

ephesians

ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRIT

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This nine week series on the book of Ephesians are taken from the writings of Pastors Frank and Parris Bailey unless noted otherwise. All Scripture is taken from the New King James Version.

week one
ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRIT
EPHESIANS 1:1-3



“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.” Ephesians 1:3

*“Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm has already been lavished upon us as a love gift from our wonderful heavenly Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus—all because he sees us wrapped into Christ. This is why we celebrate him with all our hearts!”
Ephesians 1:3 TPT*

1. WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN BY EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING?

The apostle Paul is talking about all of the benefits that begin to flood into our lives when we receive the Holy Spirit. A.B. Simpson writes, “Ephesians is an unfolding of “all the blessings of the Spirit.” This is the true translation of the passage, *‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all the blessings of the Spirit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.’ Ephesians 1:3.* There is a great difference between the blessings of the Spirit and spiritual blessings. **The person of the Holy Ghost is worth more than all His gifts.** The blessings unfolded in this epistle are said to be “in the heavenlies”; that is, in the higher realm and element where we dwell in Christ, above the natural life, and in fellowship with the heavenly world. The apostle’s theme, in this epistle, is the higher blessings of the Holy Ghost, which He makes known to those who enter into the fullness of Christ. May the Holy Spirit Himself enable us to see and enter into all the blessings of the Spirit!”

2. WHAT 3 KEYS WILL HELP US BEGIN TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT?

- Recognizing your need of the Spirit in your daily life.
- Learning how to drink, or take in, the Holy Spirit into your life.

- Once drinking becomes part of your life you are well on your way. It will enable you to do the third point- you must begin to tap into all the blessings of the Spirit purchased for you.

3. WHY MUST WE UNDERSTAND THIS SCRIPTURE?

This understanding of this verse of scripture can change everything for us. We are no longer looking for various blessings from the Lord, we are after God Himself. All of the blessings; healing, provision, changed life and lifestyle, flow out of our relationship with the Holy Spirit. When He comes into our lives, He doesn't come alone, He brings all of the "blessings of the Spirit" with Him. I love what Simpson said about the results of receiving the Spirit, **"the person of the Holy Ghost is worth more than all His gifts"**.

4. WHAT IS THE TRUE GIFT OF PENTECOST?

The true gift of Pentecost is not the receiving of a new formula or the secret to success in life, but the reception of a new person. The Lord is offering us more than wonderful gifts, He is offering us Himself. Actually, that is the greatest expression of love. We are not so much interested in gifts from our loved ones, we are interested in the loved ones themselves. The gift of the Spirit is God's greatest expression of love, His best gift. What is that gift, it is God Himself. When you receive this gift of love, you may just receive more than you ever imagined, you might just step into "all the blessings of the Spirit."

5. HOW MANY OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE AVAILABLE TO US?

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with **ALL** the blessings of the Spirit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 1:3.*

We really have know idea of how blessed we really are. Just think about it, **ALL** the blessings of the Spirit of God have been made available to us by the redeeming blood of Jesus. Just some of His blessings or even just one would be amazing, but ALL of them? Really? How big is this promise. If God the Holy Spirit is infinite, that means there is no end to these blessings. They are truly limitless. They incorporate everything from illumination, the opening up of our spiritual senses to heavenly things, to access into the very presence of God. It includes Son-ship, intercession, victorious living, power for ministry, and best of all intimacy and fellowship with our heavenly friend. It is by walking in the Spirit that we begin to implement these unspeakable blessings into our daily lives. We have more available to us than we can ever know.

6. ONCE YOU REALIZE HOW BLESSED YOU ARE, WHAT WILL BE OUR RESPONSE?

Once we see how blessed we are in Christ, we have no other recourse; we become radical worshippers of God. Suddenly, the angels, elders, and seraphim in the book of Revelation make a lot of sense. In light of His glory, worship becomes spontaneous. Apathy and disinterest are unthinkable. We see His sovereign plan that brought us to this place in our journey, we see the powerful effect of redemption in our lives, we become aware of His provision, guidance, correction, and encouragement in everything we do. We are sometimes stunned speechless by how He has us covered.

7. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BLESSINGS OF SPIRIT LISTED IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS?

Albert Barnes gets even more specific as he describes what some of those blessings are. “Pardon, peace, redemption, adoption, the earnest of the Spirit, etc., referred to in the following verses—blessings which individual Christians enjoy....”

This verse lays the groundwork to one of Paul’s greatest epistles. He unfolds these spiritual blessings, or blessings of the Spirit, all throughout the book of Ephesians. He says we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ. For those who have ears to hear, we are already brought into the heavenly banqueting house, the blessings are already pouring over us, we don’t have to wait for the coming kingdom, He is here and the blessings abound.

8. HOW DO WE STEP INTO THOSE HEAVENLY PLACES?

Bible reading, prayer, worship, going to church, and sharing our faith now become our greatest joy. It is in these spiritual activities that we begin to step into those heavenly places that Paul spoke about. Paul first tasted it on the Damascus Road: he was hooked. From the imprisonments, to the beatings, and stoning, to the shipwrecks; Paul was accessing that other world. It is in those heavenly places that we actually taste the blessings of the Spirit.

“Maybe today all you can see are your earthly circumstances. The truth is that the heavenly realm is all around you and is in you if you are born again. If you are not ‘feeling it’ all it takes is a spiritual adjustment. Take some time and be still, acknowledge the blood of Jesus that cleanses every sin, and draw near to our merciful God. Before long, you will be soaring in those heavenly places.” - Pastor Frank Bailey

9. CAN WE EXPERIENCE HIS HEAVENLY BLESSINGS EVERYDAY?

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “You see His blessings are not partial or limited, He withholds nothing that would enrich us. God has given us a foretaste of our heritage in this world. His spiritual blessings can lift us up beyond the world of sense into the unseen world. His spiritual blessings poured on us create heaven within and around us. When Christ comes near so does His world and our world begins to take on the divine. We can be surrounded in heavenly places everyday of our lives for wherever His light and love are we feel His presence. My problems that once seemed to smother me, leave just like the sun melting away the fog. His presence begins to diffuse “my issues” and we can smell the fragrance of Christ all around us. Yes, it is a good morning indeed! Thank you Jesus! This scripture resounds within me, “all spiritual blessing in heavenly places”.

“The Father blesses his children when he lavishes gifts upon them in his favor so that these bounties or these experiences, of whatever nature, work together for their good. Together with the gift he imparts himself.” Critical Commentary

“Go ahead, go out and take your walk, bask in His creation and let His spiritual blessings soak into your spirit. You can be enriched and changed! There is a fountain just for you!”
- Pastor Parris Bailey

week two
THE OBJECT OF HIS LOVE
EPHESIANS 1:3-19

1. WHAT IS THE FIRST TWO BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRIT FOUND IN EPHESIANS 1:3-6?

**WE BECOME THE OBJECT OF HIS LOVE
AND BECOME HOLY**

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,** having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephesians 1:3-6*

Today’s verse says that I am part of God’s eternal plan. Before anything existed; before stars or galaxies, black holes or solar systems, before dinosaurs or amoebas, I was chosen by God. He has known me and loved me before creation, that is the shocking truth in today’s verse. So the Lord has a plan for you, your life is not an accident. Even if you have come through miserable circumstances and even messed your life up horribly, God has a plan of redemption. His plan is to display His glory through the incredible grace He has poured out on you.



“God chooses men to be holy, not sinful; to be happy, not miserable; to be pure, not impure; to be saved, not to be lost. For these things he should be praised. He should be praised that he has not left the whole race to wander away and die. Had he chosen but one to eternal life, that one should praise him, and all the holy universe should join in the praise. Should he now see it to be consistent to choose but one of the fallen spirits, and to make him pure, and to readmit him to heaven, that one spirit would have occasion for eternal thanks, and all heaven might join in his praises. How much more is praise due to him, when the number chosen is not one or a few, but when millions which no man can number, shall be found to be chosen to life.”
Albert Barnes

2. IN EPHESIANS 1:7-12, WHAT ARE SOME OTHER BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRIT THAT WE RECEIVE AS ONE OF HIS CHOSEN ONES?

