriptures use this sort of grammar, this grammar of “the already but the not yet.” In other words, what will happen will happen. But what will happen in terms of the promise of God is as good as if it already happened.

There are ways of thinking about that. And of course there are ways of thinking about that which I think have to be thought of in an accommodated sense. But let me give you at least one way of thinking about that, and maybe two.

I want you to think about a human zygote. I've used this example with you before, but I find it to be absolutely helpful in terms of understanding this. One of the things that we understand about a human zygote is that it possesses 23 pairs of chromosomes, 46 in all. And that's the zygote, and that's the smallest of human development in Mom's womb. Now once that zygote grows in Mom's womb and is birthed at nine months, and then grows and becomes ten or twenty or thirty or forty or even eighty years old, the question is how many pairs of chromosomes does that person have? And the answer is 23 pairs, 46 in all.

In other words, that zygote has all of the human DNA it needs to become what it will become. And yet there's a sense in which that zygote is as human as it will ever be. And so it becomes what it is. There's a sense in which it's already human. But it is not yet the human that it will be.

And in the Christian life that's the way we need to understand it. For instance, when I'm born again in Jesus Christ, there's a sense in which I have all the Christian DNA that I'm ever going to have. But I'm growing up and into what I already am in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that, I think, is a very helpful way of understanding the power of God exercised in us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you to think about it for a minute. If I understand that the power of God in and through Jesus Christ by virtue of the Spirit has been exercised in me already, and there is

“The Family of God” (cont.)

a sense in which I am as much in Christ as I will ever be, I’m not going to get any more in Christ than I already am. And yet, by virtue of being in Christ, I’m going to become more like Christ than I am today. Then there is a wonderful sense in which I understand that I am secure and being kept in Christ, no matter the powers outside that threaten. I am secure. And I think that’s vitally important for us to understand, especially as we go forward in our thinking together about the book of Ephesians.

So let’s talk for just a little bit about the blessed security that we have in Jesus Christ. Now the question I think that we have to ask ourselves at the very beginning is, how do we help someone? How do we help someone to understand that they’re kept and that they’re blessed and that they’re saved, especially the Christian person? Well, I don’t think that we can do better than to look at the example of Christ Jesus Himself.

I want you to think about the night on which He was betrayed. I want you to think about Him in the Upper Room. I want you to think about what John 13-17 tells us.

John 13 starts by telling us that Jesus loved His own, and that *“He loved them to the end.”* And He loved them knowing, as chapter 14 says, that their hearts were troubled, that they were distressed. He’d been telling them that He was going to go away, that He was going to suffer and die. He’d been telling them those things, and they understood them. Their hearts were troubled and restless.

What did He say to them? How did He minister to them? The answer, I would say, may startle us. He taught them theology, but not just any theology. He taught them about the Trinity.

Now I want you to understand something. I think that is remarkable, because I think that many Christians believe that the Trinity is a necessary doctrine, but perhaps the most impractical of all doctrines. I think oftentimes that’s the way the Trinity is understood, and yet not by Jesus. Jesus uses Trinitarian doctrine in order to minister to these disciples who were disturbed and not restful.

Well, how so? Well, I think what He does is that He teaches them. For instance, He teaches them about the relationship that He enjoys with the Father. For instance, in John’s Gospel, in those chapters, one of the things that we discover is that Jesus teaches about the bond and the union that He enjoys with the Father. And then He teaches us something about the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit’s interaction in that triune Godhead.

Now what is that interaction? Well, here is the way that Augustine describes it. Augustine says that *“The Father and the Son love One another,”* and that *“the Spirit proceeds from the Father.”* But prior to creation, Augustine says that the question has to be asked. *“To where did the Spirit proceed?”* And the answer has to be that He proceeds to the Son.

But then where does He go? Well, John 15 tells us and Jesus tells us that He sends the Spirit. Now He sends the Spirit to us along with the Father. But prior to creation where was the Spirit sent? Well, the Father and the Son had a reciprocity between them. The Father sent the Spirit to the Son, and the Son back to the Father. And Augustine says that *“the Spirit proceeding from Father and Son prior to creation is the bond of love that unites Father and Son together.”* And therefore you have this beautiful picture of the triune God loving each other prior to creation. It’s a beautiful picture.

