



True Jesus Church

Galatians to Colossians



B I B L E S T U D Y G U I D E

Galatians to Colossians

TRUE JESUS CHURCH

Department of Literary Ministry

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Suggestions for Bible Study

Read Carefully

Observation is the most basic step in Bible study. Misinterpretation is often the result of careless reading. Only when we know what the passage says can we interpret what it means. Before each lesson, read the passage closely. Read it a few times until you become familiar with it. Observe words, phrases, paragraph structure, relationships, emphases, as well as anything that seems unusual. In doing so, you will discover things that you could never have if you read it casually.

Use A Pencil

Keep your pen or pencil busy by recording your observations and thoughts as you go through the passage. Mark key words and phrases. Take note of the relationship between words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Jotting your observations down on paper helps you focus your mind on the Bible text and leaves a much deeper impression on your mind. Your notes will also become valuable reference material the next time you come back to the passage.

Study with Prayer

“No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1Cor 2:11). The guidance of the Holy Spirit is key to understanding and being inspired by God’s word. Pray everyday and ask God to reveal to you the truth in His words. Whenever you come across a difficult passage, rely on the Holy Spirit by putting it in your prayer. Through your life of prayer, God will open your inner eyes to know His will and give you the strength to put it into practice.

Let the Word Speak to You

Bible study is not an intellectual exercise. Its aim is to change the reader in his thoughts, behavior, and lifestyle to conform to God’s will. The final goal of every Bible study is to apply God’s word in our lives. God reveals His will to the humble. So always approach the Bible with an attitude to be taught and corrected. When you are willing to let God’s word be a mirror to reflect your shortcomings and are determined to carry out His command, your Bible study will have achieved its intended purpose.

Using This Guide

Hands On Approach

This guide is not meant to be your coffee-table reading. Use it as a tool to make your study or discussion more effective. Make use of the spaces in the lessons to record your thoughts and observations.

Outline

One of the exercises under the section “observation” is to record an outline of the passage. Spend time to work on this important exercise because it helps you get the big picture of the entire passage as well as see the relationship between the parts. It also trains you to read the passage carefully and thoughtfully. Try to write the outline without copying the headings from your Bible. Each entry in the outline should accurately reflect the main idea of the paragraph.

Key Words

Key words are words that give meaning to the text or are related to the main idea. Key words are often repeated to mark emphasis. Key words tell you about who, what, when, where, why, or how. Since there are no right or wrong key words, your list may be different from the one provided at the end of the book.

Length of Lesson

Although the lessons are also designed for group Bible study, sometimes a lesson may be too long for a study session. If this happens, the Bible study leader who began the lesson should inform the next leader of where the passage was left off and the discussion results from the first study.

Thoughts on Questions

The end of this book contains suggested answers that serve as pointers when you need help. Since many of the questions do not have standard answers, use the answers provided only as reference. With these thoughts on questions as a starting point, you should be able to come up with more complete answers on your own.

Preparing for Group Bible Studies

Before leading a group Bible study, you should go through the lesson in advance to get a good understanding of the material. Then select questions based on the amount of time you have for discussion and the group’s size, makeup, level of biblical knowledge, etc. Try to also

design additional application questions that you think would suit the particular needs of the group.

The Inductive Method

The inductive approach is an effective way to study the Bible. It follows 3 basic steps: observation, interpretation, and application.

- 👁 **Observation**—*What did God say? How did He say it?* This type of questions helps you look at the Bible passage carefully and equips you for a sound interpretation.
- 🔑 **Interpretation**—*What does it mean?* When answering this type of questions, let the Bible interpret itself whenever possible. Look at the immediate context (the surrounding verses) as well as the broader context (the surrounding chapters and the whole Bible) to derive at the intended meaning. Also ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart to know the spiritual things that God wants to convey to you.
- 👣 **Application**—*How can I put this into practice?* Application questions encourage you to think about what God is teaching you personally through your study. What are His commands? What shortcomings in you is He pointing out? What message of encouragement does He have for you today? It is in examining your relationship with God and acting out God’s word that the words of the Bible can truly come to life.

Because the order of the questions in this guide generally follows the order of the Bible text, we did not group the questions according to the 3 steps mentioned above. Instead, we have used symbols to identify the type of question. By helping you become acquainted with these 3 basic types of questions, we hope that you will acquire the ability to develop meaningful questions for future personal studies as well as group discussions.

Footnotes

Two numbers follow each quote, e.g. (4/134). The number before the slash refers to the reference source listed at the end of this book. The second number indicates the page where the quote is located in the reference source.



Map A Geography in the time of the early church

Author

The apostle Paul (1:1; 5:2).

Recipient

Paul identifies his recipients as “the churches of Galatia” (1:2). The traditional view holds that Paul was writing to the churches in central and north Galatia, which Paul probably visited during his second missionary journey. However, most expositors today believe that the epistle was addressed to the churches in the southern part of Galatia, which Paul evangelized during his first missionary trip with Barnabas. These would include churches in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

Date

The dating of the epistle depends in part on whether Paul’s visit to Jerusalem in 2:1-10 was also the visit for the Jerusalem meeting as recorded in Acts 15. If so, the epistle must have been written after the Jerusalem meeting, between 51 and 57 A.D. If, on the other hand, Paul wrote to the Galatians before participating in the Jerusalem meeting, then this epistle would have been written in 48-49.

Place

Uncertain.

Purpose/Occasion

When the gospel began to spread to the Gentiles, some Jewish Christians insisted that observance of the law of Moses, and in particular, receiving circumcision, was necessary for salvation. These Judaizers from Judea infiltrated newly established churches and taught the Gentile believers the false doctrine of salvation by works (Acts 15:1). In an effort to discredit Paul’s preaching, these advocates of the Mosaic law even claimed that Paul was not a genuine apostle.

Soon after Paul had brought the gospel to Galatia, these Judaizers came to the churches in this region and preached a different message. Consequently, the Galatian believers began to turn to this other “gospel,” which Paul called a false gospel (Gal 1:6-7). Seeing the grave danger that the believers were facing, Paul wrote them this urgent letter to guard their faith and liberty in Christ. In defending the gospel of Christ, Paul stressed that he had received his apostolic authority from the Lord, not from man, and hence, the message he preached was the true gospel. He did not hesitate to condemn preachers of a gospel that was different from what the apostles had preached, fearing that the Galatians would fall from the grace of salvation.

Unique Characteristics

1. This is a letter of strong warnings and powerful apology. Unlike Paul’s other epistles, there is no commendation or thanksgiving. He went straight to the heart of the matter to address the crisis facing the Galatians. For the sake of the gospel of Christ, Paul was not about to give in to the legalists, and he even called down curse upon preachers of a false gospel.
2. This is the only epistle by Paul that was addressed to a group of churches.
2. Paul makes use of numerous sets of contrasts in his teachings.
3. The letter contains much of Paul’s autobiographical information.

Central Verse

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage” (5:1).

Survey of Philippians

1. Read the entire epistle once for general impressions. Then go through each section as listed in chart A and record a heading using a key phrase in that section.

Themes

For an overview of the main themes of this epistle, read the verses under each of the following themes and summarize what the verses have to say about their respective themes.

Law and Grace

1:6 _____

2:16 _____

2:21 _____

3:2, 5 _____

3:10, 11 _____

3:12 _____

3:13 _____

3:17-19 _____

3:21-24 _____

4:4-5 _____

5:3 _____

5:4 _____

5:18 _____

Introduction to Galatians

6:2 _____

Faith

2:16 _____

2:20 _____

3:2, 14 _____

3:5 _____

3:7-9 _____

3:11 _____

3:12 _____

3:22-26 _____

5:5 _____

5:6 _____

Liberty

2:4 _____
3:13-14 _____

Introduction to Galatians

3:22-23 _____

4:1-7 _____

4:8-11 _____

4:21-31 _____

5:1 _____

5:13 _____

Gospel

1:6-7 _____

1:8-9 _____

1:11 _____

2:4-5 _____

2:7-9 _____

2:14 _____

3:8 _____

Holy Spirit

3:2-3 _____

3:5 _____

3:14 _____

4:6 _____

4:29 _____

5:5 _____

5:16 _____

5:17 _____

5:18-23 _____

5:25 _____

6:8 _____

Key Words/Phrases

Christ, law, grace, faith, promise, free, liberty/bondage, gospel, Holy Spirit, flesh.

Modern Relevance

Paul’s epistle to the Galatians reinforces the foundation of the Christian faith. Because of Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross, we are justified freely by grace through faith. Christ is the only way of salvation, since no one can be justified by observing the law. Today, many of those who reject the Lord Jesus believe that they can reach God by good works. Many confidently claim that they are “good enough” to go to heaven. But the Scriptures unequivocally teaches us that no one can come to God except through our Savior Jesus Christ. All of our merits and efforts crumble under God’s perfect standard. Christ has set us free from the works of the law so we are no longer under the bondage of futile attempts to reach God. Rather than turn to human endeavors or self confidence, we need to humbly accept and depend on the grace of our Lord.

Since we have accepted the Lord Jesus as our Savior, we have received liberty in Christ. But such liberty should not become an opportunity for indulgence (5:13). Unfortunately, many professed Christians who uphold the doctrine of justification by faith have misused their freedom in Christ as a license for sinful lifestyles. Assuming that confession of the Lord has guaranteed them of salvation, they walk in the lusts of the flesh. That is why even among Christians, there is much immorality and ungodliness. But Paul tells us in this epistle that true freedom in Christ does not mean living in a manner that is contrary to God’s commandments. Rather, it means walking in the Spirit, letting the Spirit guide our steps so we may bear the fruit of righteousness.

Thus, if we are true to the gospel of grace, we would neither depend on our own righteousness nor indulge in sin. We would trust in the saving works of Christ and submit to the work of the Holy Spirit to reap eternal life.

1:1-5			
1:6-10		God versus Man	Defense
1:11-17			
1:18-24			
2:1-10			
2:11-21			
3:1-14		Promise versus Law	Apology
3:15-25			
3:26-4:7			
4:8-20			
4:21-31			
5:1-12		Spirit versus Flesh	Exhortation
5:13-26			
6:1-10			
6:11-15			
6:16-18			

Chart A Survey of Galatians

2

Denunciation of the False Gospel

The Basics

Setting

No other epistle begins with such force. After a short salutation, Paul immediately confronts the problem facing the Galatians and denounces preachers of the false gospel.

Key Verse

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (1:8)

Did You Know...?

1. **Galatia** (1:2): “The term occurs three times in the NT. In 2Ti 4:10 the reference is uncertain. In 1Pe 1:1 it refers to the northern area of Asia Minor occupied by the Gauls. Here Paul probably uses the term to refer to the Roman province of Galatia and an additional area to the south, through which he traveled on his first missionary journey (Ac 13:14-14:23).” ^{4/1781}

Observation

Outline

_____ (1:1-5)
 _____ (1:6-10)

Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

1:1-5

1. Paul was not among the original twelve apostles. Why does he call himself an apostle? 🔑

2. Why does Paul stress the divine origin of his apostolic call? 🔑

3. How is the opening of this letter different from the salutations in Paul's other epistles? Why? 👁️ 🔑

4. What fundamental Christian doctrine is found in verse 4? 👁️

5. What does it mean that the Lord Jesus Christ delivers us from the present evil age? 🔑

1:6-10

- 6a. What clues do you see in this paragraph that convey the great urgency in Paul? 👁️

- 6b. Account for this urgency. 🔑

- 7a. What is the “different gospel” that had misled the Galatians? 🔑

- 7b. How does this other gospel pervert the true gospel? 🔑



8. What does Paul call the preachers of the false gospel (7; cf. 5:10, 12)? Why? 👁️ 🔑




9. Why should preachers of other gospels be accursed? 🔑

10. In verse 8, Paul does not exclude himself from his own curse were he to preach a different gospel (“even if we...”). What does this tell us about the nature of the true gospel? 🔑 👁️




11. Have you ever encountered a “different gospel”? What was the message of this gospel? 👁️

12. How do you know which gospel is the true gospel?  

13. How does Paul's insistence on the one true gospel also confirm the teaching that there is only one true church?  

14a. Paul reminds us of an important attitude in verse 10. What is this attitude and why is this attitude necessary for the bondservants of Christ?   

14b. In what ways do you sometimes please men rather than God? 

14c. How do you resolve the apparent contradiction between this verse and Rom 15:2 as well as 1Cor 10:33? In what situations should we please men? In what situations should we not please men?   

The Gospel Committed to Paul

The Basics

Setting

In the previous passage, Paul upholds the gospel the Galatians have received as the absolute truth and condemns any other preaching that differs from this gospel. Now, he supports his argument by pointing to the divine origin of the gospel and his apostolic call.

Key Verse

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:11-12).

Did You Know...?

1. **Judaism** (1:13) is the name of the Jewish religion.
2. **Arabia** (1:17): "The Nabatean kingdom in Transjordan stretching from Damascus southwest to the Suez." ^{4/1781}
3. **Damascus** (1:17): "Ancient capital of Syria (Aram in the OT). Paul had been converted en route from Jerusalem to Damascus (Ac 9:1-9)." ^{4/1781}
4. **Syria and Cilicia** (1:21) were provinces in Asia Minor. Tarsus, Paul's hometown, was in Cilicia.
5. **Barnabas** (2:1) was an apostle and Paul's companion on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28).
6. **Titus** (2:1): "A Gentile Christian who served as Paul's delegate to Corinth and later was left in Crete to oversee the church there (see Tit 1:5)." ^{4/1782}
7. **Circumcised** (2:3): Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:10-14).

8. **James, Cephas, and John** (2:9): James was the Lord's brother; Cephas was Peter; John was the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve disciples (Mk 3:13-19).
9. **The right hand of fellowship** (2:9): "A common practice among both Hebrews and Greeks, indicating a pledge of friendship."^{4/1782}

Observation

Outline

- _____ (1:11-12)
 _____ (1:13-14)
 _____ (1:15-17)
 _____ (1:18-20)
 _____ (1:21-24)
 _____ (2:1-10)


Key Words/Phrases



General Analysis

1. Compare 1:11-24 and 2:1-10. How do these two passages form two parts to Paul's argument?  

Segment Analysis

1:11-24

1. Why is it necessary for the Galatians to know that the gospel Paul preached was not from man but from the revelation of Jesus Christ (11-12)? 

2. How does Paul use the following to convince the Galatians of the divine origin of the gospel he preaches?  

- 2a. His former conduct (13-14)

- 2b. His stay in Arabia (16-17)

- 2c. His first visit to Jerusalem (18-19)

- 2d. His ministry in Syria and Cilicia and the churches' response (21-24)

3. What can we learn from Paul’s words about the nature of God’s calling? 🔑

3a. “When it pleased God” (15)

3b. “Separated me from my mother’s womb” (15)

3c. “Through His grace” (15)

3d. “Reveal His Son in me” (16)

3e. “That I might preach Him” (16)

4. Paul’s personal experience served as a powerful testimony in his defense of the gospel. What experience can you share with others when you bear witness for the Lord to show how true the gospel is? 🗣️

2:1-10

5. While Paul was in Tarsus, it was Barnabas who went to look for him and brought him to Antioch. Read Acts 11:19-26. Considering the circumstances, why do you think Barnabas sought Paul? 👁️

🔑

6a. What led Paul to visit Jerusalem for the second time? 👁️

6b. Why is this fact important? 🔑

7. What was the purpose of this visit? 👁️

8. How was the meeting conducted? Why? 👁️

9. Explain what Paul means by “lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.” (2). What did he want to avoid? 🔑

10. How did Titus play a crucial role in this particular visit? 👁️ 🔑

11. What are the two contrasting words in 2:4? 👁️

12. Based on verse 5, explain the reason for Paul’s uncompromising attitude. 👁️ 🔑

13. What is the point of verse 6? 🔑

14. Notice the phrases “those who were of reputation” (2), “those who seemed to be something” (6), and “who seemed to be pillars” (9). Why do you think Paul uses such phrases to refer to the leaders in Jerusalem? 🔑

15. How does the recognition that God shows no personal favoritism determine our conduct and motivation? 🦶

16. How did the other apostles know that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to Paul? 👁

17. Why was the gospel God had committed to Paul a “grace” (9)? Why is the word “grace” a key word in this passage? 🔑

18. As God’s workers, what lessons can we learn from the apostles in this passage? 👁 🦶

4

Confrontation at Antioch

The Basics

Setting

To show that the truth of the gospel is above any man, Paul recalls his confrontation with Peter in Antioch. This incident reveals the issue facing the church at the time. While the apostles had fully realized that salvation is by grace, not by works, some traditional Jewish believers still considered themselves superior to the Gentile brethren and demanded that they be circumcised. Based on this event in Antioch, Paul makes clear his stand on the issue and begins to defend and expound the doctrine of justification by faith.

Key Verse

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain” (2:20-21).

Did You Know...?

1. **Antioch** (2:11): “The leading city of Syria and third leading city of the Roman empire (after Rome and Alexandria). From it Paul had been sent out on his missionary journeys (see Ac 13:1-3; 14:26).” ^{4/1782}

Observation

Outline

-
- (2:11-13)
-
- (2:14-16)
-
- (2:17-21)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

- 1. Why do you think Paul tells the Galatians so openly about Peter’s fault? Is he trying to belittle his fellow worker?

Segment Analysis

2:11-13

- 1. What was Peter’s mistake?

- 2. What caused Peter to act in hypocrisy? Was it ignorance?

- 3. Why do we sometimes use double standards the way Peter did? How can we improve in this area?

- 4. How does verse 13 serve to indicate the seriousness of Peter’s mistake?

- 5. Do you sometimes act in a way that is different from what you believe or teach? How can this become a stumbling block?

2:14-16

- 6. Why did Paul need to rebuke Peter publicly?


- 7a. In what sense did Peter “live in the manner of Gentiles” (14)?

- 7b. How did Peter “compel Gentiles to live as Jews” (14)?



- 8a. What does Paul mean by the words in verse 15?

- 8b. According to verse 16, what had the Jewish believers, “who were Jews by nature,” realized?

- 9. What does it mean to be “justified”?


10. Why is it impossible for men to be justified by the works of law? 

2:17-21

11. Rephrase verse 17 in your own words. Consult several Bible translations to help you understand what Paul is saying.  

12a. What things has Paul destroyed (18)? What does it mean to rebuild what he has destroyed? 


12b. Why is rebuilding what has been destroyed a transgression? 



13a. What does it mean to die to the law through the law (cf. Rom 4:15; 5:13; 7:6)? 

13b. What does it mean to live to God? 

14a. How have we also been crucified with Christ, and how does Christ live in us?  

14b. What enables and motivates us to do so?  

15. Paul states, “[Christ] loved me and gave Himself for me” (20). Do you personally feel that Christ loved you and gave Himself for you? Why is it important to have such personal conviction? 

16. According to verse 21, how does a person “set aside the grace of God”?  

17. What does this verse tell us about why Paul combatted the false gospel so vigorously?  

5

Galatians 3:1-25

Faith versus the Works of the Law

The Basics

Setting

Having set forth the doctrine that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ rather than by the works of the Law, Paul draws from the personal experience of the Galatians as well as the Old Testament Scripture to support his argument. In comparing the law and faith, he explains the condemnatory and temporary nature of the law and the surpassing and enduring nature of God's promise.

Key Verse

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (3:13-14).

Did You Know...?

1. **The promise of the Spirit** (3:14): This is the promised Holy Spirit foretold by the prophets (Eze 36:27; Joel 2:28) and the Lord Jesus (Jn 14:16-17; Acts 1:5). This promise came true when the disciples received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
2. **Tutor** (3:24): “The term is *paidagōgos*, which means ‘a child-custodian’ or ‘child-attendant.’ The pedagogue was a slave employed by wealthy Greeks or Romans to have responsibility for one of the children of the family. He had charge of the child from about the years six to sixteen and was responsible for watching over his behavior wherever he went and for conducting him to and from school.” ^{2/467}

Observation

Outline

- _____ (3:1-5)
 _____ (3:6-9)
 _____ (3:10-12)
 _____ (3:13-14)
 _____ (3:15-18)
 _____ (3:19-25)

Key Words/Phrases

- _____

General Analysis

1. What Old Testament figure does Paul repeatedly refer to? Why?



- _____

Segment Analysis


3:1-5

1. What contrasts does Paul make in this paragraph?

- _____


2. What point is Paul making by his series of questions? What was the basis of his argument?



- _____

3a. How was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ clearly portrayed among the Galatians? 

3b. Why does Paul mention the portrayal of Christ's crucifixion? 

4a. How have the Galatians begun in the Spirit? 

4b. What does it mean that they are now trying to be made perfect by the flesh? 

5. Can we infer from this paragraph that receiving the Holy Spirit is an obvious experience that is accompanied by a clear external sign? Explain your answer.  

3:6-9


6. On what basis was Abraham justified? 

7. According to Paul, how has God's promise to Abraham, as quoted in verse 8, come true?  

3:10-12

8. What contrast is made in verses 12 and 13? 



9. How did Christ "become a curse for us"? 

10. What does it mean that we have been redeemed from the curse of the law? 



3:15-18

11. According to verse 15, what characterizes a covenant? 

12. What point is Paul making concerning the law and the promise?  

13. Read Genesis 22:18 on God's promise to Abraham and his seed. What is Paul's interpretation of this promise? What does this interpretation have to do with the argument that we are justified by faith?  

Galatians 3:1-25

14. What does verse 18 say about the nature of a promise? What is Paul's point?  

3:19-25

15. Record what the following verses say about the law 

15a. 19a


15b. 19b, 20

15c. 21

15d. 22

15e. 23

15f. 24

16. In sum, what purpose does the law serve in relation to faith in Christ? 

6

Galatians 3:26-4:31

Sons and Heirs of God through Christ

The Basics

Setting

This is a bright and assuring passage in the epistle. In the previous passages, Paul explained that the law was a guardian that kept us for the faith to be revealed. Building on this analogy, Paul points out our identity as the sons of God through faith and our status as heirs to the promise. Being sons and heirs, we are not under bondage but have liberty in Christ.

Key Verse

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:26).

Did You Know...?

1. **Elements** (4:3,9): “The Greek term meant essentially ‘things placed side by side in a row’ (as the ABCs) and then came to mean fundamental principles or basic elements of various kinds.” ^{4/1784}


Observation

Outline

- _____ (3:26-29)
- _____ (4:1-7)
- _____ (4:8-11)
- _____ (4:12-20)
- _____ (4:21--31)

Key Words/Phrases



General Analysis



- 1. In which paragraph do you see Paul digressing from his line of argument? How is the tone of this paragraph very different? 

Segment Analysis

3:26-29


- 1. How does this paragraph relate to the previous paragraph? 

- 2a. Based on verses 26 and 27, what spiritual effects take place through baptism? Explain the meaning of these effects.  

- 2b. How does this passage refute the false teaching that baptism is a work of the law?  


- 3a. According to 28, what has been removed among the believers in Christ?  

- 3b. How is this truth applicable to the problem that Paul was addressing? 

- 3c. How does this teaching apply to our life in the church today? Have you seen conducts or attitudes that are not in line with this teaching? 

4:1-7

- 4. What contrast does Paul set forth here? 

- 5. In what sense are those under the law like an heir who is still a child? 

- 6. What are the “elements of the world”? 

- 7. What does it mean that the Son of God was born under the law? 

8. What does the phrase “adoption as sons” (5) suggest? 🔑

9. How does verse 6 identify the Holy Spirit? 👁

10. According to this verse, what purpose does the Holy Spirit serve? 👁

4:8-11

11a. Why are the elements of the world “weak and beggarly”? 🔑

11b. In what sense is turning to these elements similar to serving false gods? 🔑

12. Why does Paul add the phrase, “or rather are known by God” in verse 9 (cf. Nah 1:7; Jn 10:14; 15:16; Rom 5:8; 1Cor 8:3; 2Tim 2:19)? 🔑

13. In what ways could a believer make the mistake of the Galatians and serve God as if he is serving other gods? 🐾

14. What is Paul’s fear for the Galatians? 👁 🔑

4:12-20

15. What does Paul mean by “I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you” (19)? 🔑

16. What differentiates true servants of God and false teachers? What can we learn from Paul in this paragraph? 👁 🔑 🐾

4:21-31

If you are not familiar with the background of Paul’s analogy, read Genesis chapters 16, 17, and 21.