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:7-12

- **Redemption**
- **Forgiveness of sins**
- **Grace abounding towards us**
- **We can know the mystery of His will**
- **We have obtained an inheritance**

3. WHAT IS SO AMAZING ABOUT REDEMPTION?

The plan of redemption is quite amazing. It is more than just forgiveness and a ticket to eternal life, way more. Redemption is God’s ultimate plan to display His glory. Think about it, the universe is declaring the glory of God. In all of that splendor, even the undiscovered splendor of the universe, it cannot begin to compare to the beauty of redemption. Losers, liars, cheaters, and various forms of immoral people are all God’s choices to display the glory of His grace. It is likely the first witness of Christ after the resurrection wasn’t a Bible scholar but a delivered prostitute and demonized person. The transformation from a fallen, cursed creature to a beautiful daughter of God says it all. That was His plan, that’s why He came. In our fallen world today grace is crying out. Grace is calling whosoever will to come to the fountain and drink of His glorious grace.

“The sum of the blessings Christ sought, by what he did and suffered in the work of redemption, was the Holy Spirit. So is the affair of our redemption constituted; the Father provides and gives the Redeemer, and the price of redemption is offered to him, and he grants the benefit purchased; the Son is the Redeemer that gives the price, and also is the price offered; and the Holy Spirit is the grand blessing, obtained by the price offered, and bestowed on the redeemed. The Holy Spirit, in his indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy, or in one word, of all the spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: and is also the sum of all perfection, glory and eternal joy, that he purchased for them in another world.” Jonathan Edwards

4. WHAT IS THE GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS?

Wow! God receives glory and I receive the greatest of all gifts. I receive the Holy Spirit Himself. He is the purchased prize of the death of Christ and the treasure beyond compare. God is glorified through redemption and I reap all the blessings.

5. IN EPHESIANS 1:13-14, WHAT BLESSING OF THE SPIRIT DO WE FIND?

*“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14*

SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE

A.B. Simpson writes, “The seal is the token of ownership; and so the Holy Ghost sets us apart, stamping us as the property of God, and marking us as no longer our own, but the purchased possession of Jesus Christ, bought by His blood, bound to live for His service and glory.”

6. WHAT THREE THINGS DOES THE SEAL DO?

- **Separates us:** If you are a Christian, I mean a real Christian, you have been sealed or marked by the Spirit of God. The baptism with the Spirit clearly puts something on us that separates us from this world. We are marked by God, we belong to Him and it should be quite obvious.
- **Cuts its impression in the wax:** “Again, the seal is the expression of reality. It cuts its impression in the wax and makes it real, tangible and enduring; and so the Holy Ghost makes the things that we have known, real, and turns into actual experience that which was before but theory. He makes truth real; He makes Christ real; He makes divine things facts in our consciousness and our blessed experience.” Reality is definitely the work of the Spirit. Many nominal Christians have their beliefs all together like little ducks in a row. Christianity is more than just beliefs. The coming of the Spirit upon us makes spiritual things a reality to us. From that point on your life is quite different, Christ is alive and very real to you and in you.
- **“Finally, the seal transfers the image and the Holy Ghost** imparts to our receptive hearts the very image of Jesus Christ, and leaves the stamp of His character upon our lives.

7. WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HAVE TO DO TO OUR HEARTS IN ORDER THAT THEY CAN BE SEALED?

Softened and Infused- You cannot, however, affix the seal to the hard and settled wax. It must be soft and melted; then the impression is easily made and becomes fixed and abiding; and so God has to soften our hearts before He can seal them. Oh, the blessedness of brokenness! The Holy Spirit is ever seeking to melt our rigidity into tenderness, so that He can impress upon us the stamp of His ownership and His image, and make us the representatives of Christ to all who see and know us.”

I love that, our hearts must be soft and melted. Is your heart soft and melted? That also is the work of the Spirit. His anointing softens us in preparation, He then infuses us with His life. Today, make room for the Holy Spirit. He will soften you, infuse Himself into you, and seal you for Himself.

8. WHAT ARE THE LAST BLESSINGS WE CAN FIND IN EPHESIANS 1:15-19?

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” Ephesians 1:15-19

- **Wisdom**
- **Revelation**
- **Eyes of your understanding enlightened**

Paul had a life changing experience on the Road to Damascus. His eyes were opened when Christ revealed Himself to Paul, it was something that carried Paul the rest of his life. What actually happened to Paul? I guess it can be described many ways, but one of the things that happened to Paul is that he got a sense of the reality of God, it could be said that the eyes of his heart were opened. The puritans spoke of having a spiritual “sense” of spiritual things. They often spoke of an experiential Christianity. Have you experienced Christ for yourself?

Jonathan Edwards writes, “Thus there is a difference between having an opinion, that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former that knows not how honey tastes; but a man cannot have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his

mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent."

9. WHAT IS OUR PART IN MAKING OUR FAITH ALIVE?

God is the one who makes your faith alive, but our part is simply this, *"Taste and see that the Lord is good."* Psalm 34:8

When Christ comes into your life there is an awakening of your soul. Your spiritual senses are energized, the spiritual world becomes alive to you, there is literally an awakening of your inner man. Your faith is made alive, and you begin to taste for yourself the reality of God. Honey is sweet but can never be fully explained what the taste is like. How do you know that honey is good? You have to have a taste for yourself.

"...and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which 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 principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:19-23

week three
SEATED IN HEAVENLY PLACES
EPHESIANS 2:5-10



1. WHILE WE WERE STILL DEAD IN OUR SINS WHAT DID THE LORD DO?

“...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” Ephesians 2:5-6

HE MADE US ALIVE

The Lord looks at things totally differently from the way we do. This generation seems to be fixated on improving people’s self esteem even to the point of denying the obvious; we are all deeply flawed and in need of regeneration and renewal. Regeneration is the beginning of our new life, like Jesus said, “Unless a man is born again he will never see the kingdom of God”. But we dare not stop at regeneration, daily renewal is imperative. In Revelations Jesus said, “Behold, I am making all things new”. So this act of continual renewal or transformation began at the new birth but it continues daily as we experience Christ making all things new in us. I love this about the Lord, there is no plateau’s or getting to a place that we can say we have arrived. His adventure of transformation is never ending.

2. HOW IS THIS REGENERATION AND RENEWAL CONNECTED TO PENTECOST?

Andrew Murray writes, “Man had fallen from a life in God into a life of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking and in pursuing the perishing enjoyments of the world. But on the day of Pentecost a new dispensation of God came forth. God’s part in it was the

working of the Holy Spirit and His gifts and graces upon the whole church. Man's part in it was the adoration of God in spirit and in truth. All this was to make way for the immediate and continual working of God in man. Man, baptized with the Holy Spirit, should renounce self and give up his entire soul, with all the faculties of his mind, to the disposal of God."

3. WHAT IS OUR PART IN THIS WORK?

So rather than improving our image of ourselves we actually have to die to ourselves. It is not improving us that we want, it is Christ revealing Himself to us, in us, and through us that we are after. How can I cooperate with this ultimate plan of God? It is by drawing near to God in worship and in His word, drinking in His goodness and love for me. The more He becomes real in me, the more He shines through me. This is awesome. This is where I am satisfied and God is glorified, I must decrease and He must increase.

4. AFTER BEING MADE ALIVE WHERE DOES HE SEAT US?

HE SEATS US IN HEAVENLY PLACES

The struggle many of us have in our 21st century world is seeing the relevance of heaven. Right now, this world is crying for our attention. How can one think of heaven when he has mortgages, taxes, doctor bills, etc.? That is the challenge, living in this world while we are seated in heavenly places.