“The Family of God” (cont.)

And so what John says, or what John says that Jesus told them on the night in which He was betrayed, is this. Here is the way to be comforted. Jesus says that this is the relationship that Father, Son and Spirit enjoy. “And I’m inviting you into that relationship.” That’s what He’s saying. For instance, that’s the weight of Jesus’ prayer in John 17. He has invited them into this living, loving relationship that the Trinity enjoys. And what could be more secure and blessed than that? Think of how that would minister to those disciples on that particular evening.

And Paul basically takes his cue from Jesus. And so in the midst of this tension, in the midst of this very trying time, where the silversmith is inciting rebellion against the church and the city officials are following him in that, and there are all kinds of different people in the church—Jewish/Gentile tension, and so on,—what does Paul do? Well, Paul at the very outset brings a lesson about the triune God to bear upon the church. And what he does is that he teaches about the Trinitarian structure and its relationship not only within itself, but how it relates to us. And so for instance, he teaches about the Father’s allocation, the Son’s accomplishment and the Spirit’s application of what? Of redemption.

So let’s think about that for just a minute. And one of the things that we need to think about—and I’ve already mentioned this to you, so I’ll just briefly mention it to you right now,—is the Christological sphere in which all of this is unpacked.

Notice, for instance, that “*in Christ*” occurs eleven times in fourteen verses. It just abounds in this book. We are to understand that life is in Christ.

Now what does union with Christ mean? Well, for instance, I think that we’re going to have to take that up later, especially when we think about chapter 5 and chapter 6. And we’ll get very practical when we think about it there.

Let me give you an illustration of what union with Christ means. Union with Christ means that because I’m united to Christ I live my life in Him. And what does that mean—in Him?

Well, let me put it like this. Let’s say that your child is interested in hockey and wants to play hockey. So you go out and buy him all the hockey equipment that he needs. You go and buy him skates and pads and sticks and pucks and you put it all in a bag. You drag it up to his room and you tell him, “Here you go, son. Here is your hockey equipment.”

And you leave it there, and you start to walk out the door. And as you walk out the door your son looks at you and says, “But Dad!”

And you say, “Well, what?”

And he says, “Well, aren’t you going to take me to the rink? I mean, where am I going to go to skate?”

And you look at him and say, “No. Just play in your room up here; you’ll be fine. Just try to keep the noise down.” And then you walk out.

What have you done? You’ve given him all the accoutrements of hockey. But you’ve not given him a sphere to play in. And when we talk about life in Christ, what we mean is that our life, the context of our life, becomes the sphere wherein we obey Christ.

“The Family of God” (cont.)

So for instance, I said that we’re going to talk about this later. But let me mention it now. For instance, our marriages. We submit in the Lord or we love in the Lord, or children obey in the Lord. That frames us there in all of those contexts.

What does it mean? It means this. It means, for instance, that God has given you a marriage. And that’s your sphere in which to live in Christ.

Now let me tell you what that means. That means this. For instance, that means that when you look at your wife and you’re angry with her for some reason, justified or not, when you look at her and you’re angry with her, and you say to yourself in your heart that wicked thing, and you say to yourself, “She doesn’t deserve my love,” then you look over her shoulder and see Christ, and remember that you’re not loving her because she deserves it. You’re loving her because you’re in a union with her and this is where you practice the love of Christ. And you practice it toward her primarily.

And so that’s the idea. All of life becomes this sphere wherein I live out my Christianity. It’s very much like ice to the hockey player. All of life is that very thing to us.

So in Christ let’s think about these applications that we find regarding the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. First of all, notice *the Father’s work*. The Father’s work is an allocating work. Now we talk a lot about this. But I want you to notice some things. I want you to notice, for instance, that this text says that He chose us “*before the foundation of the world*.” He chose us in the Son before the foundation of the world.

Now why did He choose us? Well, he chose us in Christ for a purpose: “*to be holy and blameless*.” Now I want you to think about what that means. That means that He separated us from the world and devoted us to Himself that we might be what? Blameless. In other words, that in being separated from the world and devoted to Him, we might grow up, mature, flourish in our Christianity. That’s what he’s saying.