17. Identify all the sets of contrasts found in this paragraph. 👁

18a. What is the covenant from Mount Sinai? 🔑

18b. Why does it correspond to “Jerusalem which now is” (25)? 🔑

19. How are those who keep the law like the son who was born according to the flesh? 🔑

20. What is the Jerusalem above? How is she free? 🔑

21. What will be the consequence of those born according to the flesh? 👁

The Basics

Setting

Having established the doctrine of liberty in Christ, Paul urges the Galatians to remain steadfast in this liberty and not be entangled again by the yoke of bondage. Then he goes into the practical applications of this doctrine, expounding the true meaning of Christian liberty in our daily living.

Key Verse

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (5:18).

Observation


Outline



- _____ (5:1-12)
- _____ (5:13-26)
- _____ (5:13-18)
- _____ (5:19-21)
- _____ (5:22-23)
- _____ (5:24-26)


Key Words/Phrases



Segment Analysis


5:1-12


- 1. How does verse 1 function as a transition? 


- 2. According to verses 2 to 4, what are the consequences of attempting to be justified by the law? Explain each.  



- 3a. What three aspects of a Christian life are found in verses 5 and 6? 

- 3b. How are these aspects related to one another? Apply this to your life.  


- 4a. As believers, we have been justified by faith. Why should we still “wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”? 


- 4b. What does it mean that we wait eagerly “through the Spirit”? 




- 5. Identify the several references in verses 7 through 12 to the works of the Judaizers. 



- 6. Why is the cross offensive? Have you suffered persecution as a result of the offense of the cross?  


5:13-26

- 7. How can the liberty in Christ be misunderstood and misused? 

- 8. What does the word “flesh” mean here? 

- 9. Have you experienced the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit? What is the solution, according to this passage?   

- 10a. Record and study the list on the works of the flesh in 19-21.  

- 10b. What is the consequence of practicing the works of the flesh? 

11a. Record and study the fruit of the Spirit as stated in 22 and 23.



Four horizontal lines for writing.

11b. Why does the Scripture uses the word “fruit”? How is the analogy of the fruit an apt description of a Spirit-led life?



Three horizontal lines for writing.

12a. Record what this section says about the law.



Three horizontal lines for writing.

12b. Is a Spirit-filled life contrary to the law? What can we learn from this passage about the true meaning of liberty in relation to the law?



Five horizontal lines for writing.

The Basics

Setting

In this lesson, Paul continues his exhortations on Christian living. Then he concludes the epistle by emphasizing again the gospel of grace and denouncing the works of the legalists.

Key Verse

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation” (6:14-15).

Observation

Outline













- _____ (6:1-5)
_____ (6:6-10)
_____ (6:11-15)
_____ (6:16-18)



Key Words/Phrases




Three horizontal lines for writing.


Segment Analysis


6:1-5

- 1a. Who is the command in verse 1 directed to?  
- _____
- _____
- 1b. How should we restore a brother overtaken in trespass? (cf. Mt 18:15; Jas 5:15-16, 19-20)  
- _____
- _____
- 1c. With what attitude should such restoration be done?  
- _____
- _____
2. What would be the wrong way to deal with someone who is overtaken in a trespass?  
- _____
- _____
3. Have you ever helped a fellow believer in his weakness? What lessons did you learn from the experience? 
- _____
- _____
4. In the context of verse 2, what does it mean to bear one another's burdens?  
- _____
- _____
5. What is the law of Christ (2)? (cf. Jn 13:34; 14:21; 15:12; 1Jn 3:22-23; Jas 2:8; 2Jn 5-6) 
- _____
- _____





6. According to verse 3, why would a believer fail to bear other's burdens?  
- _____
- _____

- 7a. What should someone who thinks himself to be something do, according to verse 4?   
- _____
- _____

- 7b. Do you examine yourself on a consistent basis? With what measure do you measure yourself? 
- _____
- _____

8. Explain the apparent contradiction between verses 2 and 5 (Hint: interpret verse 5 in light of verses 3 and 4).  
- _____
- _____

6:6-10

9. Doing good is the central teaching of this passage. What kind of good deeds is meant here?  
- _____
- _____
- 10a. What is the golden rule here? 
- _____
- 10b. Why does Paul start the command with "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked"? What does this mean? 
- _____
- _____

10c. What kind of a Christian is deceiving himself? 🗣️

10d. In what areas in your life should you start sowing to the Spirit rather than the will of your flesh? 🗣️

11. According to verse 9, what are the possible hindrances of failing to do good? 👁️

12. Are you passive in doing good, or do you find every opportunity to do good? Think of concrete ways to start increasing your good deeds today. 🗣️

6:11-15

13. What is the motivation of the false teachers? 👁️ 🔑

14. In what ways are we sometimes tempted to take the easy way out in being a Christian so as to avoid suffering persecution for the cross of Christ? 🗣️

15a. What does Paul mean that the world has been crucified to him and he to the world? 🔑

15b. Has the world been crucified to you, and you to the world? 🗣️

16. Verse 15 brings out a strong contrast between legalism and faith in Christ Jesus. What is the contrast? 👁️ 🔑

6:16-18

17. What “rule” is verse 16 referring to? 👁️

18. Why is the identity “Israel of God” particularly significant in view of the message of this epistle? 🔑

19. What are the marks of the Lord Jesus on Paul’s body (2Cor 4:10)? 🔑

Author

Internal evidence (1:1) clearly tells us that Paul was the author. The most widely held belief is that Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned in Rome (see 3:1,13; 4:1; 6:20) together with the other so-called 'prison letters' Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. It was not until the nineteenth century that some have questioned the authorship of Paul, preferring to believe instead that the letter was written by one of his disciples. But if someone else actually wrote this epistle using Paul's name when Paul never wrote it, then we cannot trust the epistle as God's word. We unequivocally reject this proposition simply because it will make the Bible a lie. Furthermore, such a view (and not only on Ephesians but on many of the other books of the Bible) is supported by uncertain analysis, methodology and assumptions.

Recipient

Internal evidence (1:1) states the recipients to be 'the saints who are at Ephesus'. However some of the oldest Greek manuscripts omit 'at Ephesus' and the absence of any personal greetings makes it probable that the letter was written to several churches, one of which was the one at Ephesus.

Date and Place

During Paul's imprisonment in Rome (59-64 AD). We are uncertain whether it was during the first imprisonment (house arrest) of two years (59-61 AD) mentioned in Acts 28:30 or a later more severe imprisonment which led eventually to his execution.

Unique Characteristics

1. This epistle does not address specific problems in the church.
2. There are no personal greetings.

3. The literary form is a combination of doxology, prayer, theology, and exhortations. Such free form of composition is the result of the sublime nature of the doctrines in the epistle.

Central Verse

"... in all wisdom and prudence having made known to us the mystery of His will ..." (1:8,9).

Survey of Ephesians

To get a broad picture of the Ephesians, read the entire book and record a heading for each of the section divisions in chart B.

Themes**In the Heavenly Places**

Christians are to realize that there is a realm that exists alongside the physical world we live in. The heavenly places mentioned five times in this epistle does not refer to the heaven that we will dwell in for eternity (see 2Cor 5:2) but rather a spiritual dimension where saved Christians sit with Jesus (2:6) who is at the right hand of power (1:20). Here God blesses Christians (1:3) and reveals His manifold wisdom through His congregation, the church, to the spiritual principalities and powers (3:10) and this results in a war against the spiritual hosts of wickedness (6:12). With this extra perception, the enlightened Christian will prepare himself spiritually for the warfare in the heavenly places by putting on the armor of God (6:11-18). This spiritual world is real and it is another trick of Satan to deceive the people of the world into thinking either that spirituality is New Age affinity to nature or that spirituality is spiritism, occultism and black magic.

To Be Spiritually Knowledgeable

In two famous prayers, Paul asks that the Ephesians be enlightened spiritually. In 1:18-21, he asks that they know their hope, their glorious inheritance and the greatness of the power of God. This knowledge strengthens the faith and makes the believer realize the preciousness of the Holy Spirit in him (1:13-16) – He is the guarantee of his inheritance. In 3:17-19, Paul asks that the Ephesians may have power to comprehend the love of Christ. This knowledge allows one to be filled with the fullness of God (3:19) and thus controlled, the Christian is strengthened in his love for others (2Cor 5:14,15).

Unity

The early church was at risk of breaking into two parts, one part Jewish and the other part Gentile. Also, it was in danger of remaining one at the cost of compromising the doctrine of Christ – the Jews were insisting that the Gentiles observe the requirements of the Law of Moses in order to be followers of Christ (Gal 5:1-12). Paul stresses that unity is achieved by the abolishing in Christ’s flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances (2:14-18) and then further emphasizes that the body of Christ, the church, must be one (2:19; 3:6; 4:3-6). Thus the church must strive for unity but not a unity outside the one body of Christ.

The Church

This theme runs throughout the epistle. We are told many things about the church – that the church is the body of Christ (1:22,23); that the church is the household of God built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone (2:19,20); that through the church, which is His body, Jews and Gentiles are reconciled as one (3:6,12); that there is one church (4:4); and that Christ is the head of the church and her husband (5:23,31,32). The letter also addresses what is expected of the church – that gifts are distributed to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and for building up the church (4:11,12); that Christians must put on the new nature when in the body of Christ (4:24) and thus walk in the light and not in darkness (4:17-5:20).

The New Nature and the Old Nature

Paul affirms that the Christian life is totally different from the unconverted life. They are poles apart, as new compared to old (4:22-24) and light compared to darkness (5:8). Eph 4:17-5:20 is a strong appeal to note this great difference and gives clear advice on how to live one’s life accordingly. Paul extends this advice to how Christians should view relationships with one another – as husband and wife (5:21-33); as children and parents (6:1-4); and as slaves and masters (6:5-9).

Key Words/Phrases

Heavenly places, predestined, saved by grace through faith, works, reconcile Jews and Gentiles, church, dispensation, mystery, love of Christ, one, new, light, darkness.

1:1-2		
1:3-14		Glorious Inheritance
1:15-23		
2:1-10		Grace of Salvation
2:11-22		
3:1-13		Knowledge & Strength
3:14-21		
4:1-6		Church Unity
4:7-16		
4:17-5:20		Christian Conduct
5:21-33		
6:1-4		
6:5-9		Spiritual Warfare
6:10-20		
6:21-24		

Chart B Survey of Ephesians

The Basics

Setting

In this section, Paul greets the readers as saints and then tells them about the blessings saints receive in Christ. He prays that the Ephesians will be enlightened about certain spiritual truths and realities. He introduces the concept of the church as the body of Christ.

Key Verses

“... in all wisdom and prudence having made known to us the mystery of His will ...” (1:8,9).

Did You Know...?

- Ephesus** (1:1): “Ephesus was the most important city in western Asia Minor (now Turkey). It had a harbor that at that time opened into the Cayster River, which in turn emptied into the Aegean Sea. Because it was also at an intersection of major trade routes, Ephesus became a commercial center. It boasted a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana (Greek *Artemis*); cf. Ac 19:23-31. Paul made Ephesus a center for evangelism for about three years... and the church there apparently flourished for some time, but later needed the warning of Rev 2:1-7.” ^{4/1789-1790}
- Dispensation** (1:10): “The word Paul uses is *oikonomia*, which occurs nine times in the NT (TDNT, 5:151-3). Its basic meaning relates to household management (Luke 16:2-4) and is extended to cover general provision or arrangement... Here Paul uses it to suggest the administration or putting into effect of God’s far-reaching redemptive plan (3:9)” ^{3/26}

Observation

Outline

- _____ (1:1-2)
- _____ (1:3-14)
- _____ (1:15-23)

Key words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

1:1-2

1. What qualifies a person to be called a saint? 

1:3-14

2. Where are the heavenly places (3)? 

3. What is the repeated key phrase in this paragraph? 

4. List the blessings we obtain in Christ. 



- 4a. 1:4-6

- 4b. 1:7-9


4c. 1:10

4d. 1:11-12

4e. 1:13-14

5. Record all the phrases in this paragraph that begin with “according to.” What do they tell you about our spiritual blessings in Christ?  

6. How important are spiritual blessings vis-à-vis material blessings to you? 

7. Verses 5 and 6 teach us that our adoption as sons was predestined. Does predestination negate man’s free will? 


8. Explain the role of the Holy Spirit according to 13-14.  


1:15-23


9. For what aspects of the Ephesians did Paul give thanks to God?




10. List the 3 things for which Paul prayed that the Lord would enlighten the eyes of the Ephesians’ understanding. 

11. Do you feel that the eyes of your understanding are enlightened? How do you think such an enlightenment would affect a Christian’s perspective of life? 

12. Verse 18 speaks of the working of God’s mighty power. How did God demonstrate His mighty power in Christ? 

13. What does the word “church” refer to? (cf. 1Cor 12:13,27) 

14. What does the phrase ‘the fullness of Him who fills all in all’ mean? 

11

Salvation and Reconciliation

The Basics

Setting

Having established the understanding that Christians are a special people (saints) and form the body of Christ as the church, Paul in this section explains about the grace of God in the death of Christ and the necessity of faith alone in taking hold of this salvation. Not only has the atoning sacrifice of Christ given us a new life, it also brings reconciliation between the Jews and Gentiles.

Key Verse

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (2:8)

“and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity” (2:16).

Did You Know...?

1. **Uncircumcision/Circumcision** (2:11): Circumcision was a sign of God’s covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:10-14). Consequently, the Gentiles came to be known as “the uncircumcised.”
2. **Apostles and Prophets** (2:20): The prophets here refer to the New Testament prophets (cf. 3:5; 4:11).
3. **Chief cornerstone** (2:20; cf. Job 38:6; Isa 28:6): “The stone at the corner of two walls that unites them; specifically, the stone built into one corner of the foundation of an edifice as the actual or nominal starting point of a building.” ^{5/258}

Observation

Outline


_____ (2:1-10)
 _____ (2:1-3)



_____ (2:4-7)
 _____ (2:8-10)
 _____ (2:11-22)
 _____ (2:11-12)
 _____ (2:13-18)
 _____ (2:19-22)


Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

2:1-3

1. Why does Paul emphasize that we were once dead (see verses 1 and 5)? 

2. Describe the death that we were once in.  

3. Why is the devil described “as the prince of the power of the air” (2)? 

4. Although the passions of the flesh have been mentioned in other scriptures (see Gal 5:16,17; Rom 7:18), here in verse 3, Paul elaborates that it consists of two parts i.e. the desires of the flesh (body) and of the mind. John meanwhile categorizes the love of the world into three—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1Jn 2:16). Discuss how these categorizations

complement each other. Also discuss specific examples for each of the desires of the flesh and the desires of the mind. 🔑 🗨️

2:4-7

- 5. What spiritual transformation takes place in a believer upon his conversion? 👁️

2:8-10

- 6. What is the nature of God’s salvation that Paul emphasizes here? 👁️

- 7. Verses 8 and 9 are often misinterpreted as meaning that confession of Jesus Christ is all that is necessary for salvation. Thus they argue that the keeping of all other commands, including the command to be baptized or to receive footwashing, is not necessary. How would you explain these verses knowing full well the implications of verses such as Acts 2:38 and James 2:10? 🔑

- 8. Compare and contrast the two kinds of “works” in 9 and 10. 👁️

- 9. According to verse 10, what is the purpose of God’s calling? 👁️

- 10. In the light of our discussion on verses 8 and 9, it would now be clear that the good works for which we have been ordained to walk in are the works of faith. Starting with members in the Bible Study group, discuss what kinds of good works should prevail in the church and whether we have been successful in discarding the old ways and walking in the new way. 🗨️

2:11-12

- 11. Ephesus was a city in Asia with most of its inhabitants being non-Jews i.e. Gentiles. This passage describes how God reconciles Gentiles to Himself. Why are Gentiles without Christ in time past described as ‘having no hope and without God in the world (12)? 🔑

2:13-18

- 12. What has brought the Gentiles near to God? 👁️

13. With reference to verses 14 and 15, what is the dividing wall of hostility that has separated Gentiles from Jews for centuries?



14. Why is it so important that the Gentiles and the Jews be reconciled?



The broken body of the Lord also reconciled all men, including both Jews and Gentiles, to God. Technically speaking, this fact as stated in verses 16 and 18 is to be seen as different from the breaking down of the middle wall of separation (thus reconciling Jews and Gentiles) recorded in verse 14. See the symbolic tearing of the veil that separated man from God (Ex 26:33) at the death of Christ (Mt 27:51). Read also Col 1:20-22.

2:19-22

15. Describe the household of God.



16. What practical teachings can we gather from each of the following terms?



16a. Household of God

16b. Foundation of the apostles and prophets

16c. Jesus Christ the cornerstone

16d. Growing into a holy temple

16e. A dwelling place of God in the Spirit

12

Ephesians 3:1-21

The Testimony and Prayer of A Minister of the Gospel

The Basics

Setting

In the previous lesson, we learned of the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles in Christ. In this passage, we see that this reconciliation is the basis of Paul’s mission—to preach to the Gentiles. Then he ends the section with prayer and praise.

Key Verse

“of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power” (3:7).

Observation

Outline


_____ (3:1-12)

_____ (3:13-21)


Key Words/Phrases


Segment Analysis

3:1-12

- 1. Paul was given the ‘dispensation (stewardship) of the grace of God for the Gentiles’. What does this mean? 

- 2. What is the mystery that God has revealed?  

- 3. How can the church as a whole and the individual members discharge responsibly the dispensation given us? 

- 4. Discuss God’s plan of salvation through the ages noting specifically the people that He chooses. Then see if we can appreciate why the above is a ‘mystery’ i.e. something even learned people do not know. Also think about why most of the Jews today still do not believe in Jesus. 

- 5. What does Paul have to say about his ministry to the Gentiles? 

- 5a. The source of his effectiveness

- 5a. His qualifications



- 5c. The degree of the mystery

- 5d. The channel through which God reveals the mystery

5e. To whom also must the mystery be made known

5f. The ultimate power for accomplishing the work

6. What does Paul ask the Ephesians to do? What is the basis of this plea?  

7. Based on this paragraph, what is Paul's attitude toward his ministry? What lessons can we learn from this attitude?  

3:13-21


8. What does verse 14 teach us about prayer?   

9. Explain the meaning of verse 15. 



10. What petitions does Paul make in his prayer? 

11. What kind of knowledge did Paul pray that the Ephesians would have? 

12. Discuss the width, length, depth and height of the love of Christ. 

13. In comparison to the love of Christ, what is the width, length, depth and height of your love? 

14. What does Paul say about God's power? 

15. How did Paul's prayer end? What does this teach us about our prayers?  

13 Unity and Growth of the Church

The Basics

Setting

The previous sections explain how the church was established. In this and the following sections, Paul discusses what life as a Christian in the body of Christ should be like. This passage, in particular, stresses the necessity for unity and newness of life.

Key Verses

“There is one body and one Spirit ...” (4:4)

“And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (4:24)

Observation

Outline

- _____ (4:1-6)
- _____ (4:7-11)
- _____ (4:12-16)
- _____ (4:17-32)


Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

4:1-6

1. What is “the calling with which we have been called” (1)? 

2. What are the essential virtues mentioned in verse 2 and 3 that make for the ‘unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’? 

3. Elaborate on the many ‘ones’ in verses 4 to 6. For example, one body refers to one church (see Eph 1:22,23). Christ has only one church and it is important for followers of Christ to be in that one church—we call this the one true church in contrast to the false churches. See also Mt 24:24 and Jn 10:14,15. 

- 3a. One Spirit

- 3b. One hope

- 3c. One Lord

- 3d. One faith

- 3e. One baptism



- 3f. One God and Father of all

- 4. How is God our Father
- 4a. “above all”?



- 4b. “through all”?

- 4c. “in you all”?


4:7-11



- 5. The word “but” in verse 7 suggests a transition. How does this paragraph contrast with the previous paragraph?  

A digression—It is difficult to decide if verse 8 is a quotation from the Old Testament because no passage seems to fit exactly. Two possibilities exist. First, that the verse, either here or in the Old Testament, has been slightly mistranslated and thus the closest match will be Psalm 68:18. The other is that the quotation is from some other non-Old Testament writing (see Jude 14,15 which is a quotation from a non-Old testament writing, *Assumption of Moses*). The explanation in parenthesis of verses 9 and 10 can be compared with Jn 3:13.


- 6. Grace and gifts are apportioned according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Name the gifts as recorded in verse 11 and discuss these offices in relation to the work of the church.  

4:12-16


- 7. What is the purpose of the diverse gifts? 

- 8. What does the word “ministry” mean (12)? What does this tell us about our attitude in using our spiritual gifts?  

- 9. What are the two primary goals of church growth, according to 13-16?  



- 10. According to verse 16, every part of the body needs to join with other parts while doing its share. How does this analogy apply to our service in the church? 



4:17-32

- 11. It has often been emphasized that Jesus kept company with sinners (see Mt 9:10,11; 11:19). Thus sinners should be welcome in church. However, some have gone so far as to say that the church should not preach about sin and about what is wrong and instead use ‘positive’ teaching to guide the members. Reading Eph 4:17-32 will help us understand what God really wants in His church. To begin, describe the old nature i.e. the nature of a Gentile (non-believer). 

- 12. What is required of a believer? 

Ephesians 4:1-32

13. Contrast the mind of an unbeliever (17-18) with the mind of a believer (23). Account for the difference.  

14. List some of the features of the new nature. Discuss where each of us are with regards to attaining these virtues. Encourage one another.  

14

Ephesians 5:1-21

The Daily Walk of Believers (1)

The Basics

Setting

Here, Paul asks that believers focus on God when living the new life. He contrasts the works of darkness with the works of light and urges the believers to live up to their status as children of light.

Key Verse

“Walk as children of light.” (5:8)

Observation

Outline

- _____ (5:1-2)
_____ (5:3-14)
_____ (5:15-21)


Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

1. List all the contrasts in this passage. 



Segment Analysis

5:1-2

1. Suppose you want to imitate someone, what do you need to do? What steps should you take to be an imitator of God? 


2. The teaching of Christ is often role-modeled by Himself. When we seek to imitate Christ, we grow in the way best for human beings. Recall some occasions when Jesus set an example for us to follow.


3. In another instance in the Bible, we are exhorted to take someone as a role model. Recall these verses and discuss their implications.


4. What does verse 2 teach us about the meaning of loving others?  



5:3-14


5a. As often occurs, the grace of God was misinterpreted by some in Ephesus as tolerance of sin in the church. Paul warns against

being ‘deceived ... with empty words’ (6). List the boundaries of behavior that a child of light should not transgress. 

5b. What is the consequence of the sinful deeds listed in verse 3? 

6. The command in verses 3 and 4 concern our speech. Give some examples of the kinds of speech that are improper for Christians. 



7. Give examples of how a believer may be “deceived with empty words.” In other words, in what ways can our mind be influenced?  

8a. What follows in verses 7 to 14 may sound contradictory at first. For example, Paul exhorts that the believers expose the unfruitful works of darkness but then says that it is shameful to even speak of the things done in secret. To begin to understand this passage, list what is required of the children of light. 


8b. Now read verse 13 and 14. What is the purpose of exposing the unfruitful works of darkness?  

5:15-21

9. How should we walk as children of light? 

10. Paul uses the word 'but' frequently in this passage. For example: not as fools but as wise. Why does he do so?  

11. Why is it important for Christians not to waste time but manage it well?  

12. Why is being drunk with wine placed in contrast with being filled with the Spirit? 

13. What can we learn from verses 19 and 20 about the heart of a Christian?  

15

The Daily Walk of Believers (2)

The Basics

Setting

Christians are not of the world (Jn 17:16) but must continue to live in the world (Jn 17:15). Thus, walking in the way of God often brings a Christian into confrontation with the norms of the world. Relationships do not disappear when we become Christians. Paul here writes about how Christians should behave in relationships with one another and with those who are not believers. In particular, in an immoral society where adultery and divorce was common, the Christian relationship between a man and his wife held much hope for love, peace and growth. These teachings are so needed for today's society as well.

Key Verse

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God” (5:21).

Observation

Outline

- _____ (5:21)
- _____ (5:22-33)
- _____ (6:1-4)
- _____ (6:5-9)

Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

5:21

- 1. Verse 21 is a transition between the previous passage and this passage. What is the basis of submission, according to this verse?



5:22-33

- 2. How should a wife treat her husband?

- 3a. How should a husband treat his wife?

- 3b. What are some concrete ways for a husband to love his wife?



- 4a. The teaching about a husband and wife propounded here may seem strange to modern minds accustomed to the 'equality of the sexes'. How does Paul justify his view?

- 4b. Should gender equality be emphasized in a husband-wife relationship? Explain your answer.

- 5. Discuss how modern Christian families, especially where both partners work, should adopt this teaching on the relationship between a husband and his wife.

- 6. What does it mean that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church "with the washing of water by the word" (26)?

6:1-4

- 7a. How should a child treat his parents?