5. WHAT PRIVILEGES COME WITH BEING SEATED IN HEAVENLY PLACES?

Jonathan Edwards saw it this way, "the privilege of being with Christ in heaven, where he sits on the right hand of God, in the glory of the King and God of angels, and of the whole universe, shining forth as the great light, the bright sun of that world of glory, there to dwell in the full, constant and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness, there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and spouse, there to have fellowship with him in the infinite pleasure and joy he has in the enjoyment of his Father, there to sit with him on his throne, and reign with him in the possession of all things, and partake with him in the joy and glory of his victory over his enemies, and the advancement of his in the world, and to join with him in joyful songs of praise, to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, forever and ever? Is not such a privilege worth the seeking after?"

6. HOW CAN YOU RIGHT NOW EXPERIENCE THE PLEASURES OF THE COMING KINGDOM?

Heaven is not just a far off place to be experienced in the sweet by and by. Heaven can be tasted now by the power of the Spirit. It is this experience, tasting the reality of the

coming kingdom, that strengthens us for the journey right now. So if the cares of this world are blocking the glorious light of the coming kingdom, look to Jesus. Draw near to Him in worship and you too can enjoy the pleasures of the coming kingdom.

7. WHY DID HE SEAT US IN HEAVENLY PLACES?

“In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:7

Pastor Parris writes, “I am always amazed at us human folk walking around the earth and never seeing or savoring Christ. With heads bent down we scuffle along drinking what this world dishes out. As a young child I loved to be outdoors but never “saw” the God who created it all. He was screaming but his voice fell to deaf ears. Thanks be unto God the day that I saw, I touched and felt his Love! But brother what pain and suffering I endured pre-Christ!

McClarens says, “God is Love, and therefore delights in imparting that which is His creatures’ life and blessedness. He, too, is capable of being touched and gladdened by the joy of expression. Creation is divine self-revelation, and we might say, with all reverence, that God acts as birds sing, and fountains leap, and stars shine.”

“God is like an artist that loves to show his works off to others and finds so much joy in doing so. We too become objects of his love- his artwork so to speak. His work of Grace is at the top of God’s work of art. While the deer leap, fishes jump and the turkeys gobble, the “Grace of God continually communicates and operates unspent” We throughout, our lives learn to lean into this grace to trust its fullness and witness it daily in its exhaustible abundance.”

- Pastor Parris Bailey

8. WHAT IS THE GREATEST WORK OF GRACE?

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

Augustine taught that this grace (his term – sovereign grace) had a profound effect on our soul. It was so sweet and so powerful that it changed the very desires of our heart. It was not only grace that covered us but grace that changed and satisfied our thirsty souls. This grace issues from God Himself and is infinite in nature.

“It is not because of anything in them, or that ever can be in them, that they are saved; but because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy, and grace of God.

Tarry a moment, then, at the well-head. Behold the pure river of water of life, as it proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb! What an abyss is the grace of God! Who can measure its breadth? Who can fathom its depth? Like all the rest of the divine attributes, it is infinite.” Charles Spurgeon

9. WHAT DOES THIS WORK OF GRACE DO IN OUR LIVES?

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “God is full of love, for “God is love.” God is full of goodness; the very name “God” is short for “good.” Unbounded goodness and love enter into the very essence of the Godhead. It is because “*his mercy endureth forever*” that men are not destroyed; because “*his compassions fail not*” that sinners are brought to Him and forgiven.” Falling into this bottomless ocean can be catastrophic to our old plans and way of life. The taste of His grace is our first taste of true authenticity that we have ever known. It attracts us, covers us, converts us, satisfies us, and sustains us. From our first encounter with the grace of God the attractions of this world seem pitiful because we see them for what they are. So go ahead and dive in, you might have a reluctance like hesitating on the edge of a cold swimming pool but once you get in you will never want to come out.

YOU ARE GOD’S WORK OF ART

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

This verse has a very interesting word in it dealing with God’s work of redemption in our lives. It is the word workmanship. Here is how Dick Mills defines this beautiful Bible word.

“poiema – From the verb poieo, “to make.” (Compare “poem” and “poetry.”) The word signifies that which is manufactured, a product, a design produced by an artisan. Poiema emphasizes God as the Master Designer, the universe as His creation (Rom. 1:20), and the redeemed believer as His new creation (Eph. 2:10). Before conversion our lives had no rhyme or reason. Conversion brought us balance, symmetry, and order. We are God’s poem, His work of art.”

I love that definition, God’s work of redemption in our lives brought us from a confused and disordered life into a spiritual life of balance and beauty. We have literally become God’s work of art. His masterpiece began in us the day we were born again and will be completed and revealed when we see Him in glory.

Art, like music, can transport us and effect us spiritually. It is the Lord who created us in His image who gives us artistic talent to communicate His glory. Open your heart up to Him today, allow His brushstrokes to add beauty and depth to your life. Look for Him in creation, listen for Him in the song, gaze upon Him in a beautiful work of art. After all that’s what we are, God’s work of art.

Pastor Frank Bailey

week four
THE HEAVENLY MAN
EPHESIANS 2:11-22



1. WHAT IS THE GREATEST THING THE BLOOD OF JESUS DID FOR US?

*“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**” Ephesians 2:11-13*

WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR

All of us were born in a state far off from the Lord. We lived a life controlled by the pursuit of natural and worldly desires. In these last days, the Lord has appeared to show His love to mankind by the pouring out of His blood on the cross. We have been brought near by the precious blood of Jesus. All of us had gone our own ways, all of us have lived a selfish, ungodly life, and because of that, the Father sent His only Son to represent us by His death on the cross. His darkest day became our brightest day. His blood was spilt as He was brutally beaten and nailed to a cross. Rejected by His people and crucified by the Romans, He had you in mind all along. After all, you are the reason He came. His love for you compelled Him to come. His love for you was displayed by His death, and today that same love is poured out on us by the Holy Spirit. It is His love that caused Him to come near. Today, we can come as near as we want, through the precious blood of Jesus.

2. WHO DID HE MAKE AS A RESULT?

*“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, **so as to create in Himself ONE NEW MAN from the two,** thus making peace, and that **He might reconcile them** both to God in one*

body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Ephesians 2:14-18

What a powerful concept, God has created one new man. This new man is the heavenly man, Jesus Christ. Before conversion, we were earthly, sensual. Our lives were ruled by our sensual desires. Our nature was carnal, there was nothing we could do about it. We could put on our masks, or at best, restrain our sinful behavior with human laws and human willpower. When Christ came, that all changed. We are new, not new on the outside but new on the inside. **We have become that heavenly man.**

“As to the meaning of the words, “to make in Himself of twain, one new man,” Expositors says: “The new creation and the new union have their ground and principle in Christ. What was contemplated, too, was not simply the making of one man where formerly there were two, but the making of one new man. The result was not that, though, the separation between them was removed, the Jew still remained Jew and the Gentile, still Gentile. It was something new, the old distinctions between Jew and Gentile being lost in a third order of ‘man,’ – the Christian man.” The word “*make*” is not *poieō*, “*to make*,” but *ktizō*, “*to create*.” The word “*new*” is *kainon*, not “*new*” in time but “*new*” in quality. The word “*man*” is not *anēr*, “*a male individual*,” but *anthrōpos*, the generic, racial term, speaking of an individual, here of the new creation made up of male and female, the mystical body of Christ.” Wuest Word Book

RECONCILE= The term “reconciliation” means to bring together parties who are estranged from each other.

4. WHAT IS THE REASON WHY JESUS IS THE RECONCILER?

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22

BRINGING US TOGETHER AS ONE

Jesus came to build His church. Why is it important? Why is it valuable to the Christian? Why is the church valuable to the secular world? Why is the church valuable to the Lord?