But not only that. He reminds us that we’ve been predestined. We’ve been adopted to Him as sons. This is a wonderful reminder that he didn’t just justify us, but he did something else that was forensic and legal. He adopted us into His family. And that was according to His purpose, according to His good will.

And then notice this. I realize that I’m hustling through these. But we spent a lot of time thinking about them together when we were together. Notice *the work of the Son*. In verses 7-10 we find the accomplishment of salvation for who? Well, for those the Father allocated.

Now let me just remind you of this. Remember, when we were together I said to you that we have this idea of fallen humanity. And it’s out of fallen humanity that God chooses some to be saved, chooses some to be devoted to Him, chooses them out of this fallen mass of humanity.

Now the thing that we need to understand is that those who are chosen out of this fallen mass of humanity, these are those for whom Christ accomplishes redemption. These are those for whom Christ accomplishes redemption. In other words, when you think about redemption itself, what does it mean? It means to buy back from slavery. It was in fallenness that we were slaves to sin and to the devil. And so it’s through redemption that Christ buys back those whom the Father allocates.

“The Family of God” (cont.)

And how does He do that? Well, when you turn to Romans 3, for instance, you basically find three crucial terms. You find things like *propitiation*. In other words, what happens in propitiation is this. In propitiation Christ satisfies the wrath of God against who? Those who were allocated. Upon the rest of humanity the wrath of God remains. But it is on these whom the Father has allocated and for whom the Son accomplishes redemption that the Son bears the wrath of God on Himself on the cross. And so the wrath of God against these is satisfied.

Expiation is another way of fixing the problem. In other words, think about the car illustration. Rick Gamble in his *Systematic Theology* gives this illustration; it's a great illustration.

He says this. Let's say that you have two people, and one hits the car of another. And they exchange insurance information. And with that insurance information the car gets fixed and they get together for their next meeting. And there's a problem between them.

And the one who hit the other's car says, "Is there still a problem between us? I got your car fixed." That's the expiation.

And the other one says, "Yes, you got my car fixed. You expiated; you fixed the car. But I'm still angry with you. In other words, my wrath has not been propitiated."

And the other says, "Oh, well why are you angry?"

And he may say something like "Well, you look like you were driving recklessly."

And the other one says, "No. Let me explain what was happening." And he explains what was happening. So the wrath is now appeased, it's taken care of. And so the problem is expiated, the car is fixed. And now the wrath is taken care of.

Well, it's on the cross that we find that sin is expiated and propitiated. It is taken care of, it's atoned for. And the wrath of God is removed.

And then there's the idea of *justification in Christ*, who is the justified One. We are justified from our sins, forgiven them. And we could go into more. We did when we were together. But I'm not going to do that.

And then there is *redemption*, the idea of buying back. And it's the idea of buying back and being forgiven of our sins, all of those things that we found when we were together.

And then there is *the Holy Spirit's work*, and that's the application of redemption. So for instance, when you think about it the Father allocates out of this fallen mass of humanity. The Son accomplishes redemption for them. The question, though, has to be this. Well, how does the individual person receive the work that Christ has done? And the answer is by the Spirit. The Spirit does it. How? By uniting that person to Jesus Christ. In other words, when you think about the *ordo salutis* you think about the very call of God. You think about the regeneration of the Spirit. And the regeneration of the Spirit brings the person into union with Jesus Christ. And when that person is in union with Jesus Christ what begins to happen? Well, the spiritual blood begins to flow and the lungs begin to work.

And what does that look like? Well, it looks like conversion. But what is conversion? Conversion is faith and repentance. Those things begin to happen in the life of a person. They begin to exercise faith. They begin to feel sorry for what they have done, and so they repent.

“The Family of God” (cont.)

And then what begins to happen? Well, through faith we are justified and by faith we are sanctified, and so on. And the idea then is that the Christian life begins to dominate because of this union that we have with Jesus Christ. And so what the Spirit does is that the Spirit really brings the *eschaton*, the already that will be declared. He brings it into the present moment. We experience that already.

Already, but not yet. There’s an alreadiness to what we experience in union with Christ. But it’s yet to have consummation to it. That’s what we learned about earlier.