- 7b. What does the phrase "in the Lord" suggest (6:1)?




- 8. How should a father (parent) treat his children?

- 9. Some modern parenting techniques advocate reasoning with the child in all matters and never to expect a child to obey just because one is his parent. How does Paul justify his unambiguous stand on the submission of children to their parents?

10a. What does it mean to not provoke our children to wrath? 




10b. What role should the father play in the house?  

11. As a result of reading Eph 5:22-6:4, discuss the structure of a sound and healthy Christian family.   

6:5-9

12. How should a slave treat his master? 

13. How should a master treat his slave? 

14. What is the basis for this kind of relationship between a slave and his master? 

16

The Armor of God

The Basics

Setting

After his exhortations on daily conduct, Paul now speaks of Christians as soldiers of Christ. We are told that we are in a state of constant warfare (6:12; 2Cor 10:4; 1Pet 5:8). Coming at the end of the epistle, this passage provides an important epilogue for readers to study and to apply in their lives so that they will not be defeated and lose their blessings in the body of Christ.

Key Verse

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” (6:13)

Did You Know...?

1. **Whole armor** (6:11): The Greek word *panoplia*, from which comes the English word “panoply,” refers to the complete outfit of a soldier.
2. **Tychicus** (6:21) was a representative of Paul and the bearer of this epistle.

Observation



Outline



- _____ (6:10-20)
- _____ (6:21-24)

Key Words/Phrases




Segment Analysis


6:10-20



1. Were you ever bullied when you were in school? A child submits to a bully in school when he thinks that no one can help him, not his friends, his teachers nor his parents. Knowing this, can you appreciate why Paul seems to repeat himself in verse 10—“in the Lord and in the power of His might”?  

2. What are the commands of verses 10 and 11, respectively? How do they relate to each other?  

3. Why do we need to put on the whole armor of God? 



4. For each of the pieces of the armor, write down what it represents and explain the meaning of the representation in chart C. Spend time to think about and discuss the application of these teachings.   

5. What does the “whole” in “whole armor of God” suggest (11)? 

6. What can we learn from 18 and 19 about what to pray for and the attitude in prayer?  

7. Why is Paul an ‘ambassador in chains’? 

6:21-24

8. Typical of Paul, he ends his epistle with words of concern and blessing for the brethren. The letter is personally delivered by Tychicus who was sent to encourage the hearts of the Ephesians. There are two phrases which are unique to and apt for this epistle—love with faith (23) and love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (24). Discuss why these phrases apply so well to this letter. Also discuss how these values can be applied to our lives.  

Armor	What It Represents	Meaning of Representation

Chart C The Whole Armor of God

17

Joy in Christ

Author

The apostle Paul (1:1). Paul also mentions Timothy in the opening of the epistle because Timothy was with him at that time.

Recipient

Believers in Philippi (1:1), most of whom were Greeks. The church in Philippi was the first church God established in Europe during Paul's second missionary journey (A.D. 49-52). After seeing the vision of the Macedonian man's plea, Paul realized that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel in that region (Acts 16:6-12). The first converts in this city were Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, and the keeper of the prison, as well as their families (Acts 16:13-40). The church probably met at Lydia's house during its early days.

Date

Probably around 61-62 A.D.

Place

It is evident that Paul was in prison when he wrote the epistle. But the place of his imprisonment is unknown, although three possibilities have been suggested—Rome, Ephesus, and Caesarea.

Purpose/Occasion

The Philippian church had sent a gift with Epaphroditus (one of their members) to be delivered to Paul (4:18). In response to the love of the believers, he wrote this letter to thank them for their gift. He also made use of this occasion to 1) report to them about his situation and express his longing for them, 2) encourage them to endure persecution and rejoice in all circumstances, 3) exhort them to be humble and live in unity, 4) and warn them against those who preached and practiced false doctrines.

Unique Characteristics

1. Paul wrote with a deeply personal tone about his relationship with the believers and his relationship with Christ.
2. The letter is full of commendation for the believers.
3. The theme of joy is prominent.

Central Verse

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (4:4).

Survey of Philippians

1. Read through the entire epistle and record section headings in chart D.
2. Identify the section divisions that begins with the phrase “...brethren” or “...my beloved.”

1:1-11		Magnify Christ	Joy in Suffering
1:12-26			
1:27-2:11		Be Like Christ	Joy in Serving
2:12-18			
2:19-30			
3:1-4:1		Gain Christ	Joy in Believing
4:2-9		Be Content in Christ	Joy in Giving
4:10-23			

Chart D Survey of Philippians

Themes

Joy

Paul first mentions his joy as a preacher of the gospel. He rejoices every time he remembers the Philippian believers because of their participation in the gospel (1:3,7). He urges them to fulfill his joy by being like-minded (2:2), and he exhorts them to live blameless lives so that he may rejoice in the day of Christ that he has not run in vain (2:16). If the believers could offer their faith as a pleasing sacrifice to God, Paul would rejoice even if he is the drink offering that is poured on this sacrifice (2:17).

Paul further invites the believers to share his joy (2:18). In fact, he commands them to rejoice in the Lord (3:1; 4:4). According to Paul, Christ is the source of spiritual joy, and the joy of believers is rooted in Christ (1:26; 3:3). By living in Christ, believers can rejoice always and not be anxious about anything (4:4-7).

Because Paul’s joy is founded on Christ, he is able to rejoice in any circumstance (4:11-13). His joy transcends personal happiness and finds its fulfillment in Christ alone. Some preach out of envy and with an intention to add to Paul’s affliction. But Paul still rejoices because Christ is preached. This selfless and Christ-centered attitude is the ultimate expression of Christian joy.

Unity

The Philippian church has brought Paul great joy because they are one in heart and mind with God’s worker. They have participated in the preaching of the gospel from the first day and have joined Paul in his ministry, whether he is in chains or in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (1:3-7).

Paul encourages the Philippians to fulfill his joy by applying this same-mindedness to the fellowship of believers (2:1-2). Such unity comes about when believers have the mind of Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death (2:5-11). Christ’s humility teaches us to esteem others better than ourselves (2:3). Christ’s sacrifice reminds us to look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interest of others (2:4).

Towards the end of the epistle Paul implores his fellow workers, Euodia and Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord (4:2) and asks the believers to help these women as well as all of Paul’s fellow workers.

Salvation

Salvation is the ultimate concern for all Christians. Thus Paul teaches the Philippians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12). He reminds them of their heavenly citizenship and that we as believers eagerly wait for the Savior, who will transform our bodies to be like His glorious body (3:20-21). To this end Paul has suffered the loss of all things (3:7-11). He also forgets what is behind and presses on toward the goal (3:12-14).

However, salvation is not by human effort. In the same breath that Paul teaches the believers to work out their salvation, he attributes their salvation to the work of God (2:13). Paul stresses that our righteousness does not come from observing the law but through faith in Christ Jesus alone (3:1-9). Even all the effort that Paul puts into pressing on towards the goal is possible only because Christ has laid hold of him and because God has called him through Christ (3:12,14). Therefore, the grace of God and His work in our lives is the basis of our salvation.

Gospel

Concern for the gospel is central to Philippians. For Paul, preaching the gospel is of utmost importance, and it was for the sake of the gospel that he willingly suffered. Therefore, he rejoices when Christ is preached and when believers take part in the ministry (1:5, 18). A special characteristic of the Philippian church is its active involvement in preaching the gospel. Their sending of Epaphroditus to Paul and their generous gift all demonstrate their eager participation in the ministry. Their fellowship in the work of the gospel consequently fosters the close relationship that they have with Paul.

Many of the exhortations in this epistle center on the gospel. It is Paul's earnest desire to see the believers live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and strive together for the gospel with one mind and spirit (1:27). He asks the believers to receive Timothy and Epaphroditus because they are fellow workers for the gospel (2:19-30). He also appeals to the believers to be united and to support those who are in the ministry (4:2,3). Thus, in many ways, the church as a whole may have a share in the work of preaching the gospel.

Key Words/Phrases

Joy, rejoice, like-minded, love, gospel, day of Christ, longing.

Modern Relevance

In this epistle, we can learn much from Paul's discussion of his Christ-centered outlook on life. Because of his knowledge of Jesus Christ and his deep relationship with Him, Paul is able to live a victorious and dynamic Christian life. His personal experience in Christ demonstrates to us the meaning of faith in Christ and the power that we can derive from Christ. As such, studying Philippians helps us re-evaluate our own relationship with Christ and find the key to a successful Christian life.

Furthermore, Philippians reminds the church today the importance of unity as we advance the work of the gospel. Not only does unity make our ministry effective, unity is also a necessary requirement if we want our service to be acceptable to the Lord. The epistle gives practical guidelines on achieving unity with the example of Jesus Christ Himself as our model. While unity is often difficult to achieve, the church today, in particular, the fellow workers of the church, must place this Christian virtue as priority so that we may please the Lord and carry out His work to His glory.

“I Have You in My Heart”

The Basics

Setting

In the opening of this letter, Paul gives thanks for the Philippians and prays for them. He expresses his great joy at the thought of these believers and his deep affection for them.

Key Verse

“For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ” (1:8).

Did You Know...?

- Philippi** (1:1): “The city of Philippi was named after King Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. It was a prosperous Roman colony, which meant that the citizens of Philippi were also citizens of the city of Rome itself. They prided themselves on being Romans (see Ac 16:21), dressed like Romans and often spoke Latin.” ^{4/1801-1802}
- Bishops** (1:1): “In the Greek culture the word was used of a presiding official in a civic or religious organization. Here it refers to a man who oversees a local congregation. The equivalent word from the Jewish background of Christianity is ‘elder.’” ^{4/1838}
- Deacons** (1:1): “In its nontechnical usage, the Greek for this word means simply “one who serves.” The men chosen in Ac 6:1-6 were probably not only the first deacons mentioned in the NT but also the first to be appointed in the church... Generally, their service was meant to free the elders to give full attention to prayer and the ministry of the word (Ac 6:2,4). The only two local church offices mentioned in the NT are those of overseer (also called elder) and deacon.” ^{4/1838}
- Fellowship** (1:5): “The Greek word so translated comes from a root meaning common. Two of the ideas it expresses in the New

Testament are: a communion, or association, of like-minded people (Ac 2:42); and a contribution to a cause (e.g., 2Co 8:4).” ^{1/26}

- Affection** (1:8): The Greek word also means “intestines.” “The metaphor represents tender affection and love. Ancient writers used this metaphor to recognize that such tender affection comes from the inward parts.” ^{1/26}

Observation

Outline


- _____ (1:1-2)
 _____ (1:3-8)
 _____ (1:9-11)

Key Words/Phrases


- _____

Segment Analysis

1:1-2

- Paul often greets with “grace and peace.” What do these terms mean? 

- _____

- Do you experience grace and peace in your life? If not, why not? 

- _____

- How does Paul identify the Philippians? What does this identification mean?  


- _____

1:3-8

3a. What are Paul's feelings for this church? 



3b. Why does he feel this way about them? 

4a. In what ways have the Philippian believers shared with Paul fellowship in the gospel? (see also other chapters of this epistle)






4b. In what ways can you also partake in the work of the gospel? 

5a. What does verse 6 teach us about the work of God in believers?


5b. How does this verse encourage you in your life and your ministry? 

6. What does "the day of Jesus Christ" refer to? (cf. 1Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2Cor 1:14; Phil 1:10; 2:16) 


7. Based on this paragraph, what can we as servants of God learn from Paul's relationship with the believers?   

1:9-11


8. In what aspects does Paul pray that the Philippians may grow?




9. Why must love abound in knowledge and all discernment (9)?



10. Explain the phrase "approve the things that are excellent" (10).



11. What are "fruits of righteousness" (11)? 

12. What have you learned from this paragraph about Christian growth?  

“To Live Is Christ”

The Basics

Setting

After Paul expresses his thanksgiving and offered a prayer for the Philippians, he now reports to them about his circumstance. He relates to them how the gospel of Christ is preached through his chains.

Key Verse

“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice” (1:18).

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21).

Did You Know...?

1. **Palace guard** (1:13): “A contingent of soldiers, numbering several thousand, many of whom would have had personal contact with Paul or would have been assigned individually to guard him during the course of his imprisonment (see Ac 28:16,30).” ^{4/1803}

Observation

Outline

- _____ (1:12-14)
- _____ (1:15-18)
- _____ (1:19-20)
- _____ (1:21-26)

Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

1:12-14

1. Assuming that Paul was imprisoned in Rome, how did he end up in prison? (see Acts 21:5-25:12).

- 2a. What does Paul want the Philippians to know about his imprisonment?

- 3a. How has Paul’s imprisonment become opportunities to advance the gospel?

- 3b. What do you think Paul did in prison that made the palace guards and the rest realize that he was in chains for Christ?



4. Why is Paul able to have a positive attitude toward such a difficult circumstance as imprisonment?

5. What can you learn from Paul’s experience about dealing with sufferings in your life?

1:15-18


6a. What kinds of motives in preaching are mentioned here? 


6b. What does it mean that some preach Christ from envy, strife, and selfish ambition (15,16)? 

7a. Why does Paul rejoice even though some preach the gospel with the intention to hurt him? What does this reveal about Paul's heart and attitude?  


7b. What can we learn from Paul in our ministry? 

1:19-26


8. According to Paul, what two things will help bring about his deliverance? 


9. What does Paul mean when he says, "in nothing I shall be ashamed" (20)? Why will he not be ashamed? 


10a. What is Paul's aim in life? 

10b. How is this aim in life a key to Paul's victory over his sufferings and even over the prospect of death? 

10c. What does it mean to you to magnify Christ in your body?  

11. What does Paul mean by the words "to live is Christ, to die is gain" (21)? 

12c. Why is it hard for Paul to choose between life and death? What does he prefer? What does he choose instead, and why? 

12b. Given a choice between life and death, what would you choose? What would be your reasons? 

Philippians 1:12-26

13. Paul is clear about his purpose in life. What is your purpose in life? 🐾

Final Thoughts

14. Put yourself in Paul’s situation. God has used your ministry to spread the gospel and establish many churches from city to city. But now you are confined to prison and have become a “preacher behind bars.” You’ve waited for two years to stand trial, and the outcome of your trial may mean your execution. How would you feel about your situation? How can you rejoice, witness for Christ, and be a source of encouragement to other believers under such a circumstance? 🐾

20

Philippians 1:27-2:11

“Let Your Conduct Be Worthy of the Gospel of Christ” (1)

The Basics

Setting

Up to this point, the epistle has focused mainly on Paul’s personal situation. Now, he makes a series of practical appeals to the Philippians. In the midst of persecution, believers must strive for the gospel with one spirit and one mind. They must imitate Christ so that their conduct can be a testimony to the gospel.

Key Verse

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (2:5).

Observation

Outline

- _____ (1:27-30)
- _____ (2:1-4)
- _____ (2:5-11)



Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis


1. What are the requirements, according to this section, for striving together for the faith of the gospel? 👁


Segment Analysis

1:27-30

1a. How does the first phrase of 1:27 introduce the teachings that follow?  

1b. Why is our conduct so important to the gospel?  


2. Based on this paragraph, what can enable us to be steadfast in preaching the gospel of Christ? 

3. According to Paul, what is a proof of perdition to the adversaries and of salvation to the believers? 



4a. What does Paul mean by “the conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me” (30)? 

4b. What should be our view of suffering?  



2:1-4

5. 2:1 uses God’s grace as an introduction to the exhortation on unity. Why is God’s grace fundamental to unity? 

6a. What motives or attitudes disrupt unity? Give some practical examples.  



6b. Conversely, what spiritual qualities help us achieve unity?  

2:5-11

7. What is the mind of Christ Jesus that we should also have (5)?  

8. Observe and record the progression in the hymn in 6-11 about Jesus’ humility and exaltation. 

9. Why does unity necessarily involve sacrifice, as illustrated by the example of our Lord Jesus? 

10. What motivated the Lord Jesus to humble Himself? What lesson can we learn from this about what motivates unity?  

21

Philippians 2:12-2:30

“Let Your Conduct Be Worthy of the Gospel of Christ” (2)

The Basics

Setting

In the first part of this study, we looked at Paul’s appeal to the Philippians to be united with the mind of Jesus Christ. Paul continues his appeals and gives his exhortations in view of believers’ salvation. In this passage, Paul also gives instructions to the Philippians to receive two of his fellow workers of the gospel, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

Key Verse

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (2:12-13).

Did You Know...?

1. **“I am being poured out”** (2:17): Paul compares the service of the Philippians to a sacrificial offering and himself to the drink offering that accompanies the sacrifice (cf. Ex 29:38-41).

Observation



Outline



_____ (2:12-18)
 _____ (2:19-30)


Key Words/Phrases



Segment Analysis


2:12-18

1. What is the main theme of this paragraph?  

2. Based on the context of this passage, how are we to “work out” our own salvation? Why with “fear and trembling”?  

3. Is working out our own salvation contrary to the doctrine of salvation by grace? Explain your answer. 

- 4a. Compare “complaining and disputing” (14) with “crooked and perverse generation” (15). What does this comparison suggest?  

- 4b. Have you complained or disputed when carrying out God’s work? What causes complaints or disputes? 

4c. Why is such behavior detrimental to the unity of believers and to the gospel? 🔑

5. What does it mean to “hold fast the word of life” (16)? 🔑

6. Explain the analogy of verse 17 and what it reveals about the heart of Paul. 🔑

2:19-24

7. What are Paul’s commendations of Timothy? 👁

8. Why does Paul say that he would be encouraged to know the state of the Philippians (19)? 🔑

9a. What are “the things which are of Christ Jesus” (21)? 🔑

9b. What causes someone to seek their own instead of the things of Christ? 👣

9c. What is more important to you? The things of Christ Jesus or your own interests? 👣

2:25-30

10a. What are Paul’s commendations of Epaphroditus? 👁

10b. Why was Epaphroditus with Paul? 👁

11a. Why did Paul eagerly send Epaphroditus to Philippi? 👁

11b. What can we learn here about our relationship with fellow believers? 👣

12. What kind of people does the world hold in esteem? As Christians, what kind of people should we hold in esteem (29)? Why? 👁 👣

“That I May Gain Christ”

The Basics

Setting

In the last section, Paul exhorted the Philippians concerning Christian conduct. Now he warns them against the legalists and those who indulge in pleasure. His tone in this passage becomes more serious and strong. However, we also read of Paul’s powerful personal statements about his own faith and his relationship with Christ, which serve as an illustration of the message he conveys.

Key Verse

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (3:8)

Did You Know...?

1. **Dogs** (3:2): “A harsh word for Paul’s opponents, showing their aggressive opposition to the gospel and the seriousness of their error and its destructive, “devouring” results (cf. Gal 5:15).” ^{4/1807}
2. **Tribe of Benjamin** (3:5): “Among this tribe’s claims to superiority was the fact that it gave Israel its first king.” ^{1/50}
3. **Hebrew of the Hebrews** (3:5): “Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrew parents, who retained their native tongue and customs. Paul spoke Greek, but he also spoke Hebrew fluently. (See Ac 21:40; 22:2)” ^{1/50}
4. **Pharisee** (3:5): The name means “separated.” The Pharisees were a group who set themselves apart by their strict observance of the law of Moses and the oral ancestral traditions.

Observation






Outline

- _____ (3:1)
- _____ (3:2-11)
- _____ (3:12-16)
- _____ (3:17-4:1)

Key Words/Phrases


Segment Analysis

3:1-3

1. How does the exhortation to rejoice in the Lord relate to the warnings that follow?  
- _____
- _____
- _____
2. Who are “the dogs, evil workers, and the mutilation”? 
- _____
- _____
- 3a. What does Paul mean when he says, “We are the circumcision”? (cf. Rom 2:25-29; Gal 5:1-15; Col 2:11-12) 
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 3b. Explain the characteristics of believers described in verse 3. 
- _____
- _____


3:4-6


4. Why does Paul mention his achievements before his conversion? 


5. What is the “righteousness in the law” (6)? When Paul says that he was blameless, does it mean that he was perfect before God? 

3:7-11



6. What has Paul counted as loss? What has he gained?  

7a. What are the things that the world considers as gain? Why does the world consider knowing Christ a loss?  

7b. It is not possible to gain Christ without first forsaking “the things that were gain” to you (see verse 7). What have you counted loss in order to gain Christ? 

8. What does it mean to “be found in Him” (9)? 

9. What is the difference between righteousness from the law and righteousness through faith in Christ? 


10a. According to this paragraph, what does it mean to know Christ?  


10b. What is the outcome of knowing Christ? 


10c. Do you consider the knowledge of Jesus Christ as excellent, that you are willing to suffer the loss of all things (see verse 8)? 


3:12-16

11a. What is Paul pressing on to lay hold of? 

11b. Consider Paul's laying hold and Christ's laying hold of Paul. What does this verse teach about human endeavor and divine calling (12)? 



11c. Why is it important to forget what is behind? 


12a. What is your goal in life? Are you responding to the "upward call of God"? 

12b. What lesson can you learn from Paul's attitude in your own spiritual journey? 

13. How does Paul's statement in verses 15 and 16 serve as a guide in dealing with differences of opinions among believers?  


3:17-4:1


14a. What is the lifestyle of the enemies of the cross of Christ (18-19)?  

14b. Why are those who live such lifestyles enemies of the cross of Christ? 

14c. Does this lifestyle, which is so prevalent today, have any influence on your life? 

15a. Why should we constantly remind ourselves that our citizenship is in heaven? 

15b. What should be our lifestyle if we eagerly wait for the Lord Jesus Christ and the glorious transformation? 

16. How do we "stand fast in the Lord" (4:1)?  

“Rejoice in the Lord”

The Basics

Setting

This section is Paul’s final encouragement to the Philippians. He exhorts them to be like-minded in the Lord, rejoice in suffering, and pray always. He also reminds them to meditate on the virtues of others and put into practice all the things they have heard and seen in him.

Key Verse

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (4:4).

Did You Know...?

1. **Prayer, supplication, requests** (4:6): “Prayer’ (*proseuchē*) denotes the petitioner’s attitude of mind as worshipful. ‘Petition’ (*deēsei*) denotes prayers as expressions of need... ‘Requests’ (*aitēmata*) refers to the things asked for.” ^{3/152}
2. **Lovely** (4:8): “The Greek word is from *pros* (toward) and *phileo* (love), and means pleasing, agreeable, that which inspires love.” ^{1/56}

Observation




Outline




- _____ (4:2-3)
 _____ (4:4-7)
 _____ (4:8-9)




Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

Go through the entire passage and answer the following questions based on your observation.


1. How can we achieve unity despite differences?   


2. How can we have peace in the midst of troubles?   



3. How can we achieve holiness in the midst temptations?  


Segment Analysis

4:2-3

- 1a. When relationships between fellow workers break down, what adverse effects will it have on the church? 

- 1b. Do you need to be reconciled with someone today? (cf. Mt 5:23-24) 

2. Consider the words “in the Lord” (2), “in the gospel” (3), and “in the Book of Life” (3). Why do you think Paul mentions these things in his plea for like-mindedness?  

3. What is the Book of Life? Whose names are written in the Book of Life? (Rev 3:5; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19; cf. Lk 10:20; Heb 12:23) 🔑

4:4-7

4a. Why does Paul emphasize the command to rejoice? 🔑

4b. How does the command to rejoice relate to verses 6 and 7? 👁️ 🔑

4c. Why must we rejoice “in the Lord” (4)? 🔑

4d. How is it remarkable that a man like Paul encourages others to rejoice? What does this teach us about the nature of the joy in Paul? 🔑

5a. What does it mean to let our gentleness be known to all men (5)? 🔑 👣

5b. Give some examples of how you can show your gentleness. 👣

5c. What does gentleness have to do with the fact that the Lord is at hand? 🔑



6a. What is the way to get rid of anxiety in our lives? 👁️ 🔑 👣


6b. Why is anxiety unnecessary? 🔑

7a. What does it mean that the peace of God surpasses all understanding? 🔑

7b. How is this peace different from the peace the world gives? (cf. Jn 14:27) 🔑

4:8-9

8a. According to verse 8, what is a secret to godly living?  

8b. What adjustments can you make to your daily schedule, friends, and leisurely activities in order to live out the teaching in verse 8? 

9. Give an example from daily life to illustrate each of the following:

9a. Whatever things are true

9b. Whatever things are noble

9c. Whatever things are just


9d. Whatever things are pure



9e. Whatever things are lovely

9f. Whatever things are of good report

9g. If there is any virtue

9h. If there is anything praiseworthy

10. To have God's presence in our lives, what should we do more besides hearing, reading, or understanding the word of God? 

11. Compare "the God of peace" in verse 9 with "the peace of God" in 7. How are the teachings in 8 and 9 a step further than the teachings in 6 and 7?  