First of all the church is God’s temple or dwelling place on earth. In the Old Testament the Lord dwelt in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple in Jerusalem. This was the place where the manifest



presence of God was amongst His people. This is what made Israel special. Without the Lord in their midst they would be just like all of the other nations. In the New Testament the church is His dwelling place. He has chosen to make His presence known in the midst of His church. This is one of the blessings of being part of a New Testament Church. The Lord's presence is available to us when **we gather together.**

5. WHERE IS PEACE FOUND?

The secular world needs God. They are searching for Him in all the wrong ways, looking for peace and satisfaction but never finding it. The Bible clearly teaches that the rest our soul longs for is found only in the Presence of the Lord. *"In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever more."* Psalms 16:11

This presence is found in the local church. The church of Jesus Christ is where God "tabernacles" on earth and this is the place we find rest.

6. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO STAY CONNECTED?

IT IS VITAL IN BEARING FRUIT

In John 15:5, Jesus refers to us as the vine. *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me, you can do nothing."* This relationship describes just how dependent on the Lord we are. As we stay connected to Him, His Life flows into us. This life flow is directly related to our relationship with Christ and our relationship with His church. The life of God flows between us and through us through our relationships with God and His people. The church is vital to this organic and spiritual union. As we cultivate an intimate life with the Lord, and join together with others walking in this intimate lifestyle, we will experience the life flow of the vine. If we abide in Him and he in us we will bear much fruit.

The Lord also refers to His church as the body of Christ. This is another beautiful picture of His church and the life that flows amongst us.

7. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE CHURCH BEING ONE BODY?

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12

Each one of us is a dynamic part of the body of Christ. Each one of us share a special role, placed exactly in His church as He desires. As we fulfill that role and relate to others who are functioning members of His body, there is a powerful result. First, our needs are met. When we flow with other members of His church enjoying this relationship the gifts and ministries of the Spirit begin to function. The dynamics of the

body of Christ are not seen only in large corporate gatherings, but in small groups or casual relationships that we nurture and value. Out of these relationships the body ministers to itself. We are then placed in a position of giving and receiving ministry as Jesus ministers to us and through us in His body.

8. WHAT DID JESUS CALL HIS PEOPLE?

Jesus also referred to His people as the **CITY ON A HILL**... “*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*” Matthew 5:14

As we function as a healthy church, the world will begin to recognize the life of God working through His people. We live in a dark world. The non-Christian population is longing for something real. They have heard it all and seen it all. Our world is waiting to see real Christianity in action. Jesus told us the world would know the reality of God when they see Christians loving one another. This picture of a city on a hill is a portrayal of His Church, walking in revival, loving God, and loving one another. When that day comes, harvest is at hand.

9. WHAT DOES THE LORD DESCRIBE HIS CHURCH AS?

Finally, the Lord describes His church as the Bride of Christ. This is the greatest portrayal of the Glory of God of all. The Lord made a plan to save fallen man and glorify His name. He determined to become one of us and redeem fallen man from his sins. He said that all who would believe in Him and accept His sacrifice would become a son or a daughter of God. When this happens we are clothed in the righteous garments, the wedding garments of Christ. Our sins are forgiven, and we become a part of the Bride of Christ. A great celebration is about to begin. The singing and celebration has already started in heaven and is spilling over into the streets on earth. All who hear this sound of rejoicing and join in become part of the great wedding celebration. Christ is returning for His church.

Revelation 21:1-5, Now I saw a new heaven and new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

week five
THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST
EPHESIANS 3:1-8

1. WHAT WAS PAUL'S MESSAGE?

“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints (God’s consecrated people), this grace (favor, privilege) was granted and graciously entrusted: to proclaim to the Gentiles the unending (boundless, fathomless, incalculable, and exhaustless) riches of Christ (wealth which no human being could have searched out)... “ Ephesians 3:8 AMP

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

This verse is amazing to me. First, Paul calls himself the least of all Christians. Now remember, this is not just Paul but the inspired Word of God. How could arguably the greatest of all Christians be considered the worst? Paul persecuted the followers of Jesus. Paul was responsible for the death of the first Christian martyr, Steven. It doesn't get any lower than that. That's why Paul called himself the chief of sinners. Then, Paul was called to open up the gentile world to the gospel. He was called not only to do this with his missionary journeys, but also he was set apart to write most of the New Testament. Pretty amazing! Now this is where it gets really good. His message was a revelation of Jesus Himself, Paul called it the unsearchable riches of Christ. Beginning at his conversion on the Damascus Road, the Lord unveiled Himself to Paul for our sake. His message was the amazing, untraceable treasures of Christ.



2. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST?

Adam Clarke writes, “The unsearchable riches of Christ. The word “*exicniaz*”, *to trace out, from a step*, is exceedingly well chosen here: it refers to the footsteps of God, the plans he had formed, the dispensations which he had published, and the innumerable providences which he had combined, to prepare, mature, and bring to full effect and view his gracious designs in the salvation of a ruined world, by the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of his Son. There were in these schemes and providences such riches — such an abundance, such a variety, as could not be comprehended even by the naturally vast, and, through the Divine inspiration, unparalleledly capacious mind of the apostle.”

3. WHAT DID PAUL ENCOURAGE TIMOTHY TO DO CONCERNING THE RICHES OF CHRIST?

Once we are born again we begin to be drawn into Paul's, Christ centered world. Our hearts long for Christ who we meet in Paul's letters. In them we taste His love, we are dazed by His grace, overwhelmed by His glory, and captured by His sovereign plans. The

more we search, the more amazed we become. We are convicted of our sins, shocked by our apathy, and then challenged to draw near by the blood of Jesus. As we draw in closer, we hear Paul's words to his son in the faith Timothy, *"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands"*. Stir up His gift and you will be searching for the untraceable riches of Christ.

4. WHY DO THESE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST EVEN MATTER?

So, what if God has wealth beyond our imagination? Who cares if He owns the cattle of a thousand hills like David said? The reason it matters is this, these stored up treasures are stored up for us. He has reserved the wealth of His kingdom for His sons and daughters. It doesn't matter to some people; it only matters to sons and daughters. When Christ died for us, He purchased our inheritance, knowing what that inheritance is and knowing who it is for is priceless.

Charles Spurgeon writes, "There must have been a royal intention in the heart of Christ in sending out Paul to preach of His unsearchable riches, because every man must have a motive for what he does, and beyond all question, Jesus Christ has a motive. Did you ever hear of a man who employed a number of persons to go about to proclaim his riches, and call hundreds of people together, and thousands, as on this occasion, simply to tell them that so-and-so was very rich? Why, the crowds would say, "What is that to us?" But if at the conclusion, the messenger could say, "But all these riches he presents to you, and whoever among you shall desire to be made rich, can be enriched now by him." Ah! then you would say, "Now we see the sense of it. Now we perceive the gracious drift of it all." Now, my Lord Jesus Christ is very strong, but all that strength is pledged to help a poor weak sinner to enter into heaven."

5. WHO IS OUR INHERITANCE?

Paul understood the incredible inheritance we have received in Christ. He saw the value of the inheritance here in this world but especially the treasures of the life to come. In this life He has promised to supply our daily bread as well as to be with us in trouble. When others do without, He still provides for His sons and daughters. But that's not the unsearchable part. The Lord Himself is our inheritance, that's what it means to be an heir of God. God Himself is our inheritance in this world and in the one to come.

***"He Himself is the Treasure House,
and "from His fullness
have we all received,
grace upon grace".
(Interpreter's Bible)***

“I pray you too spend the rest of your life, digging around the riches of His grace and plummeting the depths of His love. We have been far too easily distracted and pleased with so many other things.”
- Pastor Parris Bailey

OUR INHERITANCE

” I will be their God. Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe thy spirit in it; swim an age, and thou shalt find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and thou shalt find no bottom. I will be their God. If this do not make thine eyes sparkle, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state. But thou wantest more than present delights-thou cravest something concerning which thou mayest exercise hope; and what more canst thou hope for than the fulfillment of this great promise, I will be their God? This is the masterpiece of all the promises; its enjoyment makes a heaven below, and will make a heaven above. Dwell in the light of thy Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love. Get out the marrow and fatness which this portion yields thee. Live up to thy privileges, and rejoice with unspeakable joy.”