Now I think that one of the things that’s really fascinating and wonderful is to think about the idea of *the sealing of the Spirit*. And the sealing of the Spirit, remember, talks about what authenticates and what guarantees. And so here we find that the Spirit authenticates and guarantees to those who have been allocated the accomplishment of the Son’s salvation, the inheritance that will be ours, that is now ours already but will be ours in His consummation in the future. And so the Spirit that we possess individually and inwardly is the deposit and guarantee of the inheritance yet to come. And so it’s a great blessing.

I want you to think about this for just a minute. I want you to think about this idea of having the blessing and yet anticipating the blessing. You can think about this in a couple of ways.

For instance, let’s think about a child who very much wants a bicycle for his birthday. And he says to his father, “I want this bicycle. Oh Father, please, would you buy it for me?”, and so on.

And the father buys the bicycle for the son. And so the son has a bicycle, and yet he doesn’t know that he has it.

And then one day he’s talking to his father. He says, “Father, Father! I notice that all the bikes are gone from the department store. Would you tell me if you got it?” And the father wanting to relieve the son of stress says, “Son, I bought the last one and I bought it for you. It’s yours.”

And then the son asks the inevitable. “Can I have it now?”

And the father says, “No. You can have it on your birthday.”

Now the son is in possession of the bicycle. He has it by the promise of his father. And yet he will come into the possession of the bicycle in two or three months, whenever his birthday is.

You get the idea. It’s an illustration that I think breaks down to some extent. But you get the idea. It works and it’s wonderful.

So what’s our security? Well, our security is that we’ve been chosen by the Father, allocated by the Father out of this mass of sinful humanity. We’ve had our salvation accomplished by the Son. In other words, the wrath of God that was toward the mass of sinful humanity has now been expiated and propitiated in the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And that work has been applied to us by the Spirit in our lives. And so that’s the blessed security that we have.

Now I want to think about the aspect of *increasing our security* just as we wrap things up. Paul prays; he does not cease to pray. And why does he pray? Well, he prays for something that I want you to see; it’s really interesting. And why does he pray? He prays

“The Family of God” (cont.)

because prayer is powerful and effective for the righteous man. And Paul is certainly a righteous man not only as he stands in Christ, but also as he lives his life. He’s a mature Christian individual.

I want you to notice what he prays for. Look at verses 17 and 18. Notice. He prays that *“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you.”*

Now I want you to notice that he prays for the eyes of their hearts to be opened. But notice. When you compare what he says there with what he says in verse 8: the grace of God in salvation *“which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ.”*

Now do you see the difference? In verse 8 he tells us that we already have the wisdom and insight that was lavished upon us in the gospel, made known to us in the gospel. And yet in verses 17 and 18 he prays that we’ll have insight, that we’ll be given wisdom and knowledge into the mystery of the gospel that has been revealed.

Now think about that. What’s he saying? Well, Paul is saying that we have already had this insight made known to us. We’ve been granted this wisdom. But then he prays that we might have more and more and more of it. It’s the “already but not yet” idea.

And so he prays that we will know the hope to which we have been called. Now any believer, right from the outset, has an understanding of the hope to which he has been called. That’s just part of what it means to be a converted person. And yet we grow in our sense of hope every day that we find ourselves in His word and in prayer. We grow in our understanding of the riches of the knowledge of grace.

It’s a wonderful thing to understand it at the beginning. But I want you to understand something. You will understand grace one and five and ten years later more than you do now. And then you will understand more of His power toward us—the power that worked in us that was the power that brought the Son to resurrected life. That same power that worked in Christ worked in us to bring us from spiritual death.

Now why do we need to know it? We know it already. Well, we need to know it because we need to grow in our understanding. We need to grow in our knowledge of that truth.

Why? Well take for instance what we’re experiencing now. There is rampant fear not only in the world, but there is rampant fear in the church. And I want you to know something. The love of Christ drives out fear. Why? Because Christ replaces and supplants that fear with security, with the sense of God’s power in what He’s doing in our lives and what He has done in the lives of others who are in Him. And that fear is driven out and security takes its place, the security rooted in love.

And so our security rests in the God who allocates His Son who accomplishes and a Spirit who applies that salvation to us. He reminds us continually that He is reigning over all things.

So, my brothers, that’s Ephesians chapter 1 in a nutshell. And we’ll go on to Ephesians chapter 2 the next time we’re together. But in the meantime, may the Lord bless you and keep you. And I pray that He keeps you safe.