24

Philippians 4:10-23

“I Can Do All Things through Christ Who Strengthens Me”

The Basics

Setting

Paul has ended his exhortations to the Philippians. He now closes the letter with some personal notes. He expresses his gratitude for their love and generous support. But he also makes it clear that his ministry is not profit-driven. Rather, he has everything he needs through the power of Christ. Finally, he concludes the epistle with greetings and benedictions.

Key Verse

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (4:13).

Did You Know...?

1. **Macedonia** (4:15): “The northern part of modern-day Greece, where Berea and Thessalonica, as well as Philippi, were located.”^{4/1809}
2. **Caesar’s household** (4:22): These were “not blood relatives of the emperor, but those employed (slaves or freedmen) in or around the palace area”^{4/1810}

Observation


Outline


_____ (4:10-20)
 _____ (4:21-23)

Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis



4:10-23

1. In which verses does Paul speak mainly about himself? What does he say about himself? 

- 2a. What does Paul say in this passage about the believers’ care for him? 

- 2b. What can we learn from the Philippians in our care for others? 

3. Did Paul rejoice because his needs were met? Explain the reason for his joy.  

- 4a. What causes discontentment? Are you discontented with your life right now?  

4b. How can we be always content, even when we are abased, hungry, or in need? 🐾

5. Paul uses the word “learned” twice (11,12). What does this indicate about achieving contentment? 🔑 🐾

6a. What does Paul mean by “I can do all things”? 🔑

6b. What does it mean for us to do things “through Christ”? 🔑 🐾

6c. Think of a personal experience in which you found sufficiency in Christ’s strength. 🐾

6d. Have you learned to be content in Christ? 🐾

7. Who benefits the most from the Philippians’ gift? 👁️ 🔑

8. What are the correct motives and attitude in giving? 🐾

9. Why is the Philippians’ gift to Paul a sweet-smelling aroma and acceptable sacrifice to God? 🔑

Final Thoughts

10. How has this epistle changed your attitude and values in life? Meditate on the teachings you have gathered from the study of this book and think about what changes you can make to your life today. 🐾

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Introduction to Colossians
Christ Is All and in All**Author**

The author of this epistle was the apostle Paul (1:1; 4:18). In the salutation, Paul also includes Timothy, his fellow worker.

Recipient

The epistle identifies the recipients as the church in Colosse (1:2), which was probably established during Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:10). It may have been the converts of Paul who brought the gospel to this city as well as the nearby towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Colosse was situated on the bank of the Lycus River and was about a hundred miles east of Ephesus. Hundreds of years before Paul's day, Colosse was a prominent city in Asia Minor because of its location on the east-west trade route from the Aegean Sea to the Euphrates River. But after the road system was changed in the first century A.D., the city declined in its social and economic status and eventually became an insignificant market town.

Date and Place

Although the epistle provides no information on its place of origin, many believe that Paul wrote this epistle around 62 A.D. while he was imprisoned in Rome. It was during this period that Paul also wrote the epistles of Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians.

Purpose/Occasion

Epaphras had come to Rome and brought Paul reports about the situation in the Colossian church (1:8). While the believers have made great progress in their faith and love, they were also facing the threat of heresies. In response to this danger, Paul wrote this letter and asked Tychicus and Onesimus to bring it back to Colosse (4:7-9). Thus, the main purpose of the epistle was to counter the false teachings and to strengthen the believers' faith in Christ. Other than

achieving this main objective, Paul also wrote the epistle to exhort the believers to forsake the sinful living of the pagans and lead a Christ-centered life.

Paul does not describe the teachings of the heretics in the epistle. But we can infer from Paul's polemics that the false teachings consist of the following errors:

1. Adherence to circumcision (2:11; 3:11) as well as strict regulations about food, drink, and festivals (2:14, 16).
2. Asceticism (2:21-23).
3. Exaltation of human knowledge and philosophies (2:8,18).
4. Worship of angels (2:18).

Central Verse

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (2:6-7).

Survey of Colossians

1. Read through the entire epistle and record section headings in chart E.

Themes

Look up the list of references under each theme and summarize its related teachings.

Supremacy of Christ

- 1:15 _____
- 1:16 _____
- 1:17 _____
- 1:18 _____
- 1:19 _____
- 1:20 _____
- 2:9 _____
- 2:10 _____
- 2:19 _____

3:11 _____

Salvation through Christ

1:12 _____

1:13 _____

1:14 _____

1:20-22 _____

2:1-2 _____

2:3 _____

2:4 _____

2:11-13 _____

Christian Conduct

1:10 _____

3:5,8 _____

3:10 _____

3:12-13 _____

3:14 _____

3:15 _____

3:16 _____

3:17 _____

3:18 _____

3:19 _____

3:20 _____

3:21 _____

3:22-24 _____

4:1 _____

4:5 _____

4:6 _____

Key Words/Phrases

Christ, knowledge, wisdom, fullness, perfect/complete, all, mystery, faith, love, prayer.

Modern Relevance

In this age of pluralistic thinking, the doctrine that Christ is the only way of salvation has come under severe attacks. Today, many believe that there is no single objective truth and that one religion is just as good as another. As a result of this seemingly encompassing attitude towards all religions, people often view Jesus Christ as simply a moral teacher who died for a good cause. Therefore, facing the challenges of secular philosophies, believers today need to reaffirm that Christ is our only Savior and that He is the fullness of God. The message to the Colossians to remain steadfast in Christ also serves to strengthen our faith today.

As with many of the other epistles, the exhortations on Christian living are timeless. The command to put off the old man and put on the new man is applicable to everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord. The teachings on interpersonal relationships, and, in particular, family living, are all the more necessary for Christians who live in a time when family values have greatly declined.

Whether in terms of our salvation or daily conduct, Colossians offers Christians today valuable insights. A careful and prayerful study of this epistle will serve as an opportunity for us to deepen our knowledge of Christ and renew our commitment to Christ.

1:1-2			
1:3-8		Christ Our Savior	Prayer
1:9-12			
1:13-20			
1:21-23		Christ Our Sufficiency	Doctrines
1:24-29			
2:1-7			
2:8-15		Christ Our Life	Polemics
2:16-19			
2:20-23			
3:1-4		Christ Our Master	Exhortations
3:5-9			
3:10-17			
3:18-4:1			
4:2-6			
4:7-18			

Chart E Survey of Colossians

The Basics

Setting

In the opening of this epistle, Paul greets the readers as saints. Just as for the Ephesians, he give thanks to God and prays that the Colossians will be enlightened about certain spiritual truths and realities.

Key Verse

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (1:9).

Observation

Outline

- _____ (1:1-2)
- _____ (1:3-8)
- _____ (1:9-14)


Key Words/Phrases


Segment Analysis

1:1-2


1. What qualifies a person to be called a saint? 

1:3-8

2a. See if you can find the three abiding spiritual qualities made famous in 1 Corinthians 13 in this passage. 



2b. What is the source of these abiding qualities? 

3a. In what ways does the gospel bring forth fruit (6)?  



3b. What is the condition for the gospel to bringing forth fruit in a person's life? Has the gospel brought forth fruit in your life? 

4. Who is Epaphras (7; Col 4:12; Phm 23)?

1:9-14

5a. What does Paul ask for in his prayer? Compare this with your own prayers.  

5b. What lessons can we learn from Paul's prayer? 


6. What is necessary in order to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God (1:9)?  


7. List the purposes of knowing the will of God (10). 

8. Based on this paragraph, explain the phrase "walk worthy of the Lord" (10).  

9. How do we carry out the will of God (11)? 

10. Discuss the will of God—for Christians on the whole and for individual members in the Bible Study group. 

11a. For what should we be thankful to the Father? 

11b. How did God deliver us from the power of darkness and convey us into His kingdom? 

The Preeminence of Christ

The Basics

Setting

Paul's prayer in the previous passage ended with reference to the saving works of God through Jesus Christ. In this passage, He emphasizes Christ's preeminence over all things and God's work of reconciliation through Christ. He also tells the Colossians that it is because of this great mystery that he became a minister of the gospel and labored for the believers.

Key Verse

"...to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (1:25-27).

Did You Know...?

1. **Laodicea** (2:1) was a city on the banks of the Lycus River, situated about 11 miles from Colosse.

Observation


Outline


_____ (1:15-23)
 _____ (1:24-2:3)


Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

1:15-23

1. As a preliminary, read the following passages and form a concept about the Godhead: Deut 6:4; Isa 9:6; Jn 1:1,14; 3:13; 8:58 with Ex 3:14; Jn 10:30; 14:17,18,23; Mt 28:19 with Acts 2:38. 

2. To refute the heresy that Jesus was less than God, the preeminence of Christ is stated in 1:15-20 with the use of words and phrases which imply superlative or first. List all that you can find. 

3. Now these statements clearly elevate Christ above all created beings but a further clarification needs to be made. If you ever come across the interpretation that the phrase 'the firstborn over all creation' (1:15) implies that Jesus Himself is created and is thus less than God the Father, how would you reply? Further note: In many translations, the phrase is rendered as "firstborn of all creation." 

4a. How did God reconcile all things to Himself?  

4b. What is the purpose of reconciliation? 

5. What makes a person an enemy of God (21)?  


6. What do the words, “if indeed you continue...” teach us (23)?





1:24-2:3



7. What is a “minister” (25)? 

8. Who is the reason for the sufferings and the labor of Paul? 

9. What is the goal of the ministry of Paul? 

10. What does Paul mean by the words, “fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ” (24)? 

11a. What can we learn from Paul’s words about our responsibilities, objectives, and attitudes as servants of Christ?  

11b. What is the source of our strength in being a minister of the gospel?  

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Colossians 2:4-23
Guarding against Deception**The Basics****Setting**

Having expounded on the preeminence of Christ, Paul now urges the Colossians to maintain their faith in Christ. Challenges arise from those who would deceive with enticing words and the teachings of men. But the believers must guard themselves and let no one take away their reward.

Key Verse

“And you are complete in Him...” (2:10).

Did You Know...?

1. **Basic principles of the world** (2:8): The Greek word *soicheia* is translated as either 1) “elementary principles,” meaning the basic elements of learning (the ABCs) or 2) “elemental spirits,” referring to angelic powers.
2. **Handwriting of requirements** (2:14): “A business term, meaning a certificate of indebtedness in the debtor’s handwriting. Paul uses it as a designation for the Mosaic law, with all its regulations, under which everyone is a debtor to God.” ^{4/1815}

Observation**Outline**

_____ (2:4-7)
 _____ (2:8-15)
 _____ (2:16-23)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

- 1a. Can you find the three verses in Chapter 2 where Paul warns against being deceived? 

- 1b. What seems to be the root of the danger?  

2. What are the specific heresies that attack the completeness and sufficiency of Christ?  



3. How does Paul argue for the completeness and sufficiency of Christ? 

Segment Analysis

2:4-7

1. What does Paul teach the Colossians to do in order to guard against deception? 

2:8-15

2. According to verse 8, what is the source of false and deceptive teachings?  


3. What is the 'Godhead' (2:9)? 

4. What is Paul's main point in 11-15?  

- 5a. Discuss how circumcision prefigures baptism (2:11-13). 

- 5b. What does "the circumcision of Christ" refer to? 


- 5c. What are the effects of baptism?  



6. Why do Christians not have to keep the rules and regulations in the Law of Moses (2:13-17,20-23)? 

2:16-23

7. Does 2:16 mean that Christians need not observe the Sabbath anymore? 

8. How do the regulations concerning food, drink, festival, new moon, or sabbaths relate to Christ? 

9. According to this paragraph, what was the motivation of those who follow and teach false teachings? 

10. In what sense have the believers "died with Christ from the basic principles of the world" (20)?  

The Basics

Setting

Whereas Paul exposed the futility of self-imposed religion in the previous lesson, he now speaks of the effectiveness of a new life in Christ. The natural consequence of setting one's mind on things above and of having one's life hidden with Christ is that one becomes or seeks to become dead to the things of the world (3:1-5). It seems almost superfluous to have to warn against the evils stated in 3:5 and yet it is clearly not so because there is so much of this evil in the world. In this section, Paul writes of how to live a Christian life devoid of these evils.

Key Verses

"...since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (3:9,10).

Did You Know...?

1. **Barbarian, Scythian** (3:11): A barbarian was "someone who did not speak Greek and was thought to be uncivilized... Scythians were known especially for their brutality and were considered by others as little better than wild beasts. They came originally from what is today south Russia."^{4/1816}

Observation


Outline



- _____ (3:1-4)
- _____ (3:5-9)
- _____ (3:10-17)



Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

3:1-4




- 1a. The goal sets the direction. Where are the goals of a Christian life?   

- 1b. What exactly does it mean to set our minds on things above? (cf. Rom 8:5; 12:1-2; 13:14; Phil 4:8-9).  

- 2a. 3:3,4 give an interesting picture of spiritual reality. Read Rom 6:3-11, 2Tim 1:12 and 1Thess 4:16,17. Discuss the implications when Paul says that you have died and your life is hidden with Christ.  


- 2b. What is the promise for those whose lives are hidden in Christ? 

3:5-9

3. 3:6-7 suggests that evil is partly due to the worldly company one is in. A Christian life entails separation from the world. Read Jn 17:14-16, 1Cor 15:33, 2Cor 6:14-18 and 1Pet 2:9-12 to have an idea of what this means. Now discuss the essence of each of these passages.   

4. Why is covetousness deemed as idolatry (3:5; Eph 5:5)? 


Verse 8 lists the things we should “put off.” “Malice,” a word that means evil or wickedness, may refer to a vicious attitude. “Blasphemy,” also translated “slander,” means speaking evil of another with the intention of wounding his/her reputation or speaking with irreverence concerning God (see notes at the end of this lesson).



5. “Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with his deeds” (3:9) Upon scrutiny, the conjunction ‘since’ looks odd because if one has already put off the old man with all his deeds, why should the apostle continue to instruct that one should not lie? 


3:10-17


6a. Which affiliation do you consider most important in your life? Is it your nationality, your race, your old school/college, the company you work in, your neighborhood, your family, your church or


your relationship with God? Discuss this in the light of 3:10,11.





6b. What about the church? Is it a human affiliation?  


7a. Read verses 12-13 and list the aspects of character that the elect of God should have. 

7b. Is it possible for Christians to survive in this competitive world while having these virtues? 

8. How would you reconcile Paul’s exhortation in 14-15 for love to bind together all in the one body (the one church) and that the peace of God rule in individual hearts with his often stern epistolary rebukes (see for example, 1Cor 5:1-6; Gal 1:6-9)? 

9a. What does it mean to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus (17)?  

9b. How does verse 17 sum up the entire passage?  

10. In retrospect, what is the new man? Summarize the main points in 3:10-17 with regard to the individual and with regard to the one body. 

The Individual

The Church

Notes

Expressions such as “Oh my God!” “Jesus Christ!” “Geel!*” or “God!” uttered in amazement or frustration are improper for Christians because not only do they not glorify God, such speech may constitute blasphemy.

Some people may say that they do not mean anything when uttering such expressions. But even without any intention of blaspheming God, using the name of God in an empty or frivolous manner would be a violation of the third Commandment—“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Ex 20:7).

* “Gee” or “Jee” are alterations of “Jesus.”

**Christian Daily Living
and Final Greetings**

The Basics

Setting

In this passage, Paul continues with his exhortations on Christian living before ending the epistle. The many names at the end of this epistle reveal that the message is all about people and the salvation of their souls. The Christian writers cared very much for individual members and individual churches even as they fought for the truth. This is so because the gospel is about the salvation of people.

Key Verse

“...Grace be with you. Amen” (4:18)

Did You Know...?

- 1. **Seasoned with salt** (4:6): Salt was used for preserving foods and for making them pleasant to the taste.

Observation

Outline

- _____ (3:18-4:1)
- _____ (4:2-4)
- _____ (4:5-6)
- _____ (4:7-18)

Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis

3:18-4:1

1. What are the commands to each of these groups? 

1a. Wives

1b. Husbands

1c. Children



1d. Fathers



1e. Bondservants

1f. Masters


2. What is an important underlying principle in these commands?  

4:2-6

3a. What does it mean to be “vigilant in prayer” (4:2; cf. Mt 26:41; Lk 12:35-40; 21:34-36; 1Thess 5:1-8; 1Pet 4:7)?  

3b. What should be the content and attitude of our prayer?  




4a. Who are those who are outside (4:5; 1Thess 4:12)? 

4b. What is our most important responsibility towards those who are outside? 

4c. How should we behave towards those who are outside (4:5,6)?   



4:7-18

5. Here is a list of all the names mentioned in this section. Look up references in the NT on these characters and record briefly what the Bible says about each of them. 

5a. Tychicus (4:7-8; cf. Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; 2Tim 4:12; Tit 3:12)

5b. Onesimus (4:9; cf. Phm 10-20)

Colossians 3:18-4:18

5c. Aristarchus (4:10; cf. Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Phm 1:24)

5d. Mark (4:10; cf. Acts 12:12; 12:25; 13:13; 15:36-40; 2Tim 4:11)

5e. Barnabas (4:10; cf. Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-27; 11:24-30; 13:1ff; Gal 2:1-13).

5f. Jesus who is called Justus (4:11)

5g. Epaphras (4:12); See lesson 26, question 4.

5h. Luke (4:14; cf. Lk 1:3; Acts 1:1; 2Tim 4:11; Phm 24)

5i. Demas (4:14; cf. Phm 24; 2Tim 4:10)

5j. Nymphas (4:15)

5k. Archippus (4:17; Phm 2)

Thoughts on Questions

Lesson 2

Observation

Outline

Salutation (1:1-5)

Curse to Those Who Pervert the Gospel (1:6-10)

Key Words/Phrases

Apostle, Christ, Father, grace, peace, glory, gospel, accursed, please men/God.

Segment Analysis

1. According to Paul, he was an apostle because he had been called by Jesus Christ and God the Father (1) to preach the gospel among the Gentiles (16). Although he had never been with the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, he had seen the risen Lord just as the other apostles had (1Cor 9:1; 15:1-8). At the time of Paul's conversion, Christ also revealed to him that He had called him to be His witness (Acts 9:10-16; 26:15-18). Thus, Paul stated in his epistles that he had been called to be an apostle (Rom 1:1; 1Cor 1:1). This is the same mission as that which was entrusted to the Twelve (Acts 1:21-22). In short, the clear calling by the Lord and the mission to be Christ's witness qualified him as one of the apostles. His apostleship was further attested to in Luke's writings (Acts 14:4,14).

The Lord Himself also confirmed Paul's apostleship. It was on this basis that Paul went to great lengths to defend his apostleship in 2 Corinthians. He considered the Corinthian believers themselves to be the evidence that proved he was a minister of the gospel (2Cor 3:1-3). He also cited the signs of an apostle from God through signs, wonders, and mighty deeds (2Cor 12:11-12). Because of all the marvelous work of the Lord through Paul, it was clearly evident that the Lord had called him to be an apostle.

2. The Judaizers attempted to discredit the true gospel that Paul had preached by claiming that he was not a true apostle. In response, Paul reinforces the message of the true gospel by arguing that it was God, not any human being, who appointed him to be an apostle. For this reason, any gospel that was different from the gospel he had preached would be a false gospel.

3. In lieu of the commendations and thanksgiving that are common among Paul's other epistles, Paul just plunges into the heart of the matter after a short benediction. In fact, even as early as the first verse, Paul has begun to defend his apostolic call.
4. Salvation through Christ's atonement in accordance with God's redemptive plan.
5. Through God's saving grace and power, believers have been delivered from the corruption in the world to be partakers of the divine nature (2Pet 1:2-4). We have been freed from the bondage of sin that controls the lives of unbelievers and have been given a new life in Christ (1Jn 5:18-19). We also have the hope of being delivered from all evil and preserved for the heavenly kingdom (2Tim 4:18).
- 6a. 1. The use of strong language, such as "marvel," "so soon," "be accursed." 2. The repetition of the warning and curse in 8 and 9.
- 6b. Seeing that the Galatians were on the verge of falling away from the grace of Christ, Paul had to take drastic measures to awaken them from the delusion of the false gospel.
- 7a. Based on Paul's defense of the gospel in Galatians as well as the recordings in Acts (Acts 15:1), we can infer that the false gospel that had misled the Galatians advocated salvation by observing Old Testament laws, including circumcision.
- 7b. While the false gospel appeared to be only a slight variation of the true gospel (because it did not deny the saving works of Christ but added the necessity of works to faith), it had actually undermined the role of Christ in salvation. The perversion was so serious that it had in essence completely nullified the necessity of Christ's atonement (cf. 2:21)
8. "Those who trouble you." They had taken away the liberty the believers had in Christ and put them under the bondage of the law.
9. The effect of the false gospel is so great that those who accepted such message turned away from God and His grace (1:6; 5:4). Hence, anyone who spreads such message is guilty of leading people to destruction and deserves condemnation.
10. The true gospel does not originate from or depend on any individual, including the preacher himself. Even if the preacher of the gospel turns away from the truth and preaches a different gospel, he will be accursed. Therefore, we should not let our faith rest on men but solely on Christ. Man may change, but God's word endures forever.
12. The true gospel is revealed to us through the Scriptures. It was first spoken by the Lord and passed down to us through the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:19-20). This gospel is also confirmed by the Lord through signs and wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit

(Heb 2:3-4). Therefore, to know if the gospel message we have received is from the Lord, we need to see whether it is in complete accord with the teachings of the Lord and the apostles, and whether the Lord confirms this gospel message just as He did in the apostolic church, through pouring out the promised Holy Spirit and through signs, wonders, and miracles.

13. Paul did not tolerate the preaching of a different gospel within the church, since the body of Christ shares only one faith (Eph 4:5). Thus, individuals or congregations that believe and uphold a different gospel from what the apostles preached cannot be part of the body of Christ.
- 14a. As servants of Christ, we are serving God, not men. It should be our aim to please our Master, to whom we have to give an account (2Cor 5:9-10). We must be faithful in carrying out God's word, even if doing so runs contrary to men's opinion.
- 14c. The Scripture teaches us to please our neighbors or brothers in order to save them and build up their faith. Doing so does not mean compromising God's word in order to please men. Rather, we are to restrict our personal freedom and become more empathetic to others' needs (cf. Rom 14:20-21; 1Cor 8:1,9-13; 9:19-23). But when pleasing others involves actions that are contrary to Biblical teachings, we must choose to please God rather than man.

Lesson 3

Observation

Outline

Source of the Gospel (1:11-12)

Paul's Former Zeal in Judaism (1:13-14)

God's Calling and Paul's Response apart from Human Counsel (1:15-17)

First Visit to Jerusalem, Meeting only Peter and James (1:18-20)

Personal Ministry in Syria and Cilicia (1:21-24)

Second Visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10)

Key Words/Phrases

Not...men/man, revelation, Judaism, Jerusalem, privately, Titus, liberty/bondage, gospel, circumcised/uncircumcised, apostleship, grace that had been given to me, right hand of fellowship, remember the poor.

General Analysis

1. 1:11-24 emphasizes the divine origin of the gospel he preached and his independence from the other apostles. 2:1-10 shows the unity of all the apostles in recognizing the mission God had entrusted to Paul.

Segment Analysis

1. The Galatians have been deceived into believing that the gospel Paul preached was not the genuine gospel. So Paul wants them to realize that the gospel they have forsaken is in fact the true gospel because it came not from man but from God. Turning away from this gospel would be turning away from the God who has called them (1:6).
- 2a. Paul used to be a zealous believer of Judaism who even persecuted the church. The drastic change in him can only be attributed to an act of God, not any human persuasion. The fact that he now preaches salvation through the grace of Christ is a powerful testimony that the gospel he preaches comes from God's revelation (15-16).
- 2b. After the Lord had called Paul, he went to Arabia instead of conferring with the other apostles in Jerusalem. Paul's point in stating this is that his message did not come from consulting with anyone, but came from God directly.
- 2c. Paul's emphasis in mentioning his first Jerusalem visit is that from among the apostles, he saw only Peter and James, the Lord's brother (James was actually not one of the Twelve). His brief stay in Jerusalem was not a formal meeting to secure the apostles' recognition, but to testify about his conversion experience to them (Acts 9:26-27). At this time, Peter had not received revelation from the Lord that salvation must also reach the Gentiles (Acts 10). Therefore, Paul's mission to the Gentiles and his gospel message of salvation by grace could not have come from his meeting with Peter.
- 2d. Paul's early ministries in Syria and Cilicia were independent of the churches in Judea. In fact, the churches in Judea had not met him in person but had only heard of his conversion. This reinforces Paul's argument that the gospel he preached was not taught by man. Despite Paul's independence, the churches glorified God upon hearing about his evangelical efforts. Such positive response from the churches in Judea confirms the fact that Paul's message was in no way contradictory to the true gospel.
- 3a. God has chosen us according to the pleasure of His will (Eph 1:5). Our salvation is not through our own choice, but the sovereign will of God (Jn 15:16).
- 3b. God's election precedes any human decision or effort (Rom 9:11,12,16).