Charles Spurgeon

6. WHO IS THIS BOUNDLESS OCEAN?

Actually, the Holy Spirit is this boundless ocean that Spurgeon is trying desperately to explain. Throughout the ages men and women of God have experienced the outpouring of His presence. The end result, they become preachers of the grace of God like Paul. Trying to track the untraceable caught up in a search that never ends. For me, it started in a simple conversation one night on the lakefront in New Orleans. Almost 40 years later I am still trying to comprehend what happened that night, still on my quest to proclaim the gospel of His grace to whomsoever will. Who knows the whys and the wherefores of the grace of God. All I know is that I have been captured by something bigger than me, someone with a plan far beyond anything I can begin to understand. Paul never thought in his wildest dreams that he would preach Christ to the gentiles, unthinkable. For me on the lakefront in 1973, I never dreamed in a million lifetimes that I would be a preacher. Now, along with countless others, I am tracking the untrackable and swimming in this bottomless ocean of God’s love.

week six
ROOTED IN LOVE
EPHESIANS 3:9-20



1. WHAT IS THE PHRASE ROOTED IN LOVE DESCRIBING?

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,” Ephesians 3:17

I love that phrase, rooted and grounded in love. This love is more than a feeling, this is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. This love is actually a person, the blessed Holy Spirit. The scriptures say that God is love. Just as Jesus is the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is the love of God. His love is life changing. In today’s verse, Paul is describing the vital life of a Christian. Just as Jesus spoke of abiding in the vine, Paul talks about letting our roots go deep down into the love of God. He is describing experiential Christianity, the kind that sustains us in this dangerous and difficult world.

2. DURING A STORM WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE ROOTED?

A.B. Simpson writes, “So the banyan tree grows. First its trunk and branches shoot up to heaven, and then the branches grow down into the ground and become rooted in the earth, and by and by there are a hundred branches interwoven and interlaced from the ground so that the storm and the winds cannot disturb it, and even the simoon (dry wind storm) of the Indian Ocean cannot tear it up. It is rooted and bound together by hundreds of interlacing roots and branches. And so when God saves a soul He plants one branch; but when He comes to fill and sanctify and help in your difficulties, each is another branch; and thus your life becomes rooted and bound to God by a hundred fibers, and all the power of hell cannot break that fellowship or separate you from His love.”

3. HOW EXACTLY CAN I BE ROOTED IN THE LOVE OF GOD?

Daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit is what enables this “root system” to be developed in our lives. For me, praying with my heavenly language and worship is how I can become “rooted”. As I worship Him, or pray in the Spirit, I become aware of the presence of God. This manifest presence is the anointing. This is actually the atmosphere we were intended to live in which we lost at the fall of man. As this anointing increases in us and upon us, our roots are going down deep into the Lord. This is where perseverance, patience, and endurance are developed in our lives. We are becoming like the banyan tree that Simpson spoke of, the storms of life may blow but we are rooted deep into the love of God.

“How is it with your root system? Are you rooted deeply into the love of God? Before the storms hit is the time to start growing. Today would be a great day to start, bask in His love, acknowledge and worship Him. As you drink in the rays of His presence, your roots will begin to go deep down into Him.” - Pastor Frank Bailey

4. ARE WE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE DEPTH OF GOD’S LOVE?

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, “When revival hit us in 1994, I heard the Lord speaking to me about His Love. He showed me that I didn’t understand, nor did I comprehend the love of God. Ephesians 3:18 in The Message says *“you will be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.”*

We can begin to experience His love here and now. It takes an effort on our part of course, a choosing so to speak or a pushing away from the shore. People, families, friendships, and yes even our spouses are but shadows, He is the sun. When Christ becomes un-bosomed within us we learn not to place such a high emphasis on our earthly relationships. While they give us pleasure, they will not sustain nor satisfy.

5. HOW DOES ONE DESCRIBE THE DIMENSIONS OF HIS LOVE?

“I pray that you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Ephesians 3:18-20

Take the breadth . . . length . . . depth . . . height?

- The “**breadth**” implies Christ’s world-wide love, embracing all men:
- The “**length**,” it’s being extended through all ages (Eph 3:21);
- The “**depth**,” its profound wisdom which no creature can fathom (Ro 11:33);
- The “**height**,” it’s being beyond the reach of any foe to deprive us (Eph 4:8) (BENGEL).

“The dimensions of redeeming love are admirable. By enumerating these dimensions, the apostle designs to signify the exceeding greatness of the love of Christ, the unsearchable riches of his love, which is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea, Job xi. 8, 9. Being “filled even unto all the fullness of God” (this is the grand goal), is “filled according to your capacity, with the divine wisdom, knowledge, and love; “even as God is full,” and as Christ who dwells in your hearts, for “all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily” (Col 2:9). Matthew Henry

6. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE BECOME TO KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD?

“...and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:19

This love of God makes the things we had no interest in, the passion of our lives. What kinds of things? Things like the Bible, church meetings, worship music, and especially talking about Jesus Christ. **He becomes the center of our world when we yield to His grace and love.** We should strive to live in the incorruptible, unbroken love of Jesus as the Father desires of us. If we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, the pure love of God will enter and we shall find that His grace is exceedingly abundant.

What an amazing truth, this love not only draws us, it actually converts us and comes to live inside of us. This love that captured our heart begins to fill our whole being. Suddenly, we are consumed with an incredible love for God. Not only do we love God, we begin to experience a supernatural love for people. Those who once aggravated you now have a special place of affection in your heart. This is the sure litmus test for conversion. This is how John described it:

“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.” 1 John 3:14

7. HOW CAN WE CONTINUE IN THIS LOVE?

It is really quite simple, as we abide in Christ this love abides in us. *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.” John 15:9*

*“be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God’s people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God’s presence in your lives, **completely filled and flooded with God Himself.**” Ephesians 3:18-19 AMP*

8. WHAT DOES THE LORD DO IN OUR LIVES WHEN WE BECOME FILLED WITH HIS FULLNESS AND LOVE?

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” Ephesians. 3:20

“God is able to do for us and answer our prayers according to the efficiency, richness, and power of the working of the Spirit in our lives. His love overshadows us and begins to dictate every move we make in our lives. It is when we lose sight of His love, that we begin to see the world through our own glasses. I pray he will color your world!” - Pastor Parris Bailey

You see God goes beyond our thinking and our asking. He likes to transcend all powers of the mind. I shall never ask too much, I have never thought too much, till I have asked beyond God’s ability till I have thought beyond God’s ability, which of course is impossible. But yet Paul challenges us to enlarge our prayer life to take on petitions beyond our human understanding.

John Gill said “It’s the Incomparable power of God to grant petitions...God’s ability to answer prayer transcends not only our spoken petitions but far surpasses even such thoughts as are too big for words, and too deep for utterance... For we know little of his promises, and so weak is our faith in them, that we ask not. He gives far more than the boldest prayer can express.”

***“When is the last time you stretched out your dreams and visions and cried to even greater depths and greater heights, until we say, “thou hast done exceedingly above all that we ask.”
- Pastor Parris Bailey***

9. WHAT DID PAUL CALL THAT POWER?

Paul called it super abundant grace, it's the power that He implanted into His people. This power that works in us is the measure and means of the limitless ability of God to do for us and in us far more than we ask or receive. It's time to open up the gates and let the King of Glory come in! (PB)

10. HOW DO WE TAP INTO THIS POWER?

Well by being filled with the fullness of God to overflow capacity. And taking Paul's prayer to try to understand the love of God which surpasses knowledge. Reach out to grasp the heights, plunge into the depths and live in its breath.

The Expository Bible said, "Paul saw the plentitude of God's gifts outreaching him. God's giving surpasses immeasurably our thoughts and asking, but there must be the asking and thinking for it to surpass. He puts always more into our hand and better things than we expected when the expectant hand is reached out to him. Man's desire will never overtake God's bounty."

Pastor Frank writes, "God has given His fullness to you for you to experience His power. One of the great places He reveals this power is in the place of prayer. As you tap into God, praying in the Spirit, don't be surprised at the demonstration of His power."

11. WHAT DOES EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY MEAN?

"Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us." Ephesians 3:20 AMP

***huperekperissou*=The exhaustless, over and above, more than necessary God!**

week seven
EPHESIANS 4
THE RHYTHM OF THE SPIRIT

1. WHAT IS THE GREATEST HONOR AND GREATEST HAPPINESS A MAN CAN ACHIEVE IN THIS LIFE?

*“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and **through all and in all.**” Ephesians 4:4-6*

Is it to climb to the highest heights in academic achievements, or to climb the mountain of ambition and gain in the business world, or to hear the accolades of thousands because of your athletic accomplishments and trophies? No, the greatest honor and highest joy available to man, in this life and in the life to come, can be found in his connection to the Lord and His church by being filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

To be “pervaded” by God, we would say today permeated, is the greatest attainment in this life. I like the word marinated. When you are pervaded, permeated, or marinated by God Himself, you will find your highest honor and deepest happiness.



2. WHERE CAN WE BE “MARINATED” BY GOD HIMSELF?

Why, it is in His church of course, this is the place where the Lord has chosen to dwell and to reveal His Glory, and this is the place you will discover your purpose in life. Have you ever experienced that corporate anointing that Paul describes in this verse? To experience the tangible presence of God in a gathering of believers is the closest parallel to heaven we can experience in this life. In that place of corporate saturation, many times, the Lord speaks to us. This is the place of total contentment and the place of supernatural guidance.

3. HOW CAN WE AS BELIEVERS BE UNIFIED?

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:1-6

Everyone knows there is supposed to be unity in the church but, many times, that is far from true. Where does unity come from? How can we attain to that atmosphere that we all long for? Obviously, it takes more than just knowing that we need unity, there has to be a spiritual effect in us corporately, a common participation in order for us to experience this spiritual oneness. Charles Hodge writes, “ in Scripture it is said that the Spirit dwells in believers, that Christ dwells in them, and that God dwells in them. And, therefore, also our Lord prays for his people, *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”* **Mr. Hodge calls this** “the sacred rhythm” of the trinity.

As we as individuals are filled with God, we are joined together with this spiritual rhythm with the Father and the Son. We find ourselves flowing not only with the Lord, but also with the body of Christ. He has made us drink together of His Spirit, and out of this drinking we are drawn into this heavenly dance. Can you feel the heavenly rhythm? Join into this heavenly dance today, as you do, you will find yourself being drawn out of the world and into a brand-new way of life.

4. WHAT GIFTS OF ALL GIFTS DID GOD GIVE TO MEN?

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says, “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” Ephesians 4:7-8

This immediately reminds us of what Jesus said to the woman at the well, “If you knew who I was and if you knew the gift of God you would ask of Me and I would give you living water. John told us that this river of living water would come when Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. In today’s verse Paul is quoting from David’s Psalm about the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. When He took His place at the Father’s right hand He began to give the greatest gift imaginable, the gift of the Spirit of God. When man receives that gift, the gifts of the Spirit are also given and begin to be poured out.

“No sooner is Christ inaugurated in his throne, but he scatters his coin, and gives gifts. He gives gifts, or the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost” - Isaac Ambrose

WOW – WOW – WOW !!! God Himself is this gift, as Ambrose said, the gift of gifts. We who have received this gift have the precious Spirit of the Lord living inside of us. For those who have never received this gift, it is available right now. Jesus is exalted to the Father’s right hand and is giving out this gift of gifts to whosoever will. Today just may be your day to receive the gift of your lifetime, the gift of God Himself.

5. WHAT ADDITIONAL GIFTS DID GOD GIVE TO MAN TO HELP KEEP US UNIFIED?

“ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:12-16

6. HOW DO WE GROW UP IN ALL THINGS?

David gave us some good insight about spiritual growth in *Psalm 92:13*, “*Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.*” One of the great keys to putting yourself in a place where spiritual growth is sure is found in this verse. What is the key? Get planted! Get planted where? Get planted in the house of God. The local church is intended by God to provide the proper atmosphere and ingredients for spiritual growth to result. Here we find the good teaching from God’s word that provides the food we need to grow strong in The Lord. Here we find the awesome presence of The Lord, this is like the showers of blessing that bring the rain upon the seeds causing them to grow. We also find the light of His presence as we walk in the light in fellowship with the body of Christ. Light, food, rain; we have all we need. The only way we cannot grow is by avoiding His church on purpose.

7. HOW DO WE BECOME ONE IN THE SPIRIT?

In Ephesians 2, we talked about how the Lord takes the broken pieces, the things that were divided and he brought peace, creating in Himself **ONE NEW MAN FROM THE TWO.**

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross,...Ephesians 2:14-18



But as far as our part in this, the Bible exhorts us to: *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God,*

*because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you **PUT OFF**, concerning your former conduct, **THE OLD MAN** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you **PUT ON THE NEW MAN** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:17-24*

8. HOW DO WE NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

“Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:25-32

Being sensitive, is a positive trait not a negative one. The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit is sensitive. It is a good thing if coarse jesting, profanity, or harsh words hurt your feelings, they hurt the Holy Spirit’s feelings. A few years ago, R.T. Kendall spoke in our church about the sensitivity of the Spirit. He emphasized just how easily the Spirit is offended, or as Paul said, grieved. Since that teaching was given, I have heard several people from the church being cautious of their words concerned about the possibility of grieving the Holy Spirit.

9. HOW DO WE WELCOME THE HOLY SPIRIT INTO OUR LIVES?

Charles Spurgeon writes, “O child of God, thou hast no life within thee apart from the life which God gives thee through His Spirit! Then let us not grieve Him or provoke Him to anger by our sin. Let us not quench Him in one of His faintest motions in our soul; let us foster every suggestion and be ready to obey every prompting. If the Holy Spirit be indeed so mighty, let us attempt nothing without Him; let us begin no project, and carry on no enterprise, and conclude no transaction, without imploring His blessing. Let us do Him the due homage of feeling our entire weakness apart from Him, and then depending alone upon Him, having this for our prayer, “Open Thou my heart and my whole being to Thine incoming, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit when I shall have received that Spirit in my inward parts.”

10. WHAT SHOULD WE BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT?

If we really need the Holy Spirit to help us in all of our activities, if we really are totally dependent upon Him in all we do, we should be especially cautious about the possibility

of grieving Him. Being insensitive with our words, our actions and thoughts can easily offend God. Don't get me wrong, I am not talking about becoming unsaved because of grieving the Spirit: I'm just saying you may have to 'go it alone' without His help.

week eight
EPHESIANS 5
REDEEMING THE TIME



1. WHAT ARE THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS OF DARKNESS, AND HOW SHALL WE LIVE INSTEAD?

“Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Therefore, do not be partakers with them. Walk in Light, for you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore, He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” Ephesians 5:1-14

“Wake up from your sleep, climb out of your coffins; Christ will show you the light!”
Ephesians 5:14 (The Message)

Obviously, the Apostle Paul is talking about a state of what he called spiritual slumber. Wake up! Our world is more dangerous than you can imagine. In that place of spiritual slumber, we easily fall into laziness and compromise. Only those wide awake in Christ

can be prepared for the days we live in. Awake oh sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. ***CLIMB OUT OF YOUR COFFINS! Don't live like you have lived in the past. There is a better way!***

2. HOW DO WE REDEEM THE TIMES WE HAVE WASTED?

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:15-16

It is important for us to be spiritually alert. I will never forget when I heard about revival in August of 1994. Revival was something that I had longed for throughout my Christian experience. Revival had broken out in various places around the world months and even several years earlier and there I was, clueless. I was not tuned in to what the Lord was doing, it was as if my spiritual senses were dull. The time of revival had come and it was passing me by. There are special seasons of God's outpourings that come from time to time. Not everyone recognizes these seasons, as a result many people miss out. It could be because of wrong teaching or just spiritual apathy, nevertheless, when God begins to move it is important to be ready. These seasons are too rare and precious to miss them.