- 3c. Our salvation does not depend on our own merits but is a free gift of God (Eph 2:8).
- 3d. We have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ through the revelation of the Heavenly Father (Mt 16:13-17).
- 3e. God's purpose in delivering us is so that we may declare His praises (1Pet 2:9).
5. Barnabas was keenly aware of God's unique mission for Paul. When the disciples still held a guarded suspicion of Paul after his conversion, it was Barnabas who brought him to the apostles (Acts 9:26-27). Because of the circumstances that prevented Paul from preaching in Jerusalem, he was sent back to Tarsus. Years later, when the church scattered because of persecution, the gospel spread to Gentile regions (Acts 11:19-20). At this point, Barnabas went to search for Paul and brought him to Antioch. He realized that God had called Paul to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, and it was probably this very reason that led Barnabas to enlist Paul's help at this key moment in the church's missionary efforts.
- 6a. Paul went up to Jerusalem this time by divine revelation (2:2).
- 6b. While Paul was also sent to Jerusalem by delegation of the church, Paul points out that his visit to Jerusalem was based on divine direction. He does not want anyone to think that his mission to the Gentiles was entrusted by man or that he went up to Jerusalem out of his own initiative to win the approval of the church leaders.
7. Paul went up to Jerusalem to communicate to the church the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles (2:2).
8. The meeting was conducted "privately to those who were of reputation lest [Paul] might run, or had run, in vain" (2:2).
9. Paul did not want popular opinion to obstruct or even ruin the work of the gospel. Concerned that the legalist might use an open meeting as an occasion to sway the decision of the church, Paul chose to meet privately with the leaders.
10. The leaders in Jerusalem must confront the issue of whether Gentiles needed to be circumcised. Had the leaders compelled Titus, a Greek, to receive circumcision, then the legalists would have won. But because Titus was not compelled to do so, the clear message was that Gentiles are saved by grace and do not need to be subjected to the law.
11. Liberty and bondage.
12. Paul did not give in to the false brethren in order that the truth of the gospel may continue to spread among the Gentiles. If he were to yield to them, the Galatians would not have been able to hear and accept the true gospel.

13. The thrust of Paul's statement is that men's reputation had no part to play in the gospel truth God had revealed to him.
14. Paul was not putting down the leaders in the Jerusalem church. Rather, he is pointing out that the things men esteem, such as reputation, position, and leadership, are completely irrelevant as far as the gospel is concerned. God shows no favoritism, and His grace does not depend on any personal merit.
15. If we acknowledge that God shows no favoritism, we will remain faithful to the word of God and not make compromises in order to please those whom the world respect.
16. The divine origin of Paul's mission was something that others could see (7; "they saw..."). The power of God that was at work in Paul was a clear evidence that God had chosen him to preach to the Gentiles (8).
17. Paul considers his ministry the grace of God (Rom 1:5; 12:3; 15:15; 1Cor 3:10; Eph 3:8; Phil 1:7). Although Paul was the worst of sinners, God in His mercy had chosen him for this work. Furthermore, the gospel itself is God's grace because it brings the free gift of salvation to those who believe.

That the gospel is God's grace is crucial to Paul's argument. Salvation comes to us freely apart from observing the law. The Judaizers, who had denied the grace of God, hoped to put Gentile believers under bondage. But Paul did not give in to them in order that the grace of Christ may remain with the believers. In this passage, Paul also argues that God's grace does not come by means of men's merit, nor does it need the endorsement of reputable men. Instead, men must humbly acknowledge and submit to the work of God, who wills that His grace of salvation be made available to all.

18. Although the pressures from the Judaizers were great, the apostles did not bow to their demands but acted according to God's will. It was by no means easy for the church to break through the traditional Jewish values. But the disciples had the spiritual wisdom and perception to see the will of God in saving the Gentiles, and they submitted to God and lent their support to Paul. Likewise, when it comes to carrying out God's word, we ought to do what is right and not let the demands of men prevail.

We can also learn from the spirit of unity and cooperation among the apostles. Recognizing that God had given Paul the mission of preaching to the Gentiles, they gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. Rather than compete with one another or disparage one another's ministry, the apostles acknowledged their respective roles in God's work and committed themselves to their tasks accordingly.

Lesson 4

Observation

Outline

- The Gospel Threatened by Hypocrisy (2:11-13)
- Paul's Reproach of Peter (2:14-16)
- Dying to the Law and Living through Christ (2:17-21)

Key Words/Phrases

Hypocrisy, truth of the gospel, Gentiles/Jews, sinners, justified, works of the law, faith, Christ, died, live, grace of God, righteousness.

General Analysis

1. Paul cites this incident for its instructional value, not for the purpose of launching a personal attack on Peter. Just as Paul reproached Peter at Antioch for compelling the Gentiles to live as Jews (2:14), he now denounces the doctrine of the legalists, who attempted to put the Galatians under the yoke of the law. The story of Paul's confrontation with Peter also reinforces Paul's argument in the previous passages that his preaching did not come from men of reputation, for even a church leader like Peter could also err sometimes.

Segment Analysis

1. By separating himself from his Gentile brothers, he had drawn a distinction between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, with the implication that Gentile Christians were still unclean. His action was a violation of God's earlier revelation to him (cf. Acts 11:1-18).
2. He acted not out of ignorance but for fear of the circumcision group (12). The fact that he had initially been eating with the Gentiles indicates that he had become personally convinced that there should be no separation between Jews and Gentiles. In fact, he had arrived at this conviction when God sent him to preach to Cornelius, for he stayed with Cornelius and ate with them (cf. Acts 10:48; 11:3). Thus, his withdrawal from the company of the Gentiles in Antioch was clearly out of pretense to conform to Jewish customs rather than because of his personal beliefs.
3. We use double standards because of expediency or self-centeredness. For example, we may impose a strict standard on others but are much more forgiving toward ourselves. To correct such an attitude, we should look to the interests of others rather than only to our own interests. Another cause of double standards is favoritism. Because of fear of those who have wealth, talents, or power, we may apply a different standard or

behave differently before them. But since God shows no favoritism, our conduct toward everyone must be consistent with God's word regardless of who they are.

4. When the rest of the Jews saw Peter, an apostle and leader of the church, separated himself from the Gentile believers, they also withdrew themselves. Even Barnabas, also a missionary to the Gentiles, joined in their hypocrisy. Because of Peter's prominence, his mistake had a strong influence on the other brothers and his fellow workers, and it caused a serious negative impact on the church.
5. Actions often speak louder than words. If we do not practice what we preach, we may weaken others' faith in God's word. Therefore, we should be witnesses of God's word not only through our preaching but also through our deeds.
6. Because Peter's action became a negative influence on the other believers, misrepresented the truth of the gospel, and might have even hurt the Gentile believers who were present, Paul needed to correct Peter's mistake in everyone's presence in order to rectify the wrongdoing immediately and stop it from doing further damage.
- 7a. He lived in the manner of Gentiles in the sense that, by eating with the Gentiles, he had set aside Jewish traditions and identified himself with the Gentile believers.
- 7b. By withdrawing from the fellowship with the Gentile believers, Peter was implying that a Gentile believer must live as a Jew in order to have fellowship with the Jewish believers. Here we can see the double standards in Peter's actions. While he had freed himself from Jewish customs, he now imposed them on his Gentile brethren.
- 8a. The words "Jews by nature" refer to those who were born as Jews. God had chosen the Jewish race and given them His law. Therefore, the Jews took pride in their heritage and considered Gentiles as unholy and sinful. Thus, the expression, "Gentile sinners" is taken from the perspective of a Jew.
- 8b. They have come to understand that no one could be justified by observing the law. Even the Jews, who believed that they were superior, needed to receive justification through faith in Jesus Christ.
9. The Greek word for "justified" shares the same root as that of "righteousness." Therefore, to be justified means to be reckoned righteous.
10. We cannot be justified by the works of law because our sinful flesh cannot possibly reach God's perfect standard (cf. Rom 8:3).
11. Paul poses a rhetorical question, which in essence asks, "If we become sinners in light of the justification through Christ, does this mean that

Christ encourages sin?" Those who were against the doctrine of justification by faith argued that preaching justification through faith in Christ apart from good deeds would encourage people to live in sin. Paul emphatically objects to such an argument. Through Christ we have come to realize that we are sinners, but that does not make Him the author of sin!

- 12a. He has destroyed his former conviction that man can be justified by his works. To revert back to the work of the law or to compel Gentile believers to live as Jews would be to rebuild what he has destroyed.
- 12b. Reverting to justification by works would prove that Paul's stance on justification by faith was a serious mistake and a violation of God's law, because he had, supposedly, promoted sin by preaching this doctrine. Thus, if we read verses 17 and 18 as one continuous thought, Paul's words may be paraphrased as, "In view of justification through Christ, even the Jews have become sinners. Does it mean, then, that Christ encourages sin? God forbid. In fact, I would be encouraging sin if I go back to the doctrine of justification by works, which I have renounced. Doing so would make me a lawbreaker and prove that I have been wrong in preaching that man must be justified through faith in Christ."
- 13a. The purpose of the law is to condemn. Through the law we become aware of our utter inability to keep the law. Consequently, we die to the law in the sense that we acknowledge our sin and are freed once and for all from our futile attempts to achieve righteousness through our own efforts.
- 13b. Having died to our own efforts, we can now receive a new spiritual life from God. This new life is God-centered and God-dependent because it is not based on our own merits.
- 14a. We have been baptized into the death of Christ and were united with Him in the likeness of His death. Our old, sinful self was done away with in baptism, and we have thus been freed from the bondage of sin. The life we now live is no longer our own, but Christ's (Rom 6:1-14; 1Cor 6:19).
- 14b. It is "by faith in the Son of God" that we are able to live out the life of Christ (20). Paul also adds that Christ loved him and died for him. The love of Christ motivates us to be crucified with Him and to let Him live through us.
15. Only when a person believes that Christ loves him and died for him will he receive Christ as his personal Savior and commit his whole life to Christ. Unless he has such kind of personal recognition, he would not be willing to be crucified with Christ and let Christ live in him.
16. Setting aside the grace of God means attempting to achieve righteousness through human endeavors.

17. The false gospel was not just an addition to the gospel of grace. It completely denies the saving effect of Christ's death. Therefore, Paul would not make the slightest compromise with this subversive teaching.

Lesson 5

Observation

Outline

- Appeal to the Galatians' Own Experience (3:1-5)
- Abraham's Faith and God's Promise (3:6-9)
- The Curse of the Law (3:10-12)
- Redemption and Blessings through Christ (3:13-14)
- God's Enduring Promise (3:15-18)
- The Law as Our Tutor (3:19-25)

Key Words/Phrases

Bewitched, Jesus Christ, crucified, Spirit, works of the law, faith, Abraham, justify, Gentiles, curse, redeemed, promise.

General Analysis

1. Paul frequently refers to Abraham because he was the key figure in God's covenantal relationship with His people and because the Jews consider themselves the children of Abraham. By showing that even Abraham was justified by faith, not by works, Paul effectively points out the error of the legalists in trying to seek their own righteousness through the works of the law.

Segment Analysis

1. The works of the law versus the hearing of faith (2,5). Spirit versus flesh (3).
2. Paul's questions aimed to appeal to the personal experience of the Galatians. The fact that the Galatians received the Holy Spirit and experienced miracles through faith apart from the works of law is a solid proof that a believer is justified by faith.
- 3a. The Greek word for "portray" means "set forth beforehand" (cf. Rom 15:4; Eph 3:3; Jude 4) or "write, depict, or paint before the eyes." Christ's crucifixion was portrayed before the Galatians through the preaching of the gospel as well as the lives of the preachers (cf. 2Cor 4:10).

- 3b. Paul marvels that the Galatians are forsaking their crucified Lord, whom they had once received with faith, and are now turning to the works of the law.
- 4a. Through faith in Christ, they have received the promised Spirit and been set free from condemnation by the Spirit of life (cf. Rom 8:1-2).
- 4b. They hope to "perfect" their salvation through the works of the law, as if faith in Christ is not sufficient for salvation.
5. Paul bases his argument here on the personal experience of the Galatians, including receiving the Holy Spirit (3,5) and miracles (5). The receiving of the Holy Spirit must be an experience that is as obvious as the miracles that God has worked among the Galatians (cf. Acts 2:1-4; 8:18; 10:44-46; 19:1-7). If receiving the Holy Spirit is only a silent, inward, event without any external signs, Paul's argument would not work, since the Galatians would not be able to recall any experience to realize that they received the promised Spirit through faith rather than through works. In fact, the legalists might even be able to argue that the Galatians did not receive the Spirit at all just as they had not received justification, and that in order to receive the Spirit, the Galatians must fulfill the works of the law.

We know from Acts 10 that when the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, it was such an obvious experience which even Peter and the brethren with him could witness (i.e. the Gentiles spoke in tongues just as the disciples did on Pentecost). This obvious sign from God completely removed any reservation on Peter's part to baptize the Gentiles. By the same token, it is with this strong evidence, which the Galatians had personally and clearly experienced, that Paul now convinces these Gentile believers that God had bestowed on them the Holy Spirit through their faith apart from the works of the law.

6. Abraham was justified because he believed God (6).
7. God's promise to Abraham, "In you all the nations shall be blessed" has come true in that the believers of all races may become children of Abraham and receive the grace of salvation through faith in Christ.
8. Whereas justification by faith is granted apart from man's merit, the law requires that a man must "continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law, to do them" (10) in order to be righteous. In short, faith is not based on works, the law is.
9. He took our sins upon Himself and suffered in our place (2Cor 5:21; 1Pet 2:24).
10. The word "redeem" means setting a person free by paying his owner a ransom. Under the curse of the law, a sinner is sold to sin to be its slave, and his wage is death. But our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased us with

His blood, thereby setting us free from sin and death (1Cor 6:20; 7:23; Heb 2:14-15; 1Pet 1:18-19).

11. Once a covenant is confirmed, it cannot be annulled or added to.
12. The law, which was added later, could not do away with God's promise to Abraham that the nations would be blessed through his Seed. In other words, we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ based on God's promise rather than on observing the law.
13. Paul explains that God's promise to Abraham concerning his seed actually refers to Christ because the word "seed" is singular. Since God has already foreordained salvation through Christ in His promise to Abraham, we must put our faith in Christ in order to be justified.
14. A promise, by definition, is received freely and not earned by good works. Thus, God's promise to believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, does not depend on the works of the law.
- 15a. It was added because of transgression till the Seed should come.
- 15b. It was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.
Many interpretations have resulted from the obscured meaning of verse 21. The expositor needs to answer the question of why Paul adds the statement, "but God is one." If this addition is to contrast the law and the promise, the verse may be interpreted as "whereas the law was mediated by a human agent, i.e. Moses, the promise was given by God Himself without mediation." But if the addition is to show the unique nature of the mediator of the law, then we may understand the verse to mean this: "whereas a human mediator mediates for parties other than himself, in the case of the law, God Himself mediates unilaterally."
- 15c. The law is not against the promise of God. The law cannot give life, or righteousness would have been by the law.
- 15d. The Scripture has confined all under sin.
- 15e. Before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law.
- 15f. After faith came, we are no longer under a tutor, i.e. the law.
16. The law makes us aware of our need for grace. By constantly reminding the sinner of his transgressions and weaknesses, it drives him to the throne of grace to receive justification through faith in Christ.

Lesson 6

Observation

Outline

- Sons and Heirs in Christ (3:26-29)
- Receiving the Adoption as Sons (4:1-7)
- Warning against Turning Back to Worldly Elements (4:8-11)
- Personal Appeal (4:12-20)
- Abraham's Two Sons (4:21-31)

Key Words/Phrases

Sons, faith in Jesus Christ, one in Christ Jesus, Abraham's seed, heirs, promise, child, slave, guardian, bondage, elements of the world, law, redeem, adoption as sons, Spirit, bondwoman, freewoman, covenants, Mount Sinai, Hagar, Jerusalem, flesh, Spirit.

General Analysis

1. In verses 12-20, Paul suddenly shifts from doctrinal arguments to personal appeal. He recalls the strong affection the Galatians once showed him, and he expresses his deep tender love for them.

Segment Analysis

1. Whereas the previous paragraph shows us our former status as a child under the guardianship of the law, this paragraph emphasizes our present status as sons through faith in Christ.
- 2a.
 1. We become sons of God when we are baptized. We used to be dead in our sins. But through baptism, we have been raised with Christ to a new life through the remission of sins and regeneration (Col 2:11-13; Rom 6:3-4; Tit 3:4-5).
 2. Through baptism we are now in Christ, for we were baptized "into Christ" (27). To be in Christ means belonging to Christ ("you are Christ's" in 29) and being able to partake of all the spiritual blessings in Christ, including eternal life (Rom 6:23; 2Tim 1:1), redemption (Rom 3:24), the love of God (Rom 8:39), sanctification (1Cor 1:2), new creation (2Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10), God's grace and kindness (Eph 2:7; 2Tim 1:9; 2:1), consolation (Phil 2:1), joy (Phil 3:3), and salvation (2Tim 2:10).
 3. Through baptism we have put on Christ. In this context, putting on Christ means being found righteous in Christ (2Cor 5:21). By His atoning sacrifice, the righteousness of Christ covers our shame and

- we become righteous in God's eyes. Having put on Christ, we have also put on a new identity as sons of God (Jn 1:12; cf. Lk 15:22).
- 2b. We are baptized into Christ through faith in Christ Jesus (26). Baptism is meaningless without faith in Christ, for it is the blood of Christ that washes our sins in baptism. This is why baptism naturally follows belief in Jesus Christ (Mk 16:16; Acts 8:35-38; 10:34-48; 16:30-33). If baptism is a work of the law, is Paul suggesting in verse 27 that we are in Christ by observing the law? The fact that he mentions baptism in discussing faith in Christ Jesus, which contrasts with the discussion on the law in the previous paragraph, shows that baptism is of faith and not of the law.
 - 3a. In Christ all ethnic, social, and gender barriers are torn down (cf. Eph 2:11-16).
 - 3b. By advocating the necessity of circumcision or observance of the law, the Judaizers have drawn a distinction between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers. But Paul rebuts with the truth that all believers are one in Christ.
 4. He contrasts the heir as a child and the heir as a son.
 5. They still remain under the guardianship of the law and live as slaves to the law.
 6. These are regulations and observances that unbelievers, whether Jews or Greek, adhere to before they come to Christ. In 4:10, the elements include the observance of days and months and seasons and years.
 7. The Lord Jesus came in the likeness of men and shared in our humanity (Phil 2:7; Rom 8:3; Heb 2:14-18). He was without sin, but He took upon Himself our transgressions and died under the curse of the law (Gal 3:13).
 8. We are not born as sons of God because we were dead in our sins. Neither did we earn our sonship. In His mercy God chose to adopt us as His sons through the atonement of Christ.
 9. The Spirit of God's Son. Thus, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 16:6-7). This contradicts the view that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are "distinct and coequal persons".
 10. He is the seal God gives us to testify with our hearts that we are sons of God and heirs of the inheritance (Rom 8:14-17; 1Cor 1:21-22; 5:4-5; Eph 1:13-14).
 - 11a. They are weak because they are powerless to deliver us from sin and bring us righteousness (cf. Rom 8:3-4). They are beggarly because they have nothing to offer in comparison with the riches in Christ (Eph 2:7; 3:8).
 - 11b. A believer in Christ who turns to the works of the law in order to find justification is like a pagan who hopes to please the gods with religious rituals and observances.
 12. Paul is reminding the Galatians that it was not by their own efforts that they came to know God, but that they have been called by God in His mercy and grace. Consequently, they should not turn back to the elements of the world in order to be justified by works.
 13. If we ever forget that we are saved by God's grace through faith and take pride in our dedication and offerings to God, then we are justifying ourselves on our own merits. This was what the Pharisee in Jesus' parable did (Lk 18:9-14). Sometimes, it is easy to fall into a mere outward formality in serving God and find security in our own zeal but forget to come to Christ for mercy and help.
 14. He feared that the Galatians would forsake the grace of Christ and that his efforts in leading them to Christ would have been in vain (11).
 15. Although Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among the Galatians as crucified, they still do not fully know Christ. Paul calls his efforts to restore their faith as the pains of a second childbirth, the first being the hard work that led to their conversion (cf. 11).
 16. The false teachers zealously court the Galatians for self-interest, but Paul labors genuinely for the benefit of the believers. In this paragraph, we can learn much from the motherly love that Paul demonstrates toward the Galatians. He considers the Galatians his little children, and he is deeply anxious for their spiritual welfare. While reasoning with them on the truth, he cannot help but digress from his argument and speak to them tenderly, pleading with them to turn back from the deception of the false teachers.
 17. The son by a bondswoman versus the son by a free woman; born according to the flesh versus born through promise; bondage versus freedom; the old covenant versus the new covenant; Jerusalem which now is versus the Jerusalem above; the desolate versus she who has a husband; born according to the flesh versus born according to the Spirit; being cast out versus being heir.
 - 18a. This refers to God's covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, which stated that if the Israelites kept God's law, they would be God's treasured possession (Ex 19:5). In other words, under the old covenant, which included the Old Testament law and regulations, obedience is the condition to a favorable standing with God.
 - 18b. The historical Jerusalem was, and still is, the center of religion for the Jews (cf. Jn 4:20). Thus, the earthly Jerusalem represents the observance of Mosaic law.

19. Seeing that God's promise had not come true, Sarah gave Abraham, Hagar the maidservant, through whom Abraham had a son. This decision was based on man's device and effort in the same way that those who seek justification through the works of the law attempt to replace God's promise with their own efforts.
20. The Jerusalem above is the church, the assembly of believers in Christ (Heb 12:22-24). Those who are born of God through Christ are set free from the burden of attempting to become righteous through the works of the law. Instead, through faith in Jesus Christ, they are able to live a renewed life through the power of the Spirit (Rom 7:6).
21. They will be cast out and not have a share in the inheritance.

Lesson 7

Observation

Outline

- Standing Fast in the Liberty in Christ (5:1-12)
- Walk in the Spirit (5:13-26)
 - The flesh versus the Spirit (5:13-18)
 - Works of the flesh (5:19-21)
 - Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23)
 - Death of the flesh and life in the spirit (5:24-26)

Key Words/Phrases

Stand fast, liberty, yoke of bondage, circumcised, debtor, law, fallen from grace, hope of righteousness, faith, love, leaven, offense of the cross, flesh, Spirit, crucified the flesh.

Segment Analysis

1. The word "therefore," is a clue that this verse is a conclusion to the previous passages. In the preceding paragraph, Paul showed that believers who are born of the Spirit are the children of the freewoman and heir to the promise. Thus, 5:1 exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty they have already found in Christ. The second part of this verse warns against becoming entangled again by the yoke of bondage, and it leads us to the elaboration of this warning in the following verses.
2. 1. "Christ will profit you nothing." For a Christian who goes back to the yoke of the law to be justified by works, the cross has lost its meaning. He has forsaken Christ, and he will not benefit at all from the saving grace of Christ.

2. "He is a debtor to keep the whole law." Anyone who chooses to be circumcised to fulfill the law has also chosen to obey all the statutes and regulations of the law perfectly. Since he rejects the saving grace of Christ and seeks justification through his own works, he has to bear the burden of paying for his debts to God if he ever fails to keep even one letter of the law.
3. "You have become estranged from Christ... you have fallen from grace." Attempting to be justified by the works of the law means forfeiting the free gift of justification God has given to us in Christ.
- 3a. Hope, faith, and love (cf. 1Cor 13:13; 1Thess 1:3; Rom 5:1-5; Col 1:4-5).
- 3b. Our hope of salvation is built on our faith in God and His promises ("wait...by faith" in verse 5). Our faith in Christ is not merely an abstract concept but is demonstrated by works of love ("faith working through love" in verse 6).
- 4a. Although we have been justified by faith, we still confront the challenges of sin and flesh while we wait for the final realization of our deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom 8:18-21). Thus, we look forward to the coming of "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2Pet 3:13).
- 4b. Our hope is not through the works of the law but through the Spirit by faith (cf. Gal 3:2). The Holy Spirit is a seal that guarantees our inheritance. Having begun by the Spirit and experienced a foretaste of God's glorious promise through the Spirit, we eagerly wait for the redemption of our bodies as we walk in the Spirit in this life (cf. Rom 8:23)
5. They hinder the Galatians from obeying the truth (7), persuade them not to obey the truth (8), trouble them (10), and persecute preachers of the gospel (11).
6. For the legalists, the cross of Christ is offensive because it removes all grounds for boasting about man's merits. See also 1Cor 1:18-25.
7. The liberty is sometimes misunderstood as freedom to commit sin. As believers in Christ, we have been set free from the burden of earning a righteous standing before God, but that does not mean that we start living unrighteous lives. Christians must also practice righteousness (1Jn 3:7). The Scripture teaches us that we have become the slaves of righteousness after Christ has redeemed us from the bondage of sin, and we should live to God by leading righteous lives (Rom 6:1-23).
8. Sinful desires.
9. To be free from the lusts of the flesh, we ought to walk in the Spirit (16, 25) and be led by the Spirit (18). We need to submit to the renewing

power of the Holy Spirit and bear the fruit of righteousness through the Holy Spirit.