circumspectly = **carefully, exactly, strictly, distinctly. (Strong's)**

3. WHAT DOES REDEEMING THE TIME LITERALLY MEAN?

A.B. Simpson pastored during one of these seasons in the early 1900's. Listen to His thoughts on redeeming the time. “Two little words are found in the Greek version here. They are translated ***ton kairon***, in the Revised Version, “Buying up yourselves the opportunity.” The two words, ***ton kairon*** mean, literally, “the opportunity”. They do not refer to time in general, but to a special point of time, a juncture, a crisis, a moment full of possibilities quickly passing by, which we must seize and make the best of before it has passed away. It is estimated that there are not many such moments of opportunity, because the days are evil. Like a barren desert, in which, here and there you can find a flower, pluck it while you can; like a business opportunity that comes only a few times in a life-time, buy it while you have a chance. Be spiritually alert; be not unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is. “*Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, buying up for yourselves the opportunity.*”

4. WHAT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST REASONS WHY PEOPLE MISS SPECIAL SEASONS OF GOD IN THEIR LIVES?

I remember a Friday night revival service in 1995, Dick Mills was visiting our church. He came into the service and you could see he had his spiritual antennas up. Revival was in the air and he was not about to miss it. He was looking for revival, he was redeeming the time. In that same season we had several other guest ministers who actually despised what was going on in our church, they had come with their own ministry agenda. They couldn't afford to redeem the time, ***they had other plans***. Do you have “other plans” or

are you looking for God. One of the greatest reasons for people to miss these special seasons is because they have other plans. They are just too busy to experience a God season in their life.

“All of us live in a world screaming for our time. The Lord is different, He is quietly waiting for us to turn our attention to Him and to see the value of the time He has given to us. Seeing the value of something is the key to wise stewardship, especially of our time. We give ourselves to the things we perceive as important. How can I redeem the time and why would I want to? One glimpse of Him and His greatness will answer all of those questions. When you “see” Christ for yourself, your value system is radically upended, what you deem as important will change. When that happens, you will immediately see the value of one of the Lord’s greatest gifts to you, your time. In light of what Paul said about living in the evil day, we have to redeem the time, frankly, we don’t know how much of it we have.”
- Pastor Frank Bailey

5. HOW CAN WE BEST USE OUR TIME?

*“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is **dissipation**; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:18-20*

Here Paul is describing a supernatural lifestyle that can begin to make the very best use of our time and in some ways begin to buy back lost time. He said we could do this by staying filled with the Spirit. In this passage the word Paul uses, **“dissipation”**, literally means **“to waste your time”**. He is saying we can buy time back by staying full of God.

6. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO NOT WASTING YOUR TIME (DISSIPATION), AND BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT ON A CONTINUAL BASIS?

Now just think about the comparison of the consequences of spiritual drunkenness to being drunk on alcohol. If you drink too much booze you do stupid things such as getting into fights, car wrecks, profanity, and possible sexual compromise. Excessive drinking can lead to other problems such as losing your job, your marriage, or loss of friends. Ultimately excessive drinking will affect you physically; all sorts of disease is connected to alcohol consumption.

Now what about spiritual drinking, what are those consequences? The first is extreme joy that drives depression out of our lives. You keep drinking new wine and you begin to be overcome by God’s love, this tends to spill over into our other relationships. Our marriage improves, our friends are better friends, and our job performance improves.

Finally, spiritual drink connects us to the power of God. We live a more moral life, we have power in our testimony, and we can actually be used by God to bring miracles into other's lives. So, what am I going to do, I think I'll have another drink.

7. BEFORE LONG WHAT WILL YOU BE SINGING?

You will be singing the new song. David was all about the new song. He had tasted the sweetness of the other world and earthly songs would never do for David. This all started for him after that day of days when the prophet Samuel poured the oil upon David. From that very day the Spirit of God continued to "rush upon" David. He was singing the songs of heaven.

8. WHAT DOES GOD PRODUCE THROUGH THE SONG BEING SUNG THROUGH OUR LIVES?

Jonathan Edwards writes, "The melody of the heart with which they sing is new. Before they knew but how-to sing praise to God: they were unlearned; they could make no melody in God's ear; they had no skill in divine music; they had not learned the tune, nor could they sound one harmonious note. Their hearts were like an instrument that is unstrung and broken, wholly out of tune. The notes were most jarring and discordant. If they pretended to sing praise to God, it was howling and not singing in God's ears. But now God has put their hearts in tune. Now there is some inward harmony. Now there is divine harmony that is melodious unto God."

9. WHAT HAPPENS TO US ONCE WE HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED BY HIS GRACE?

Edwards is pointing out the dramatic, total change in the nature of someone who is born again. We couldn't praise God before, there was no praise in our hearts. He describes this new spiritual experience as a spiritual harmony. Before Christ, we were in discord with Him, His church, and His creation. Once we have been transformed by His grace, we begin to have harmony and joy in our hearts. This joy cannot and must not be contained, it flows out of us in a beautiful new heavenly song. It becomes the song and rhythm of our lives.

Then we begin to see it, we have lived our lives discordant, we lived out of step with the Lord and His kingdom plans. We were ignorant of His purposes. His church was irrelevant to us. The renewal of the Spirit changes all of that. We are now in harmony with our God. We take great delight in His plans and purposes for our lives. His church becomes our very life. Instead of walking lock step with the world, singing their songs, our hearts are filled with the songs of heaven. Our sins have been washed away, His love has been displayed for us at the cross, His Spirit is being poured upon is excessive measures. How can we stay silent? We have to sing this new song.

10. HOW MANY TIMES ARE WE TO BE FILLED?

BE BEING FILLED

Watchman Nee writes, “Plerousthe, ‘be being filled’, is the expression here used in relation to the Holy Spirit. “Allow yourselves to be continually made full.” This describes not a crisis as at Pentecost but a condition we are to enjoy all the time. And it is not a matter of spiritual gifts and manifestations outwardly but of the personal presence and activity of the Holy Spirit of God within our spirits—the oil that guarantees the lamp shall burn on undimmed, long after the midnight hour if need be. Moreover, it is not alone a private, individual thing. It is something we share with other Christians. Paul speaks of making melody together. Some of us may well find it easier to sing solos than to keep in time and harmony in a choir or even in a duet! Yet the fullness of the Spirit is given to us with this very object, that we shall sing together a new song before the throne.”

“Be filled” is plural and thus applies to the body of Christ collectively. God’s people collectively are to “be so ‘full of God’ by his Spirit that our worship and our homes give full evidence of the Spirit’s presence: by song, praise, and thanksgiving that simultaneously praise and adore God and teach the community”.

The Spirit filled life is closely connected to our Christian community. It is veritably impossible to stay full of the Spirit if you are not around Spirit filled believers. I am not talking about people who say they believe in being Spirit filled, I am talking about actually drinking of His Spirit corporately. *Who you fellowship with will determine your ability to stay full of the Spirit.*

11. HOW CAN “BE FILLED” BE TRANSLATED?

“It (the phrase *be filled*) is passive and thus could be translated, ***“Let the Spirit fill you”*** (NEB). There should be such an openness and obedience to the Holy Spirit that nothing hinders him from filling us.” This is critical. Yielding, learning to be in a receiving mode, is key to receiving more of His presence. Many get stuck in a doing mode. Humility stays in a receiving state, I need Him in my life

DRINKING IS STEPPING INTO THE RECEIVING MODE

“It is a present tense and thus carries the idea of an ongoing action. As our physical bodies need the constant renewal that sleep brings, so the body of Christ needs the constant renewal that the Spirit makes possible.”

This passage could be translated ‘*be being filled*’. Be baptized or immersed into the Spirit is a continual thing. Paul is calling us to a lifestyle of drinking in the new wine on a continual basis.

week nine
BE STRONG IN THE LORD
EPHESIANS 6



1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD?

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Ephesians 6:10

Wuest writes, **“Be strong”** is *endunamoō*, **“to make strong, to endue with strength.”** The idea is, “to clothe oneself with strength as one puts on a garment.” Here the verb is in the passive voice, “be continually strengthened.” The qualifying phrase, “in the Lord,” defines the strengthening as Christian strengthening, such as can take effect only in union with the Lord (Expositors). The rendering, “be strong,” could encourage one to self-effort at being strong, whereas the translation “be strengthened,” causes the saint to depend on the Lord for the supply of that strength. **“Power” is kratos, “relative or manifested power,” and “might” is ischuos, “power as an enduement.”** The idea is, “in the active efficacy of the might that is inherent in Him.”

Translation: *“Finally, be constantly strengthened in the Lord and in the active efficacy of the might that is inherent in Him.” Ephesians 6:10 Wuest Translation*

2. WHAT IS THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN POWER AND NO POWER CONCERNING MIRACLES TODAY?

I love what Wuest said about being clothed with supernatural strength as one puts on a garment. The power of God is real and is closely associated with the anointing. Jesus Himself told His followers in Luke 24:49 that they would be “clothed” with power from on high. He was referring to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit which the disciples received just ten days after that promise was given. After the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to move in the power of God. Signs, wonders, and miracles; the display of the power of God, became a very normal part of the Christian experience. So should it be today. What is the missing link? The missing link is failure to be clothed with His

Spirit. We must follow Paul's admonition, "*Be strong in The Lord and in the power of His might*"... Let's press on to know the Lord. Maybe, just maybe, there is more of God available for each of us than we have ever known.

3. WHAT IS THE KEY TO STAYING FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF DARKNESS?

Ephesians 6:10 in the Amplified Bible says, "*In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [be empowered through your union with Him]; draw your strength from Him [that strength which His boundless might provides].*"

Whether we like it or even realize it, we live in hostile territory. Christ has defeated His enemies at the cross but there are still hostile forces entrenched in this world trying to hold onto what they consider as their property. The church has been commissioned to enforce the victory of Christ at the cross. We have been given authority in this world through the name of Jesus. That authority is enforced by the power of the Holy Spirit whom He gives to whosoever will drink of the water of life. The key to staying free from the influence of darkness and actually being used to drive out the enemy's forces is to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit. This phrase is critical, "be strong in the Lord". This is more than just pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, it is ever being filled with the Spirit of God.

4. DOES THIS MEAN WE CULTIVATE OUR OWN STRENGTH?

A.B. Simpson writes, "The very first thing in this battle scene is the command "*Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power*" (Ephesians 6:10). The original is much more emphatic. Translated by Rotherham it reads, "*Be getting empowered in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.*" That does not mean that you are to cultivate your own strength, but you are to discount it altogether, and take the power of God himself at the very outset of the conflict."

This strength was described by Paul as "armor-like". As we put on Christ by being baptized in the Spirit, we are putting on the armor of God.

5. WHAT PART DO WE PLAY IN PUTTING ON THAT ARMOR?

There are obviously dark forces at work behind the scenes of our world which is apparently spinning out of control. Drug addiction, immorality at epidemic levels, unchecked crime rates, and political leaders manipulating our society deeper into the mire. The solution to our dilemma, as Paul said, is not carnal but spiritual. The weapons of our warfare are not natural talents or brilliant plans of reclaiming the glory days long passed by. Our weapons, "or our armor" is spelled out by Paul as Christ Himself. Putting on Christ is our only defense as well as our only effective weapon in this cosmic battle. In this verse Paul brings the passage to a striking conclusion, **we put on Christ by praying in the Spirit.**

Simpson continues concerning that armor, “We have a part to do in putting on this armor. The Greek word is, “take up” the complete armor of God, and all through the vivid figurative language the command is in the active and imperative form. *“With the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all of this, take up the shield of faith” (Ephesians 6:14-16a)* We are to be active in this war, not in fighting, but in covering ourselves with Christ by his divine provision for strength and victory.”

6. HOW DO WE PUT ON CHRIST?

We do this by immersing ourselves in Him. This means praying extended times in the Spirit, putting on the worship music to create that atmosphere of heaven, and saturate yourself in the Word of God. As you lose yourself in Christ, you become covered with Him. He becomes an impenetrable shield of protection around us. This is not only for defensive purposes, but we are also covered with His shield as we advance in battle. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

7. HOW DO WE BREAK THE YOKE OF OPPRESSION?

“Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God’s consecrated people).”
Ephesians 6:18 AMP

Prayer is more powerful than any of us can imagine. Prayer is only as limited as God is which means it is unlimited. All of God’s power and His wisdom are available to His sons and daughters who call upon His name. Paul taught us about the importance of prayer, specifically praying in the Spirit, when we are dealing with the powers of darkness. Isaiah 10:27 says that the yoke of oppression is broken by the anointing. The limited power of the enemy is no match to the unlimited power of God.

8. WHEN DOES BREAKTHROUGH IN PRAYER USUALLY HAPPEN?

A.B. Simpson writes, “The artillery of prayer is important. “And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints and pray also for me”. This brings into play all the armor already described, and best of all, brings God into the action and covers us with His presence and almighty power. It will be noticed that the moment He gets us to pray, the devil disappears from the scene. The battle seems to be over, and we even stop praying about ourselves and our conflict. ***But the whole scene ends in prayer for others, and a high and holy unselfishness that loses itself in the cause of God and the needs of others.*** This is literally true. Satan runs away from a saint upon his knees; and when we become occupied with God in prayer, we are lifted to a sphere where the dragon cannot

reach us. This is not so much the act of occasional prayer under some emergency, but it is the habit of prayer that is here described, **a life encased in prayer**, the spirit armored in God's overshadowing presence, so that it is impenetrable and unapproachable by the devil's wiles or wicked assaults."

"So if you are facing circumstances way beyond your control, pray in the Spirit. When you do, The Lord Himself will come on the scene. You may not see Him but your enemy will and he will certainly run for cover."
- Pastor Frank Bailey

9. WHEN ARE WE TO PRAY IN THE SPIRIT?

*"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, **praying at all times in the Spirit**, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints." Ephesians 6:16-18*

Praying in the Spirit is the source of our power as Christians. Being filled with the Spirit, or walking in the Spirit, is not something that happens in moments of crisis or only special seasons of spiritual revival, it is our normal way of life as Christians. This is where we are strengthened for every aspect of our lives. That is where we are infused with moral courage and strength, power for ministry, grace to live in peace, and the supernatural ability to walk in love. Without this spiritual dynamic in our lives we are left to our own resources to "try" to be Christians.

10. WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WANT TO DO IN OUR LIVES?

Andrew Murray writes, "The Holy Spirit does not come to us just at times when we think we need Him or at times when we think we need His help. The Spirit comes to us as our lifelong companion. He wants to view us as His possession, completely and at all times. Many Christians do not understand this truth. They desire that the Spirit of God help and teach them, but they do not grasp that **He wants to live within them continually and have full possession of their lives.** Once we understand this, we will realize that it is possible to live while we continually pray through the Spirit. By faith, we will have the certainty that the Spirit will lead us to a prayerful attitude and make us aware of the presence of God, so that our prayer will be an exercise in our fellowship with God and His great love. As long as we limit the working of the Holy Spirit to certain times like Pentecost, it will remain an unsolved riddle to us."

11. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT WAYS WE CAN PRAY IN THE SPIRIT?

Praying in the Spirit can take on different forms. We can pray in the Spirit in our natural language, in praying scripture, and also praying in our heavenly language. Praying in the Spirit acknowledges our need for God in every area of our lives. We especially need His help when it comes to prayer. Pray in the Spirit, this is where we find God's help in all our weaknesses.

12. HOW DOES THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS END?

“Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”
Ephesians 6:23-24