- 11b. Just as a tree bears fruit because it has life, we can practice righteousness only if we are connected to the life of God and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as a good tree would not be fruitless or bear bad fruit, a Spirit-filled life would be accompanied by good works (Mt 7:16-20).
- 12a. All the law is fulfilled in one word: love (14). If we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the law (18). There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit (23).
- 12b. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is by no means contrary to God's law. In fact, it fulfills the requirements of the law (cf. Rom 3:31; 8:3-4). Whereas the works of the law seeks to carry out the letter of the law superficially, the fruit of the Spirit is an outflow of the righteousness of God from the heart (cf. Rom 2:29). In this sense, we are freed from the curse of the law and mere outward observance, that we may live out the spirit of the law by faith in Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Lesson 8

Observation

Outline

- Bearing One Another's Burdens (6:1-5)
- Doing Good (6:6-10)
- Glory in the Cross of Christ (6:11-15)
- Admonition and Benediction (6:16-18)

Key Words/Phrases

Trespass, burdens, law of Christ, share, God is not mocked, sow/reap, flesh/Spirit, corruption/everlasting life, do good, circumcised, cross of Christ, new creation, marks of the Lord Jesus, grace.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. Paul gives the command to the spiritual, i.e. those who bear the fruit of the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. A spirit-led life is not just theoretical. It is manifested in concrete action.
- 1b. Restoring a brother involves pointing out his error and guiding him back to the right path. We also need to pray for him so that he may be forgiven and strengthened.

- 1c. 1. It should be done "in a spirit of gentleness." In other words, we should not condemn the weak but help them out of genuine concern. Our Lord Jesus reminds us to love even the least of our brothers, just as a loving shepherd seeks the lost one (Mt 18:5-14). Spiritual restoration is like applying medication to a wound. It must be done with care and tenderness.
2. We need to be careful lest we also be tempted. We ought to take the brother's mistake as a warning for ourselves so that we will not also commit the same trespass. While helping our brother with sympathy, we should not tolerate or condone sin (Jude 22-23).
2. Sometimes, when a brother is weak, very few have the courage to help him and the love to pray for him. Instead, gossip and passing of judgment start going around among the brethren in church. Such attitude and practice is contrary to the spirit of love among Christians.
4. Bearing one another's burdens means helping each other's spiritual weaknesses through encouragement, correction, and prayer.
5. It is the new commandment our Lord has given to us—to love one another as He has loved us.
6. When a person thinks that he is something, he is bound to pass judgment on the weak instead of helping them with sympathy.
- 7a. We need to each examine ourselves to see if our deeds are pleasing to the Lord and not take pride by comparing ourselves with others. We will all be individually accountable to the Lord (1Cor 4:3-5; 2Cor 2:9-10).
8. While the command to bear one another's burdens refers to restoring the weak, the command to bear our own load has to do with being personally accountable to God.
9. Verse 6 teaches us to provide for the material needs of God's workers, who labor for our spiritual needs. In this sense, the good deeds are monetary. But from the rest of the passage, we can see that the references to good deeds may be applied to all areas of service and do not need to be limited to monetary help.
- 10a. Verse 7.
- 10b. God's principle of sowing and reaping is absolute. While man may fool himself with the thought that he can reap what he did not sow, God cannot be fooled.
11. We may sometimes "grow weary" and "lose heart" in doing good. Doing good requires sacrifice and persistence. Our good deeds may not always be appreciated. But we need to put our trust in the Lord's promise and keep sowing patiently until the time of reaping.

13. 1. Make a good showing in the flesh (12). This means putting on an appearance of godliness by observing the letter of the law but devoid of sincerity toward God.
 2. Avoid suffering persecution for the cross of Christ (12). By appearing to conform to the tenets of Judaism, these people will not have to suffer the persecution of the unbelieving Jews.
 3. Boast in the followers' flesh (13). If the Galatian believers are circumcised, then these false teachers may boast that these new converts are their followers.
- 15a. When the Bible speaks of "the world," it sometimes refers to godless values, unbelief, and the desires of the flesh (1Cor 1:21; 2:12; Gal 4:3; Col 2:8; Jas 1:27; 4:4; 1Jn 2:15-17; 5:4,5,19). In this context, "the world" has do with the boasting that comes from human achievements. To Paul, what he used to value and boast about is now rubbish (Phil 3:3-9). To the world, the Paul that used to be is now dead.
 16. Legalism pays attention to external achievements, but faith in Christ brings about the transformation of a person's entire being (2Cor 5:17).
 17. The rule as stated in verse 15, that the flesh counts for nothing, but a new being made through the Spirit.
 18. While the Judaizers may think that they are the Israel of God, in this epistle, Paul argues that those who are of faith are true descendants of Abraham and true Israel, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.
 19. The marks of the Lord Jesus on Paul's body are his sufferings for Christ's sake. Paul's sufferings are a signature of his apostleship (2Cor 6:4-6; 11:23-30).

Lesson 10

Observation

Outline

- Salutation (1:1-2)
- Blessings in Christ (1:3-14)
- Prayer that the Ephesians be enlightened (1:15-23)

Key words/Phrases

Spiritual blessing, in Him, heavenly places, chose, predestined, adoption as sons, pleasure of His will, redemption through His blood, mystery of his will, inheritance, Holy Spirit of promise, spirit of wisdom and revelation, eyes of your understanding, hope, riches, power, church.

Segment Analysis

1. Sanctification of the Spirit (1Cor 1:2; 1Pet 1:2), through the truth (Jn 17:19), by the blood of the covenant (Heb 10:29). In effect, a person who is baptized into the true church is washed by the blood of Jesus and if he maintains his sanctification by spiritual nurture in the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God, he remains a saint in God's eyes. In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church has an elaborate system of determining who can be called a saint and that also only some years after his/her death. Paul here addresses living saints not dead ones.
2. Not heaven in eternity but the spiritual realm that exists together with the physical realm today. Note that blessings are there (1:3), Christ is there (1:20), we are there (2:6), the spiritual battle is fought there (6:12).
3. "In Christ."
 - 4a. Chosen in Him for holiness and predestined to adoption as sons.
 - 4b. In Him, redemption through His blood.
 - 4c. In Him, gathered together in one.
 - 4d. Obtained an inheritance in Him.
 - 4e. Sealed with the Holy Spirit, the result of trusting in Him.
5. "According to the good pleasure of His will" (5). "According to the riches of His grace" (7). "According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself" (9). "According to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (11).
All spiritual blessings in Christ are not based on man's merits but proceed from God's sovereign purpose and immense grace.
6. Spiritual blessings are eternal and worthwhile. A Christian who realizes this will be able to have joy in the Lord no matter what his earthly physical circumstances (Hab 3:17-19). Consider how common it is for Christians to be happy and 'witness' for the Lord when they succeed in the world. Though such blessings in the world sometimes do come from God, clearly the emphasis here and in the rest of the Scriptures is on spiritual blessings of salvation and the perfection of our souls.
7. God desires all men to be saved (1Tim 2:4). The fact that not all men are saved implies that God does not impose His desire against man's free will. Man's exertion alone cannot save him (Rom 7:15-24). On the other hand, a man's free will to decide to accept the salvation of God is necessary but not sufficient. Man needs a giant hand up from God and this He accomplished by the death of Jesus and by choosing us. Man's free will is not negated because if God offers salvation, man can still reject Him.

Verses on predestination to consider:

Eph 1:5,11—Predestination according to the good pleasure and counsel of His will.

Rom 8:29,30—He foreknew then He predestined. Next, He called, He justified and He glorified.

The picture that emerges is that if one is ultimately saved, it is because of God's grace. If one is not saved, it is our rejection of His grace.

Does God determine the course of human lives? Yes, within His sovereign will (Rom 9:10-24). Is man helpless to determine his own destiny? Not completely, for man is alive and can decide (2Tim 2:20-21).

8. Although we have been adopted as sons and obtained an inheritance in Christ, we still wait for the ultimate adoption, the redemption of our bodies ("until the redemption of the purchased possession" in verse 14; Rom 8:23). In other words, we still expect the ultimate glory that will only be fulfilled at the final resurrection. But in the meantime, God has given us the Holy Spirit as a seal to show that we are his possessions. The presence of the Holy Spirit also guarantees the reality of our eternal inheritance (2Cor 1:21-22; 5:1-5).
9. For their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for all the saints (1:15,16).
10. 1. To know what is the hope of His calling (18). 2. To know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (18). 3. To know what is the exceeding greatness of His power (19).
11. If we know what the hope is, we will not pursue earthly things (cf 1Cor 15:19; Col 3:1,2).
If we know what are the riches of His glory, we would consider the things of this world as rubbish (Phil 3:7,8).
If we know what is the exceeding greatness of His power, we would not put our trust in man nor in wealth but only in God. We would rely on Him for all things (Ps 146:3-5).
12. God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him (20-21). God also put all things under His feet and made Him the head over all things (22).
13. The assembly of believers who have been baptized into Christ.
14. It tells us that God who 'fills all in all' is everywhere (cf Ps 139:7-12). It also tells us that God's presence or fullness tends to be more focused in some places than in others (Ex 20:24), people (Jn 14:16,17) or entities like His body, the church (Eph 1:23).

Lesson 11

Observation

Outline

Salvation (2:1-10)

Our former condition (2:1-3)

Salvation springs from God's mercy and love (2:4-7)

Salvation by grace, through faith and not of works (2:8-10)

Reconciliation (2:11-22)

The former condition of the Gentiles (2:11-12)

Reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ (2:13-18)

The one household of God (2:19-22)

Key Words/Phrases

Made us alive, raised us up, saved, by grace, through faith, works, workmanship, remember, peace, law, commandments, ordinances, reconcile, household of God, foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, holy temple, dwelling place of God.

Segment Analysis

1. To help us understand that God saved us by grace (verse 5), for a dead man cannot help himself.
2. Through the trespasses and sins we once walked. Following the devil (prince of the power of the air) (2). Lived in the passions of our flesh (3). Following the desires of the flesh and of the mind (3). Children of wrath (3).
3. Air here is used in the sense of it being naturally circumambient (surrounding). The devil here is described as completely surrounding and controlling the world.
4. It would seem that the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes neatly elaborate the desires of the flesh. Also, the terms 'pride of life' and 'desires of the mind' help us to understand intellectual pride and self-exaltation.
5. He is made alive together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (4-6).
6. Our salvation is by grace, meaning that it is God's free gift. This salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning work. It is not based on our merits.

7. Because this is such an important issue, please read the entire article in the appendix. Important excerpts are as follows:

As grace is the giving of salvation by God, so faith is the accepting of salvation on our part.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1 NRSV). By the above Scriptural definition, faith, being an ‘assurance’ and a ‘conviction’, can be seen as an abstract entity, a thing of the mind. James saw the misconception that could possibly arise from such a definition and stressed the absolute necessity of the projection of the abstract entity into action (which he terms works). He rejects the conception of faith as a thing purely of the mind or heart, independent of the actions proceeding from such an assurance and conviction. “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (Jas 2:17).”

A simple illustration of faith in its true sense – You are trapped in your burning office block. Out of the blinding smoke and chaos, you sight a fireman breaking through the flames. Salvation! You have faith in him, in his ability to save you from a fiery end. He beckons to you. You go to him. “Down on your knees and crawl so that you won’t choke on the smoke.” Down on your knees you go. “Up the stairway.” Up the stairway. Turn left, then right.” Turn left, then right. “Jump!” Jump? “Jump!” Jump. And you are saved.

The illustration underlines the intrinsic relationship between obedience and faith, action and faith. Is it possible to be saved from the fire if you have faith in the fireman but do not follow his commands? Is it possible to separate faith and works? “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” (Jas 2:22) True and saving faith is faith with works – not any kind of works but works which have their source in the conviction that Christ is the Saviour.

The doctrine that salvation is effected at the moment of confessing Jesus Christ faces serious disagreement in the light of Mark 16:16 and Matthew 24:13. The first commands the believer to be baptized for salvation. If one’s salvation is effected at the point of open confession, why this verse? The latter goes even further. It advocates a lifetime of faith, not a single important moment of faith alone. Salvation is to one who remains faithful to the end.

Salvation is a way. “Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Mt 7:14). Salvation begins (not ends) with belief in Jesus as the Saviour. Then follows the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do (Acts 2:37)?” To which Peter replied, “Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of

the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).” This next step is reconciliation with God through the removal of the barrier of sin by Jesus’ blood in water baptism (see Acts 22:16; 1Pet 3:21). Whereupon in due time, we shall be sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance (Eph 1:13,14). Our feet are now firmly planted on the road to salvation. But the way stretches on for a lifetime, a lifetime to be saved by the Spirit “for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Rom 8:13).” This is a process of renewal, growing in the Lord, not an accumulation of ‘works of righteousness which we have done’ (see Tit 3:5) but a living by faith, quickened by the Spirit.

Tit 3:5 is also an important parallel passage to Eph 2:9. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Comparing with Eph 2:8,9 we have:

1. works of righteousness which we have done – works;
2. His mercy – grace;
3. washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit – faith.

If we can see that the works mentioned in James 2 are different from the works in Eph 2:9, we are out of our muddle. The difference in the two kinds of works is in the source of each. The work in James has its source in faith. It is intrinsic in faith and without it, there is no faith. The works in Ephesians has its source in human moral exertions – deed done by us in righteousness. It is alien from a faith in Jesus, typical of the moral strivings of humanism, charity and other religions. Paul emphasizes that this kind of works cannot save since it is without faith in Jesus. It is then easy to understand why baptism or adherence to other commandments of God are necessary for salvation since these are NOT works done by us in righteousness but rather are works of faith.

8. Verse 9 speaks of human endeavors to find justification in good works apart from the grace of God. Such kind of works cannot save us. On the other hand, verse 10 speaks of the good works after a believer’s conversion, and these good works are the result of becoming “God’s workmanship.” In other words, this kind of works is made possible by the spiritual regeneration and renewal in Jesus Christ. We are the works of God’s hands. Therefore, we ought to give God the glory for the good works we perform as Christians.
9. God has chosen us in order to transform us in Christ so that we may walk in a new way of life and carry out good works.
10. These are some of the good works discussed in Ephesians:
 1. Abstaining from evil - see Eph 5:3-7 and contrast with 1Cor 5:1,2.

2. Serving the Lord - see Eph 4:1,2,11 and compare with Lk 9:59-62.
3. Walking in love - see Eph 5:2 and compare with Rev 2:2-5.
11. Because they do not partake in the covenants of promise that God made with Abraham. This covenant, whose sign is circumcision, remains for the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and finally the commonwealth of Israel.
12. The blood of Christ (13) and the broken body of Christ (14-16). This fact ties in very well with the doctrine of the Holy Communion where we are told that 'for we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread'. (1Cor 10:16,17)
13. The dividing wall of hostility is the law of commandments and ordinances.
14. Because God does not want two separate ways to Himself. From the beginning, His way of salvation is one and the people He chooses is one (see Eph 4:3-6). So while the promises and the covenants with the Jews cannot be revoked, God has to find a way to save both parties in one unified way and this He achieved through the blood of Christ and the death of His flesh.
15. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone. In Jesus, the whole structure is joined together. It grows into a holy temple to the Lord. In Jesus also, we are built into the temple (see 1Pet 2:5) for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.
- 16a. As members of God's household, believers are children of God and siblings of the same spiritual family. There should be no division on the basis of race, gender, wealth, status, or personal interests (Gal 3:26-28). Because we are all part of this family, we all have a part to play in the work of the church. No believer is a guest waiting to be served, but we all ought to serve one another.
- 16b. The church must conform to the teachings of the apostles and prophets, who had received the revelation of God (Eph 3:5; cf. Acts 2:42). Since the church is founded on the truth (1Tim 3:15), she must preach the same gospel that the apostles preached (Gal 1:8-9). Any congregation that strays from the apostolic doctrine cannot be the church of God.
- 16c. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the center of our faith (1Cor 3:10-11). Our faith must be built not on man but on Christ the solid rock. People make mistakes and may fall away, but the Lord is always trustworthy. Furthermore, it is the Lord Jesus Christ, not our common interests or any other factor, that unites us together as one body. The only way to achieve unity despite our diversity is for all believers to be joined to the Lord and share the same faith in Christ.

- 16d. From verse 21, we see that the church is a building project in progress. We are being fitted together by the hand of God until the entire building grows into a holy temple. Thus, the church needs to work towards spiritual maturity and unity in the faith (Eph 3:13-15). Our ultimate objective is to become a spiritual temple dedicated to God for His use, so that our assembly becomes a holy gathering in which prayers and thanks are offered to God continually and believers offer themselves as living sacrifices (i.e. they obey the will of God). Then God's name will be exalted through this temple.
- 16e. The church of God has the presence of the Holy Spirit. This means that believers in the church receive the promised Holy Spirit just as the apostles did on the day of Pentecost. Not only so, as a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, we need to seek to live a sanctified life (1Cor 6:19-20) and submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all areas of church ministry (cf. Acts 13:1-3; Eph 4:3).

Lesson 12

Observation

Outline

- The Dispensation of the Grace of God to the Gentiles (3:1-12)
- Prayer for the Ephesians (3:13-21)

Key Words/Phrases

Gentiles, dispensation of the grace of God, mystery, gospel, minister, unsearchable riches of Christ, manifold wisdom of God, church, glory, strengthened, Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, rooted and grounded in love, love of Christ.

Segment Analysis

1. This means that Paul had been entrusted to dispense (pass on) the grace of God (salvation) to the Gentiles i.e. he was entrusted to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The concept of stewardship impresses upon us that the grace of God actually belongs to the Gentiles and that Paul must dispense it and not keep it to himself.
2. See 3:6.
3. The church as a whole must dispense the gospel to all the world (Mt 24:14). For individual members, God may intend for one to be the light to his family or his friends at work.

4. God chose Seth over Cain; Noah; Abram was called out; Isaac over Ishmael; Jacob over Esau; the nation of Israel over all the other nations. The promise of God's grace was to the descendants of Abraham alone (Gen 17:7,8,15,16; 21:10). So it was difficult for the Jews to understand how the Gentiles could be saved unless they were circumcised and became Jews themselves. But the mystery is resolved in Christ (Gal 3:26-29) because Gentiles can become descendants of Abraham through Jesus without having to become a Jew.
- 5a. The grace of God given to him by the effective working of His power.
- 5b. Not his worldly qualifications. In fact because he was less than the least of the saints (see 1Cor 15:9,10).
- 5c. From the beginning of the ages, it has been hidden in God.
- 5d. The church (Jews and Gentiles have been united as one in the church).
- 5e. The principalities and the powers in the heavenly places – note the struggle in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12)
- 5f. Christ's work of salvation and faith in Christ.
6. Paul asks them not to become discouraged because of his hardships and imprisonment, for these were all for a worthy cause. Through Paul's sufferings, God's glorious purpose for the Gentiles is accomplished.
7. He considers his ministry a grace of God and feels unworthy for the task. Rather than complain about his sufferings, he knows that his tribulations are for a noble purpose.

In the same way, we ought to regard our mission of preaching the gospel as an honor. Then we will work for the Lord with gladness and not lose heart.
8. Prayer often involves the bowing of knees (Lk 22:41). This gesture indicates coming to God with sincerity and humility.
9. "The whole family in heaven and earth" refers to the spiritual family all believers are born into (2:19). Jews and Gentiles are now brethren in the Lord, for they both call God their Father (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15). Thus, the spiritual family originates ("derives its name") from the Father through Jesus Christ.
10.
 1. That the believers may be strengthened with might through God's Spirit in the inner man (16).
 2. That Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith (17)
 3. That they may be able to comprehend with all the saints the width and length and depth and height of Christ's love (18-19).
 4. That they may be filled with all the fullness of God (19).
11. The love of Christ (compare Eph 1:17ff).

12. Width – All people (1Tim 1:15)
Length – To the end (Jn 13:1)
Depth – Like an iceberg, more than we can imagine.
Height – Lifted up on the cross. This is the ultimate act of love i.e. to die for one's friends (Jn 15:13).
14. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (20). His power works in us (20).
15. He ascribed all glory to God. The climax of all prayers should be a heart-felt praise in which we give all glory to God and ask God's glory to be fully manifest (Rev 5:11-14).

Lesson 13

Observation

Outline

- The Unity of the Church (4:1-6)
- The Gifts for the Church (4:7-11)
- The Goal for the Church (4:12-16)
- The Moral Standards of the Church (the New Man) (4:17-32)

Key Words/Phrases

Walk worthy of the calling, unity, one, gifts, body of Christ, perfect man, fullness of Christ, new.

Segment Analysis

1. To be God's own people (1Pet 2:9-10), to be members of His body, the church.
2. Lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearing one another in love, eagerness to maintain unity. The first four virtues are passive towards others, absorbing contention and dissension till they fizzle out. Read Gideon's gentle answer that preserved the unity of Israel (Judg 8:1-3). The last virtue is active as in the teaching of Jesus on the Mount regarding making peace with one's brother before offering a gift to God (Mt 5:23,24).
- 3a. One Spirit—One Holy Spirit. Thus to be careful of false spirits (1Jn 4:1-6). Thus also the Holy Spirit is God (see Acts 16:7-10).
- 3b. One hope—the hope of being God's people in the kingdom of heaven. Thus do not believe in Jesus for things hoped for on earth alone (1Cor 15:19).

- 3c. One Lord—Our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus no one else should be called master other than Christ Himself (see Mt 23:8-10; 1Cor 1:12, 13).
- 3d. One faith—One core collection of truths we believe in faith (see Tit 1:4) which was once for all delivered to the saints through Jesus, the apostles and the prophets (Eph 2:20; Jude 3).
- 3e. One baptism—One mode of baptism, one receiving of baptism (Rom 6:3; Heb 10:26-29).
- 3f. One God and Father of all—Serve no other. The false alternatives: mammon (Mt 6:24) and Satan (Jn 8:44).
- 4a. He is sovereign over all creation.
- 4b. His works pervade all creation (cf. Rom 8:28).
- 4c. He dwells in the hearts of believers through His Spirit.
5. Whereas 4-6 stresses oneness, this paragraph discusses diversity within the body of Christ.
6. Apostle – Greek *'apostolos'*: a delegate; an ambassador of the Gospel; a commissioner of Christ (with miraculous powers); a messenger; he that is sent. All followers of Christ are disciples but not all are apostles. The 12 were called apostles (Mt 10:2, Rev 21:14). Paul, Barnabas, Andronicus and Junias were considered apostles (1Cor 15:7-9; Acts 14:14; Rom 16:7) indicating that apostleship is not restricted to the 12. It seems that to qualify as an apostle, one must be personally sent by Jesus (1Cor 9:1,2).
- Prophet – Prophets had their roles in the early church (Acts 11:27,28; 21:10,11). But they still had to conform to the perfect standard of God (Deut 18:20-22; 13:1-5). Prophecy in Hebrew is *'naba'* – speak (or sing) by inspiration (in prediction or simple discourse). Prophet in Greek is *'prophetes'* – a foreteller; by analogy, a divine speaker. So prophecy is more than foretelling the future, it is speaking the word of God. Thus the church is encouraged to seek the gift of prophecy above the gift of speaking in tongues (to others) (1Cor 14:1-5).
- Evangelist – Greek *'euangelistes'*: a preacher of the gospel. Philip was an evangelist (Acts 21:8). Timothy was charged to do the work of an evangelist (2Tim 4:5). An apostle is personally sent by Jesus and a prophet speaks under the inspiration of God. In contrast, an evangelist preaches the good news that he has heard – that true belief in Jesus saves. Also in contrast with the pastor and the teacher, the evangelist's scope is to those outside the church.
- Pastor – Hebrew verb is *'raah'*: to tend a flock i.e. pasture it. The Greek noun is *'poimen'* – a shepherd (literally or figuratively). The link to the commission of Christ in Jn 21:15-17 to feed His lambs, tend His sheep and feed His sheep is clear. The work of a pastor, in contrast to the evangelist, is to shepherd the members in the church.

Teacher – Greek *'didaskalos'*: an instructor (doctor, master, teacher). A teacher is different from a prophet or an evangelist in that it is his responsibility that his students understand what he teaches. The teacher has to ensure doctrinal understanding (Heb 5:12). The teacher is also reminded that he shall be judged with greater strictness (Jas 3:1). So why be a teacher then? Because it is our duty and responsibility if we have been given the gift (Lk 12:42-48).

Note: Compare these gifts with the gifts in 1Cor 12:28. The two lists overlap but by themselves neither are comprehensive.

7. They are for equipping the saints for the work of ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ (12).
8. 'Ministry' in Greek is *'diakonia'* meaning attendance (as a servant). The root word is *'diako'* meaning to run on errands. This does not demean the work involved which is the glorious work of saving souls but clearly shows the vast gulf in status between the master (God) and the minister (the human worker). The minister thus should not see himself as superior to the common member and lord it over them (Lk 12:45-47) but rather should realize his responsibility to his superior, God Himself.
9. Spiritual wisdom and stature. These two aspects coincide with "truth" and "love" in 15-16. A mature church is one in which believers are filled with the knowledge of God, being able to discern what is right. But spiritual knowledge must be accompanied by love (1Cor 8:1). In other words, believers need to develop and manifest Christ-like characters by supporting each other and edifying one another out of love.
10. No believer in the church should be idle, but everyone has his share of work in the body of Christ. While we each play our individual roles, we cannot afford to function alone. We need to work together with other believers in one accord.
11. Futile in their minds. Darkened in their understanding. Alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance. Due to their hardness of heart, have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice uncleanness.
12. Verses 20-24 talk clearly of putting off the old nature and putting on a new nature. Jesus accepts us even though we are still in our old nature BUT He expects us to change after we 'learn Christ'. He said to the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more." (Jn 8:3-11).
13. The unconverted mind is futile, darkened, ignorant, and blind. On the contrary, the mind of the new man has been renewed. Through the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, we have come to know the surpassing greatness of Christ and the glory of our inheritance (Eph 1:17-19; Phil 3:7-8). Thus, our values, priorities, and outlooks in life should be focused on the

things above rather than on the desires of our flesh (Rom 12:2; 13:14; Col 3:1-4).

14. Speak the truth (25).

Anger without sin because it is given a time frame to expire (26-27).

Stop sinning – the thief must no longer steal (28).

Do good – the former thief must find honest work so that he may help others (28).

No evil talk, speak edifying words (29).

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit (30)—The Holy Spirit lives in the believer (Jn 14:17) and teaches him the truth (Jn 14:26). We grieve Him when we refuse to listen to His teaching and prefer to walk according to our own will. Read also Ps 78:40,41.

Put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and slander (31).

Be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving (32).

Lesson 14

Observation

Outline

God, the Role Model (5:1-2)

Warning against Continuing in the Works of Darkness (5:3-14)

Walking in the Light (5:15-21)

Key Words/Phrases

Imitators of God, walk in love, fitting, light, darkness, walk circumspectly, submit, fear of God.

General Analysis

1. Filthiness, foolish talking, coarse jesting vs. giving of thanks; darkness vs. light; have fellowship vs. expose; fools vs. wise; unwise vs. understand; drunk with wine vs. filled with the Spirit.

Segment Analysis

1. The first step in imitating someone is to get to know the person and study his every expression and action. In the same way, to be an imitator of God, we need to know God intimately through studying His word and observing carefully God's nature. In particular, we need to study the life of our Lord Jesus and learn from His heart, attitude, speech, and actions.

After knowing the person we imitate, we need to keep practicing in order to be a good imitator. Likewise, imitating God also involves constant practice. That is why we need to constantly train ourselves in godliness until we attain the full measure of the fullness of Christ.

2. To be baptized (Mt 3:13-17).

Overcoming temptation (Mt 4:1-11; Heb 4:14-16).

Prayer (Lk 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; 22:32, 39-46; Heb 5:7,8).

Humility (Mt 11:29; Phil 2:5-8).

Love (Jn 15:13; Eph 5:2).

3. In 1Cor 4:16 and 11:1, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitates Christ. To those who have not seen Jesus personally, it is allowed that they imitate men of God but only insofar as these men of God imitate Jesus themselves. Thus leaders must set good examples so that the flock in imitating these examples may be brought along the good way (cf. 1Tim 4:12; Jas 5:10). Furthermore, followers must grow out of becoming followers of these men per se (cf. 1Cor 3:3-7).

4. Loving others involves personal sacrifice.

5a. No fornication, uncleanness or covetousness (3). No filthiness, foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting (4).

5b. Those who practice such sinful deeds will not inherit God's kingdom (5).

7. The persuasion of our unbelieving friends; godless conversations; messages from the media; etc.

8a. Do not associate with those who walk in darkness and counsel that there is nothing wrong.

Walk as children of light by following all that is good and right and true.

Please the Lord.

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them.

8b. So that the sleeper may arise from the dead. The clear teaching of the moral standards of God will alert the one walking in darkness to his impending destruction if he continues in that way. When he awakens and understands his predicament and sees his works as unfruitful and dirty, he will turn to the light and be saved (see 1Jn 1:6-8).

9. Not as fools but as wise (15; cf. Prov 2:6-15).

Redeeming the time because the days are evil (16; cf. Eccl 9:12).

Do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is (17; cf. 1Thess 5:16-18).

Do not be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit (18; cf. Eccl 10:16,17).

Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (19; cf. Col 3:16).

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of Jesus (20; cf. Col 3:17; Heb 13:15).

Submitting to one another in the fear of God (21; cf. 1Pet 5:5).

10. To contrast the way of light with the way of darkness. The Christian is constantly reminded that light and darkness are very different. Though man may often say that there are grey areas and so justify a walk in the dark, Christians must remember that 'God is light and in Him is no darkness at all' (1Jn 1:5). Thus to walk in the dark is seldom a walk on the boundary of light and darkness but is often an act totally contradictory to the light.
11. Paul exhorts us to redeem the time because the days are evil (16). In this world, we are surrounded by godless values and lifestyles. The devil hopes to take our time away by luring us with pleasure and wealth. If we do not carefully use our precious time to serve the Lord, we will easily waste our lives away by living the lifestyles of unbelievers and go after the material pursuits of this world.
We also need to make good use of our time to prepare ourselves for the Lord's coming. Note that in this passage, redeeming the time is an act of wisdom. We cannot afford to be like the foolish virgins in Jesus' parables, who did not spend the time to prepare oil in their lamps (cf. Mt 25:1-13). Instead, we need to be like the wise virgins and prepare ourselves for the Lord's coming by constantly seeking the Spirit's fullness and carrying out the Lord's will.
12. Being filled with the Spirit means finding fulfillment and joy in the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, being drunk with wine represents indulging in sensual pleasures. Therefore, here is the contrast: A spirit-filled person finds joy in doing the will of God, but a drunkard finds pleasure in the material. A spirit-filled person is sober and wise, making good use of his time, but a drunkard is foolish, wasting his life away in meaningless indulgence.
13. A believer's heart should always be filled with the word of God, praise, joy, and thanksgiving.

Lesson 15

Observation

Outline

- Submitting to One Another (5:21)
- The Relationship between A Husband and His Wife (5:22-33)
- The Relationship between A Child and His Parent (6:1-4)
- The Relationship between A Slave and His Master (6:5-9)

Key Words/Phrases

Submitting, wives, husbands, to the Lord, head, Christ, body, love, gave Himself, church, one flesh, mystery, respects, children, obey, parents, bondservants, masters, sincerity of heart.

Segment Analysis

1. All forms of submission originate from the fear of the Lord. In other words, we submit to one another as to the Lord (see 5:22, 6:5; Col 3:2-23).
2. Submit to her husband as to the Lord (5:22). Be subject in everything to her husband (5:24). Respect her husband (5:33).
- 3a. Be the head of his wife (5:23). Love his wife in the same way Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (5:25). Love his wife as his own body (5:28). Leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife (5:31; Gen 2:24). Love his wife as himself (5:33).
- 3b. The passage teaches us that the husband needs to give himself for the wife just as Christ did for the church. This suggests that the husband needs to make more sacrifices and shoulder more responsibilities for the wife. Besides showing his affections for his wife, he needs to protect and care for his wife as he does his own body, bear the pains and hardships of the family, be sensitive to and considerate of his wife's needs, carry heavy loads, be willing to suffer for his wife, do the extra work even when he is tired, make plans as well as difficult decisions for the family, take the lead to find solutions to problems, etc.
- 4a. By comparing the relationship of a husband and his wife to that of Christ and His body (the church). Thus note that:
Christ is the head of the church (5:23).
The church is subject to Christ (5:24).
Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (5:25).

Christ sanctified the church, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word (water baptism) ... that she might be holy and without blemish. Thus Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, His body (5:26,27,29,30).

- 4b. Equality is unfitting in the discussion on a husband-wife relationship just as it is unfitting when we speak of the relationship between the head and the body. Equality applies to the relationship between two distinct individuals, but the husband and wife are one body. Equality stresses rights and privileges, but love stresses giving ourselves and fulfilling our responsibilities.

Using the analogy of the head and the body, Paul teaches us that husbands and wives are one (5:31). Just as the body submits to the head, the wife should also submit to the husband. This does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband, just as the body is not inferior to the head. It simply shows that both the head and the body have their respective roles to play. The role of the head is not to dominate, but to think on behalf of the body and be considerate for the needs of the body. In the same way, the husband should be considerate of his wife's needs whenever he makes decisions. His leadership role is built on his love for his wife, not dominance over her.

Many women today cannot accept the teaching on submission for two reasons: They do not experience their husband's love and misunderstand the meaning of husbands as being the head in a husband-wife relationship. But such obstacle does not exist in a loving relationship in which the husband truly cares for his wife and gives himself for her in everything. In such a trusting relationship, the wife gladly submits to the husband's decisions, knowing that he always does what is best. In fact, submission becomes a blessing in the same way submission to the Lord is a blessing. She feels secure because she is trusting someone who always makes sacrifices for her.

6. The washing of water by the word refers to baptism into Christ. Both water and word are involved, meaning that spiritual cleansing takes effect during baptism according to God's word (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16). Baptism is effective because Christ has given Himself for the church (Eph 5:25). His precious blood washes our sins away during baptism.
- 7a. Obey his parents in the Lord (6:1). Honor his father and mother (6:2).
- 7b. Obedience to parents is built on obedience to the Lord. Therefore, the verse continues with "for this is right"—Obedience to parents is right because it is right in the eyes of God.
8. Do not provoke them to anger (6:4). Bring them up in the training (discipline) and admonition (instruction) of the Lord (6:4).
9. By referring to the 10 Commandments (6:2,3; Ex 20:12).

- 10a. Fathers should not make unreasonable demands or let out their own anger and frustrations on their children.
- 10b. As the spiritual leader in the family, the father is responsible for teaching his children the fear of the Lord (Deut 6:4-9).
11. The nuclear family is created when a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife (Eph 5:31). In this nuclear family, the husband is the head of his wife and the children must obey the parents. Note that children need to obey their parents only as long as they are children, which by definition is when they have not left their parents to form their own nuclear families. Based on this, there should be no confusion in the Christian family as to who is the head of the family—it is the man (who is husband and father) and not the couple's parents/parents-in-law. To one's parents and parents-in-law, a married person does not owe obedience but rather love, respect and a responsibility to take care of them (1Tim 5:4,7,8). It is very good if a good Christian couple can extend their respect of their parents to include obedience but this should not be placed as a burden on the couple.
12. Be obedient with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ (6:5). Not with eyeservice but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart (6).
13. Do good to him with the knowledge that he will receive reward from the Lord (6:8,9). Do not threaten (6:9).
14. That Christ is the Master of both and that there is no partiality with Him (6:9).

Lesson 16

Observation

Outline

The Whole Armor of God (6:10-20)

Conclusion (6:21-24)

Segment Analysis

- Some people may believe in Jesus but their faith is such that they doubt His ability to help. Like a child submitting to a bully because somehow he thinks that the bully is stronger than even his parents, the weak Christian does not really understand the power of God and needs to be enlightened (see Eph 1:19) on His might to be able to turn to Him.
- "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" and "put on the whole armor of God."

As mentioned earlier, the spiritual warfare we wage is against the devil and the arena is in the spiritual world (the heavenly places). The strength of the Lord is obtained by putting on the armor of God. As a Christian song vividly puts it, when we put on the armor of God, the devil sees Christ in us and we in Christ, an awesome sight indeed.

3. To stand against the wiles of the devil, withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (11-14). The devil hopes to strike us down and make us his captives, but with the armor of God, we can remain firm in our journey of faith to the end.
5. We need to be equipped with all the resources available to us, not lacking any one of them. Putting on every piece of this armor requires great diligence and constant dependence on the grace of our Lord (cf. 2Pet 1:5-8).
6. We need to pray in the Spirit, interceding for all the saints, especially the ministers of God's word. We need to be watchful, always examining ourselves (Mt 26:41). We need to persevere and never lose heart in our prayers (cf. Lk 18:1-8).
7. Though a prisoner, Paul continues to preach the gospel.
8. Love with faith—because faith is so central to this epistle and that faith can be ignored in the pursuit of the greatest which is love (see 1Cor 13:13).

Sincere love for our Lord Jesus Christ—Many have loved Jesus but have turned back to their former ways. In this epistle, Paul continually warns against turning back to the old ways and exhorts the believers to live a new life in Christ. With sincere love for Christ, this can be realized.

Armor	What It Represents	Meaning of Representation
Girded Waist	Truth	The stability of the human body depends on the firmness of its centre of gravity at the waist. By girding the waist, a man ensures that the organs in the groin and waist regions are protected and kept firmly close to the body. Truth (the teachings of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets) form the foundation of stability for the church (Eph 2:20-22). Revisiting another concept in Eph 4:13-16, truth in love is portrayed as central to growth of the body.
Breastplate	Righteousness	Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Mt 12:34). So also does the heart influence what we do and where we go. We protect our heart with righteousness. For the good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good (Mt 12:35). Though one may seek to do good by controlling say his tongue, he will do better to go to the source of his actions i.e. his heart (feelings or thoughts).
Shoes	Preparation of the Gospel of Peace	Romans 10:15 quoting Isaiah 52:7 confirms that the feet are best when they travel to bring good news. The Christian must realize that his life no longer is his to go where he wants to but that it now belongs to Christ (Gal 2:20). Members of the True Jesus Church have a responsibility to tell the good news to the world. We have to realize also that we are the True Church and bring the full gospel to our friends in other churches so that they too may be saved.
Shield	Faith	Three things abide – faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love (1Cor 13:13). A wise man understands the relative importance of things and is not misled into thinking that if one is the greatest, the others are dispensable. 1Jn 5:4 states that it is our faith that overcomes the world. In the battle against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, faith is the first line of defense and an all-encompassing defense at that. In persecution, as what happened to our brethren in communist China for many years, life and death hinged on faith – if one maintained his faith, he would lose his physical life and gain eternal life but if he renounced his faith, he would be spared here but not in the Judgement (Mt 10:39).
Helmet	Salvation	Constantly we are to realize and recall that we are saved, delivered from the power of sin and of the devil (Eph 4:22-24; Jn 8:34-36; Rom 6:17-19; Gal 5:1). With this understanding, we turn to Jesus who can deliver us from every infirmity and weakness. So it is that to a Christian, the mental battle is won when he fully accepts the salvation of Christ. What the world considers impossible to overcome, even attitudes such as homosexuality and pride, can be overcome believing in the salvation of Christ.
Sword	Word of God	This is the only offensive part of the armor protects the whole body. The sword can be used to parry attacks as well as to strike at the enemy. The best defense is an offense. The Word of God is Jesus (Jn 1:1,14) who is also the Spirit (see Acts 16:6,7). It is with the Word that we strike down the lies of the devil that form strongholds which hold men captive (2Cor 10:3-6). Jesus countered the temptations of Satan with quotes from the Scriptures (Mt 4:1-11).
Prayer		Prayer is communication with God. In war, it is vital that a soldier communicates with his superiors to receive instructions and to ask for help when in trouble. We are told to pray at all times, so we must communicate our needs to God and receive comfort and instruction from Him in our prayer.

Chart C The Whole Armor of God

Lesson 18

Observation

Outline

- Salutation (1:1-2)
- Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
- Prayer (1:9-11)

Key Words/Phrases

Grace, peace, joy, fellowship in the gospel, partakers, long for, affection of Jesus Christ, more and more, knowledge, discernment, fruit of righteousness.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. In particular, God's grace is the free gift of redemption and forgiveness He gives to mankind through Christ (Rom 3:24); In general, it refers to all the spiritual blessings He bestows on those who are in Christ, including hope, joy, reconciliation, love, and peace.
Peace refers to the inner tranquility and assurance that result from God's grace (Jn 16:33).
2. He addresses them as saints. Believers are saints not because they have attained to a certain moral standard but because they have been justified by faith and put on the righteousness of Christ (3:9).
- 3a. Paul is filled with joy and thanksgiving whenever he remembers and prays for the Philippians (3-5).
- 3b.
 1. Their fellowship in the gospel (5).
 2. Confidence that God will complete the good work in them (6).
- 4a. They have supported Paul's ministry by 1) standing with him in his imprisonment and defense of the gospel (1:7, 17); 2) praying for him (1:19); 3) sending Epaphroditus to assist him in his work (2:25); 4) and sending him monetary gifts (4:14-16).
- 5a. He begins the good work in us, and He completes this work. He has chosen us to receive salvation and inspired us to our ministry. He will strengthen us continually until He accomplishes His purpose in us. Such persistent work of God demonstrates His faithfulness (cf. 1Thess 5:23-24). While we strive to carry out God's work, we should always remind ourselves of the faithful work of God in us.
6. The day of Jesus Christ will be the day when Christ receives the believers and when we will give accounts of our work and receive our rewards from the Lord.

7. Paul always has the believers in his heart and he longs for them with the affection of Jesus Christ. Unlike a hireling, who works only for his wage, Paul is like the Good Shepherd, who cares for his sheep (cf. Jn 10:11-14). As servants of Christ, we must have the believers in our hearts always and love them with the affection of Jesus Christ.
8.
 1. "that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment" (9).
 2. "that you may approve the things that are excellent" (10).
 3. "that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" (10).
 4. "being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (11).
9. Love must be in truth (1Jn 3:18; 2Jn 1:1; 3Jn 1:1). In other words, our actions of love need to conform to the principles of God's word. Misguided or blind love may ruin others rather than build them up. Therefore, we need to grow in our spiritual knowledge and discernment as our love grows.
10. Being able to approve the things that are excellent means having the wisdom to weigh our choices. We often face situations where we have to choose among things that seem equally right and valid. Therefore, we need to have the discernment from God to always choose what is best.
11. "Fruits" in Scripture represents a person's conduct and speech (Mt 3:8-10; 7:15-20; 12:33-35; Gal 5:22-23). "Righteousness" literally means "that which is right." "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness," therefore, means always doing the things that are right in the eyes of God, leading a lifestyle that exhibits the righteousness of Christ.
12.
 - 1) We need to depend on God in order to grow spiritually. That is why Paul prays to God for the growth of the believers.
 - 2) A sign of life is continual growth, and there is no end to spiritual growth. Since our faith is a living faith, we must not remain stagnant but always seek for higher goals in our spiritual development.
 - 3) Our lives should be characterized by the abundance of spiritual qualities, as indicated by the words, "abound still more and more," and "filled with."

Lesson 19

Observation

Outline

The Gospel Advanced through Imprisonment (1:12-14)

The Gospel Advanced through Preaching (1:15-18)

The Gospel Advanced through Prayer (1:19-20)

The Gospel Advanced through Labor (1:21-26)

Key Words/Phrases

Furtherance of the gospel, my chains, preach Christ, rejoice, Christ will be magnified in my body, progress and joy of faith.

Segment Analysis

1. While he was visiting Jerusalem, some Jews had him arrested for preaching the gospel, but he appealed to Caesar to hear his case.
- 2a. That the things which happened to him have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel (1:12).
- 3a.
 1. It has become evident to those around Paul that he is in chains for Christ (13).
 2. His imprisonment has encouraged the brethren to become much more bold to speak the word without fear (14).
4. Since Paul has determined to magnify Christ in his body (1:20), his heart is Christ-centered rather than self-centered. Instead of pitying himself for his sufferings, he rejoices that his chains have served to make Christ known.
- 6b. These people preach out of jealousy, hoping that they may win more converts than Paul or that they may enjoy greater popularity and respect. They think that their preaching would add affliction to Paul's chains, supposing, perhaps, that their success in evangelical work would stir up Paul's resentment.
- 7a. Once again, he places the cause of the gospel above his personal interests. Even though these people preach the gospel at the expense of his personal well-being, he rejoices as long as Christ is preached (18).
- 7b. We should rejoice when God uses others to advance His work, even if they carry out God's work with wrong motives or with the intention to compete with us. This is not to say that we should condone impure motives in serving God. But we ought to have a selfless attitude and place God's glory over our own interests. If we seek not our own glory but God's, we can truly rejoice in serving God whether in prosperity or adversity (Jn 5:30-31; 12:23-29).
8. The believers' prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (19).
9. Paul is confident that he would not be ashamed of the message of Christ he preaches. He knows that whether he lives or dies, Christ's name will surely be exalted.
- 10a. Christ is magnified in his body, whether by life or by death (20).

- 10b. Because Paul considers his body an instrument for magnifying Christ, he gladly accepts imprisonment, others' envy, and even death as long as he is able to exalt Christ's name.
11. Paul's life is a manifestation of Christ. He has surrendered himself completely so that it is no longer he who lives, but Christ lives in him (Gal 2:20). It is Christ who directs his every motive and action. For Paul, he has everything to gain by death. Not only would the name of Christ be exalted through his martyrdom, he will receive the reward from the Lord and be with Christ forever.
- 12c. See 22-26.

Lesson 20

Observation

Outline

Appeal to strive together for the gospel (1:27-30)

Appeal to be like-minded (2:1-4)

Appeal to have the mind of Christ (2:5-11)

Key Words/Phrases

Gospel, stand fast, one spirit, one mind, salvation, suffer, joy, like-minded, same love, one accord, one mind, lowliness of mind, humbled.

General Analysis

1. Stand fast in one spirit (1:27); having one mind (1:27; 2:2); having the same love (2:2); being of one accord (2:2); not doing anything out of selfish ambition or conceit (2:3); in lowliness of mind esteeming others better than ourselves (2:3); looking out for each other's interests (2:4); having the mind of Christ (2:5).

Segment Analysis

- 1a. The teachings on unity and obedience are all about conducts that are worthy of the gospel.
- 1b. Our conduct testifies to our message.
2. Standing fast in one spirit; striving together with one mind; not terrified by our adversaries; being ready to suffer.
3. The believers' steadfastness and boldness for the faith of the gospel.

- 4a. The believers had previously witnessed how Paul was persecuted and imprisoned (e.g. Acts 16:16-24). Now they hear about his afflictions and chains (Phil 1:13, 16).
- 4b. 1. Know that we are destined for suffering (1Thess 3:3; 1Pet 4:12). 2. Consider it a privilege and joy to suffer for Christ because we share in the sufferings of Christ and such sufferings are beneficial to our faith (Jas 1:2-4; 1Pet 1:6,7; 4:12,13).
5. The consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, and affection and mercy enable Christians to become one. What all believers have in common is that they have all received God's grace and have been brought into God's household (cf. 1Cor 12:12-13; Eph 2:11-18; 4:1-16). It is God who makes unity among believers possible, and it is His Spirit that binds us together. Thus, God's grace and love serve as the basis and motivation of unity.
- 6a. 1. Selfish ambition and conceit, resulting in power-struggle, division, slander, judging others, stubbornness, jealousy, etc.; 2. Being self-seeking, resulting in inconsiderate words and actions that hurt others.
- 6b. Love, affection, mercy, lowliness of mind, looking out for others' interests.
7. The Lord Jesus willingly laid aside His glory and humbled Himself. He became a servant (Mk 10:45). He was obedient to the point of death (Mk 14:36). We should likewise forsake our selfish ambitions and serve one another with a heart of submission.
8. In terms of Christ's humility, the hymn describes the descent of Christ from the glorious God to a sinner on the cross: Being in the form of God > did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (NIV) > made Himself of no reputation > coming in the likeness of men > taking the form of a bondservant > humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death > even the death of the cross.
In terms of His exaltation, the hymn finds its climax in the lordship of Christ: Therefore God also has highly exalted Him > and given Him the name which is above every name > that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth > and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord > to the glory of God the Father.
9. The phrase "made Himself of no reputation" in verse 7 is literally "Himself He emptied." Unity is not possible without denying and emptying ourselves. To achieve unity, we must be ready to forsake our personal rights, interests, and pride. Only then can we serve one another in true humility.
10. It was His great love for us that brought Jesus to this world to die on the cross (Jn 3:16; 15:13; Rom 5:6-8; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:25; 1Jn 3:16). Likewise,

our love for our brothers and sisters also compels us to put aside all selfish ambition and conceit, consider others better than ourselves, and look out for the interests of others.

Lesson 21

Observation

Outline

Appeal to Work out Salvation (2:12-18)

Plans for Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30)

Key Words/Phrases

Work out your own salvation, blameless and harmless, shine as lights, word of life, rejoice, like-minded, things which are of Christ Jesus, gospel, longing, distressed, esteem.

Segment Analysis

1. Conduct ourselves as true children of God so we may be acceptable to God.
2. Obedience to God's command is the way to work out our salvation. In preparing ourselves to meet God, we must serve Him with reverent fear by leading holy lives (Heb 12:14, 28-20).
3. Working out our own salvation does not mean earning our salvation with our efforts. Verse 12 and 13 must be read as one single thought. We must work out our own salvation because it is God who works in us. Without the work of God in believers' lives, salvation would simply not be possible. But believers must continuously respond by faith to God's saving work. Such "working out" is an act of obedience that demonstrates our faith in the saving grace of God. It does not serve as the basis of our justification or salvation.
- 4a. Complaining and disputing is the way of this crooked and perverse generation. While the people of this dark world constantly complain and dispute with one another, believers, who are the light of this world, should not be conformed to such attitude and behavior. In fact, we must do *all things* without complaints or disputes.
5. To hold fast the word of life means adhering to the teachings of the gospel. This phrase can also be translated, "hold out the word of life" (NIV). In this sense, the verse reinforces the previous statement about shining as lights in the world. Not only should we persist in our

obedience, we must also make the word of life known to the dark world by our godly lifestyles.

6. The analogy is that of a drink offering being poured out on the sacrifice (cf. Ex 29:38-41; Num 15:1-10). Paul considered his ministry and life a service to the believers. The purpose of his “running” and “laboring” is that the believers may be accepted in the day of Christ. Paul’s genuine love for the believers enabled him to have such a selfless spirit.
7. 1. He sincerely cares for the state of the believers (20). 2. He seeks the things of Christ Jesus (21). 3. His character has been proven, since, like a son with his father, he has served with Paul in the gospel (22).
8. Just as the Philippians have always been a reason for Paul’s joy, he is confident that reports about their further progress will be a source of great encouragement.
- 9a. The work the Lord has entrusted to us—preaching the gospel (22) and caring for the faith of believers (20).
- 10a. Brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier (25).
- 10b. He was sent by the Philippians to bring their gift to Paul and to minister to his needs (25, 30; 4:18).
- 11a. See verses 26-28.
- 11b. In this example we can see that the Philippians, Paul, and Epaphroditus all look out for others interests instead of their own. We ought to also care for one another with such genuine concern.
12. Whereas the world esteems people of talent, wealth, and power, we should esteem those who labor for the work of the gospel (30; cf. 1Tim 5:17). By holding God’s workers in esteem, we honor God and His work (Mt 10:40).

Lesson 22

Observation

Outline

- Call to rejoice in the Lord (3:1)
- Righteousness through Faith in Christ (3:2-11)
- Pressing on toward the Goal (3:12-16)
- Heavenly Citizenship (3:17-4:1)

Key Words/Phrases

Rejoice in the Lord, Spirit/flesh, gain/loss, excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, gain Christ, righteousness, faith, resurrection, press on,

lay hold, “one thing I do”, mature, walk, citizenship in heaven, stand fast in the Lord.

Segment Analysis

1. The false teachings and ungodly practices that Paul warns the Philippians against can rob them of the joy that they have in the Lord. That is why Paul tells them that the things he writes are a safeguard to them (1).
2. Those who insist and advocate that circumcision and observance of the Old Testament regulations is necessary for salvation.
- 3a. While these advocates of circumcision seem to be zealous toward God, it is believers in Christ who have been truly circumcised because they have received the spiritual circumcision from God. Through faith in Jesus Christ, believers who are baptized into Christ have been regenerated. With the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they have received a new heart and are able to obey God in truth and spirit rather than by mere outward observance.
- 3b. We worship God in the Spirit because we serve God from our hearts and obey Him by the Spirit who is at work in us (cf. Rom 7:6). We rejoice in Christ Jesus (also translates as “glory in Christ Jesus”) because we have access to God and the hope of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ. We have no confidence in the flesh because we no longer depend on our own efforts to achieve righteousness before God.
4. Paul uses his own example to show that although he had every reason to put his confidence in the flesh, more so than those who insist on justification by works, he has come to realize that these achievements cannot bring about the righteousness that God desires. If even with his heritage and achievements Paul fell short of God’s perfect standard, then no one else should put their trust in themselves.
5. Paul was blameless before men because he observed the letter of the law flawlessly. But he knew that he could not stand before God with confidence because, being controlled by his sinful nature, he had nothing good within him (Rom 7:14-24).
6. He has counted his confidence in his achievements as loss because such confidence could only hinder him from accepting Christ. Instead, he has gained Christ and His righteousness.
- 7a. The people of the world seek after vain glory and pleasure, and they consider it a gain to obtain these things. To give up their ego and sinful indulgence in order to follow Christ would be a loss to them.

There are others who take pride in their religious zeal or their philanthropic deeds and think that they are able to attain to God’s standard. They are unwilling to acknowledge their sin and put their hope

- in Christ alone. To surrender their self-confidence to believe in Christ is a loss to them.
8. To be found in Christ means to be baptized into Christ and to live in Christ, abiding in his love and commands. The only way to have confidence before God and be kept from the coming wrath is for us to be found in Christ (cf. 1Thess 1:10). On judgment day, we will be blessed if God “finds us” in Christ.
 9. Righteousness from the law is based on human effort. It is imperfect and superficial. Because of our sinful nature, no human being can ever meet God’s perfect requirements (Rom 3:20). But God has revealed a righteousness apart from the law—His righteousness (Rom 3:21). This righteousness is a gift that God imparts freely to believers. By the atonement of Jesus Christ, we can now be justified before God through faith. We who have been baptized into Christ have clothed ourselves with Christ (Gal 3:27). Thus, we have received Christ’s righteousness and may stand before God with confidence.
 - 10a.
 1. To know Christ is to know the power of His resurrection. This means being able to experience the Spirit’s transforming power in our Christian walk (Rom 8:1-4, 9-11)
 2. To know Christ is to know the fellowship of His sufferings. This means participating in the sufferings of Christ by enduring hardships for Christ’s sake (1Pet 2:21; 4:1, 13; Col 1:24).
 3. To know Christ is to be conformed to His death. This means dying with Christ and putting to death our sinful nature (Rom 6:4-11; 8:12-13; Gal 5:24).

Only by experiencing the death, resurrection, and sufferings of Jesus Christ in our lives can we truly know Christ.
 - 10b. Attaining to the resurrection from the dead (11), the glorious moment that all believers eagerly expect (Rom 8:18-23).
 - 11a. Paul presses on toward the goal of knowing Jesus Christ (8,10).
 - 11b. Believers are able to lay hold of the heavenly prize because Christ has first “laid hold” of them. In other words, without the salvation of Jesus Christ and the upward call of God (14), all human effort to attain salvation or God’s reward is futile.
 - 11c. Past achievements can make us complacent so that we stop pursuing spiritual advancement.
 - 12b. Paul regards the journey of faith as a race (cf. 1Cor 9:24-27; 2Tim 4:7), which requires all his energy and focus. We should likewise set our mind on the heavenly glory and make every effort to know Jesus Christ more and more (cf. 1Pet 1:5-11). Then our lives will not be unproductive and aimless.

13. As long as we share the same attitude of pressing on to know Christ (“Let us, as many as are mature, have this mind”), God will reveal His will to us concerning issues which we cannot fully agree on. When our views differ, there is no need to turn our differences into endless disputes or even personal grudges. Instead, each one of us needs to make sure that we do have a sincere desire to know God’s will and pursue the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We should humbly seek God’s will through the study of God’s Word and prayer. With this goal and attitude as our common basis, we will eventually reach perfect unity under God’s guidance (cf. Eph 4:11-13). But in the process, we do not have to wait until we are in complete agreement on all things before seeking progress in our faith. We should continue to pursue spiritual growth towards our common goal with the same mind and same spirit.
- 14a.
 1. They serve their appetites by indulging in gluttony and feasting (Rom 16:18).
 2. They advocate and boast of their shameful behavior (Eph 5:12 Rom 1:32).
 3. Their mind is constantly thinking of godless ambitions, material pursuits, and sinful pleasures (1Jn 2:15-16; Col 3:5).
- 14b. Whereas the cross of Christ brings salvation, godless lifestyles lead to destruction (19). Not only are their conducts contrary to the will of God, they also often oppose the gospel and profane the message of the cross.
- 15a. If we realize and believe that we are heavenly citizens, our priorities, values, and conducts will be drastically different from those whose minds are on earthly things.
- 15b. Instead of investing our hopes and energy in the temporary material things, we will live our lives as strangers here with reverent fear (1Pet 1:17 NIV; Heb 11:13). We will make wise use of our time, possessions, and talents to strive for spiritual growth (Phil 3:12-14), lay up treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19-20; 1Tim 6:17-19), and always abound in the work of the Lord (1Cor 15:58).
16. Continue to strive for spiritual growth. Keep our eyes on Christ, who is seated in heaven, and remember that this world is not our home. Always focus on the coming of Christ and the glorious resurrection.

Lesson 23

Observation

Outline

Pleas for Unity in the Lord (4:2-3)

Be Joyful and Prayerful (4:4-7)

Pursuing Higher Virtue (4:8-9)

Key Words/Phrases

The same mind in the Lord, Book of Life, rejoice, be anxious for nothing, true, noble, just, pure, lovely, good report.

Segment Analysis

2. Paul reminds the believers the basis and reasons for unity—that they all have one Lord, that they all labor for the same gospel, and that they all have a share in the Book of Life. Unity among believers is possible and necessary because of their spiritual ties and common goals.
3. The register in heaven of those who are saved.
- 4a. Paul repeats the command to rejoice probably because it is easy to be discouraged in the midst of sufferings, disharmony, and the threat of false teachings. But Paul wants them to transcend all these difficulties and live above the problems of life by having the joy of the Lord, for joy is the key to a victorious life. Paul's emphatic exhortation is also an expression of the overflowing joy in him.
- 4b. Following the command to rejoice, Paul presents the peace of God as the basis of joy and teaches us how to receive that peace. Peace from God is the foundation of true joy.
- 4c. Happiness is an emotion. Joy is an attitude. Happiness is based on the circumstance. Joy is founded on Christ. Therefore, in order to have true joy, we need to have a Christ-centered attitude. While our circumstances may change, our Lord does not change. He has overcome the world, and through faith in Him, we can transcend problems and difficulties in life. If we have Christ in our lives, no circumstance can take away our joy.
- 4d. Paul is in chains, but he can still exhort the believers to rejoice. This is a powerful demonstration that Paul's joy surpasses his adverse conditions. Not only so, his joy overflows to others, bringing comfort and encouragement.
- 5a. We need to show gentleness to all, not just the people we favor.
- 5c. Gentleness involves great patience because it requires us to deal kindly even with those who are against us. When there is disharmony among believers, showing gentleness can be a great challenge. But instead of arguing and complaining, we should wait for the coming of the Lord, who will judge everyone according to their deeds. Knowing that the Lord is coming soon to examine our works and reward us encourages us to persist in our gentleness (cf. Jas 5:8).
- 6a. "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (4:6). When we cast our cares on the

Lord (Ps 55:22; 1Pet 5:7), we have no need to be anxious because we trust that He will take care of us. Being thankful always also relieves us of our anxiety because, by counting the blessings of God, we are constantly reminded that God will always watch over us, just as He always has.

- 6b. Anxiety does not solve problems but only adds burdens to our hearts (cf. Mt 6:27,34; Lk 12:25-26). Besides, knowing that God will take care of our needs, why should we be anxious?
- 7a. 1. God's peace can give us an inner tranquility so miraculous that it is beyond rational explanation. 2. God's peace can calm our hearts so perfectly in ways that our own attempt to alleviate anxiety by means of reasoning or positive thinking can never do.
- 7b. The peace that the world gives only provides a temporary sense of security that is easily unsettled when trouble comes. For example, we may pay for health insurance, but when we become ill, the insurance cannot help us deal with our sorrows, fears, or depressions within. The peace from God, however, goes much deeper. It does not necessarily change the circumstance or remove the difficulties we face, but it is able to give us inner joy and strength to overcome the difficulties.
- 8a. Godly conduct begins with godly thoughts. What we put into our mind determines what comes out in our words and actions (Mt 15:18-19). We must reprogram our thinking. It takes practice, but it can be done. Fill our hearts with the Word of God and ask God to help us focus our mind on what is good and pure (cf. Ps 139:23-24).
10. We must do the word of God (9).
11. Verses 6 and 7 teach us to let the peace of God keep our hearts and minds from anxieties through prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. Verses 8 and 9 go even further and teach us the way to have God's continual presence in our lives. If we do God's Word, God Himself, the author of peace, will be with us at all times. Therefore, not only should we come to God for peace when we have trouble in our lives, we should all the more seek to let the God of peace dwell in us by living out His Word. When God's living Word is embodied in our lives, we will naturally experience God and all His blessings.

Lesson 24

Observation

Outline

Joy because of Their Care and Gift (4:10-20)

Final Greetings (4:21-23)

Key Words/Phrases

Rejoiced, care, flourished, content, learned, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” shared in my distress, fruit, abounds, sweet-smelling aroma, acceptable sacrifice.

Segment Analysis

1. 11-13.
- 2a. Their care for him has flourished again (10). They care for him even in his distress (14). They care for him time and again (16).
- 2b. Our care and concern for others should be continuous and abound more and more.
3. Paul makes it clear that his joy does not reside in material sufficiency (11-12). He rejoices because the Philippians are bearing fruit that abounds to their account (17) and that their giving is in fact an acceptable sacrifice to God (18).
- 4a. Discontentment is often the result of unfulfilled desires rather than true need. That is why even the rich and famous are discontent. Discontentment is also a reflection of inner emptiness, which no material abundance, physical pleasure, or human relationship can fill.
- 4b.
 1. Remember that we already have the best possession—eternal life. Why should we be discontent? Not only so, with Christ in our lives, we can enjoy spiritual blessings that the world does not know.
 2. Count our blessings and be always thankful for what we have rather than lust for things that we don't have.
 3. Do not seek for things beyond basic necessities (Mt 6:31-33; 1Tim 6:6-7).
 4. Even if we have difficulties in life that we cannot remove, we should rejoice and trust that the Lord knows what we can bear, that sufferings can benefit us, and that His grace is sufficient for us (1Cor 10:13; 2Cor 12:7-10).
5. Contentment comes by learning. As we continue to develop our trust in the Lord, and as we experience more and more of God's grace and provisions, our contentment will also grow.
- 6a. Doing all things means being able to transcend all circumstances and stand firm in Christ. This ability is not the ability to change our surroundings but the inner strength to accept and live with any situation that God has placed us in.
- 6b. Exchange our self-confidence for faith (1Cor 2:4). Exchange our will power for God's power (Phil 2:13). Exchange our weakness for God's

strength (Mt 11:28-30).

Live a Christ-centered life everyday and rely not on our own understanding. Learn to depend on God through prayer and studying His Word. Through the Lord's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can always stand tall and be victorious.

7. The Philippians themselves (17-19).
8. When we help those in need, we should give as if we are doing it for the Lord (Prov 19:17; Mt 25:34-40). Thus, we ought to give cheerfully and not expect any favors in return (2Cor 9:7; Lk 14:12-14). When we give financial support to the ministry, we should do so with a heart of repaying the Lord's love and out of our concern for the people who will benefit from the ministry.
9. They supply for Paul's needs out of their concern not only for Paul, but ultimately for the Lord's work. Therefore, their gift is a sacrifice to God that is fragrant and acceptable.

Lesson 26

Observation

Outline

Salutation (1:1-2)

Thanksgiving for the Colossians (1:3-8)

Prayer for the Colossians (1:9-14)

Key Words/Phrases

Christ, thanks, faith, love, hope, truth, bringing forth fruit, do not cease to pray, filled with the knowledge of His will, walk worthy of the Lord, strengthened, inheritance, delivered, conveyed, kingdom, Son, redemption through His blood.

Segment Analysis

1. Sanctification of the Spirit (1Cor 1:2; 1Pet 1:2), through the truth (Jn 17:19), by the blood of the covenant (Heb 10:29). In effect, a person who is baptized into the true church is washed by the blood of Jesus and if he maintains his sanctification by spiritual nurture in the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God, he remains a saint in God's eyes. Note also that the saints in Paul's letters were Christians who were living at the time of writing. This is contrary to the belief that only a few selected believers can become saints and that also only some years after their death.

- 2a. Faith in Christ Jesus (1:4); love for all the saints and love in the Spirit (1:4,8); the hope which is laid up in heaven (1:5). These three abiding virtues must be present in any living church of God.
- 2b. The word of the truth of the gospel (1:5,6) preached by the faithful ministers of God (1:7).
- 3a. The fruit is a symbol of a person's speech, conduct, and life. When a person receives the gospel and bears fruit, it means that he has become a new person, whose life exhibits Christ-like characters.
- 3b. Consider the parable of the sower (Mt 13:3-9,18-23). The word of the gospel is invariably good but the bearing forth of fruit is not inevitable. This depends on the ground, which is the heart of him who receives the word. In order for the gospel to bear fruit in our lives, we need to accept God's word with faith, and our hearts need to be free from the cares, riches, and pleasures of life. In addition, we also need to patiently put God's word into practice (cf. Lk 8:15).
4. Epaphras, a Colossian himself, was one of the early workers in the church at Colosse. At this time, he was with Paul at Rome and kept Paul informed on the situation of the church at Colosse. In his epistle to Philemon, Paul called him "my fellow prisoner." Notice that in all the epistles and not just Paul's alone, names of persons are mentioned as a source of encouragement or greeting and never as a support of doctrinal truth. This is to say that one will not encounter name-dropping such as "with regard to this doctrine, even the apostle Peter agrees with me". See Gal 1:15-19 and 2:1-14 for an interesting example of just the opposite. Here Paul says that he approached those of some reputation (Gal 2:2) out of humility and thanked God that all agreed in the Lord but in the same passage was not afraid to oppose them when they swayed from the truth (Gal 2:11-14). It is important for Christians to have a faith that is based solely on the Scriptures and not because such and such a minister said so. Also, while personal greetings are welcome in writings, sermons and speeches, such is not true for name-dropping and flattery. As an example, it is always nice to hear something like "A personally asked me to convey his greetings and fond thoughts for everyone in the church" but not "It is my honor to convey the greetings of Elder A, the Chairman of B Committee."
- 5a. He prays that the Colossians may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (9).
- 5b. 1. He intercedes for the believers, and his intercession never ceases (9). Doing so requires great love and patience.
2. He prays that God's will be done in the lives of the believers (cf. Mt 6:10, 31-33). His priority in prayer is spiritual growth, not material or physical blessings.

3. He is always thankful (Col 1:3) and prays that the believers may also be thankful (12).
6. Wisdom (Jas 3:13-18) and spiritual understanding (Jn 16:13; 1Cor 2:10-16). In general, the will of God for us is found in the Bible. Reading the word of God with wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit, the Christian understands the will of God for himself. It is more the exception rather than the rule that God would reveal His will to an individual through a sign, a vision or a message. A person seeking the will of God should concentrate on reading the word of God and praying in the Spirit, not for signs or messages, but to be in communion with God and to let the Holy Spirit fill him with wisdom and understanding.
7. a. To walk worthy of the Lord.
b. To fully please Him.
c. To be fruitful in every good work.
d. To increase in the knowledge of God.

Does it surprise you to see that the list is not the selfish one that most of us have? Some would like to know the will of God with regard to their field of study while many others would like to know with regard to their choice of a career or spouse. In many of these situations, seeing beyond the immediate choice to the purposes stated above will immediately tell one what the will of the Lord is. Is it the will of God that because of the lack of choice in the church we marry someone who is not in the Lord? Expand this question to the following:

Can I then walk worthy of the Lord with my unbelieving partner?

Will I please the Lord?

Will I be able to be fruitful in every good work after marriage?

Can I increase in the knowledge of God or would I be hindered from going to church?

The will of the Lord will then be clear.

8. Paul prays that the Colossians may be filled with the knowledge of God so that they may walk worthy of the Lord. Verse 10 also adds, "fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." Thus, we can infer from the context that walking worthy of the Lord means living up to the Lord's will.
9. a. With might obtained through His glorious power.
b. With all patience and longsuffering.
c. With joy.

These seem to suggest that it is not easy to carry out the will of God but also that with the right attitude and understanding, it is a joy to do so

(Acts 5:41). The best example of one who did the will of God is Jesus Himself (Mt 26:38-42; Heb 10:5-9).

- 11a. We thank the Father because He has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (12-13).
- 11b. Through the redemption of Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins (14).

Lesson 27

Observation

Outline

Christ's Preeminence (1:15-23)
Paul's ministry (1:24-2:3)

Key Words/Phrases

Image of the invisible God, firstborn, all creation/all things, head, body, church, preeminence, fullness, reconcile, blood on the cross, sufferings, minister, mystery, Christ in you, love, knowledge.

Segment Analysis

- Deut 6:4 - there is one God; Isa 9:6—the Child is also the Father and the Counselor; Jn 1:1,14—Jesus is God from the beginning; Jn 3:13—Jesus while on earth was also in heaven at the same time; Jn 8:58 with Ex 3:14 - Jesus used the name 'I AM' which was used by God when He appeared to Moses; Jn 10:30—Jesus and the Father are one; Jn 14:17,18,23—Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father are the same; Mt 28:19 with Acts 2:38—the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is Jesus. The True Jesus Church believes that God is one and that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three different titles of God that are a result of the three different functions of God in the salvation plan, i.e., the Father as Sustainer and Ruler who cannot be seen by man (Ex 33:20), the Son in the form of flesh as Saviour (Heb 2:14; Rom 8:3,4) and the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of believers (Jn 14:17). We do not believe in the concept of Trinity where the Godhead is seen to consist of three different persons and yet one God.
- The image of the invisible God.
The firstborn over all creation.
By Him, all things were created through Him and for Him.
He is before all things.

In Him all things consist.

He is the head of the church.

The beginning.

The firstborn from the dead.

In all things, He may have the preeminence.

In Him, all the fullness should dwell.

By Him, to reconcile all things to Himself.

- The word "firstborn" means the preeminent one and this position is not restricted to a chronological order of birth. Thus though Ephraim was the second son of Joseph, he was considered the firstborn by God (Gen 48:17-19; Jer 31:9). We first acknowledge that, by itself, the verse can be interpreted to mean that Jesus was also created if we take it that the firstborn of a group must also have the characteristics of the group. However, we introduce a second possible interpretation which is that the firstborn here refers to the dominance of a group that does not include the subject itself. This means that Jesus is above all creation but is not part of the creation Himself. A third interpretation is that by taking on the form of flesh and blood, God Himself became part of His creation without nullifying the fact that He exists by Himself. This temporary state of being in the flesh for 33 years allows Himself to be called the firstborn of all creation. Similarly, the temporary state of being dead for three days allows Jesus to be called the firstborn from the dead. Thus, the firstborn here does not mean that Jesus was the first to be created but rather that He is the greatest of all who have been flesh and blood (Heb 2:14; Rom 8:3,4). In addition, the same Greek word *ktisis* meaning creature is used in both 1:15 and 1:23. Clearly, the gospel that is to be preached to every creature is to be preached to every human being. We now have a probable understanding of "firstborn of all creation" to mean 'the best of mankind'. The next stage for competing interpretations would be to see how they fit into a cohesive concept backed by other verses of the Bible. The preliminaries established in Question 1 contradict the first interpretation that Jesus is created and is a lesser god.
 - God sent His Son to die on the cross and make peace through His blood (20-22). Whereas sin alienated us from God, the forgiveness of sin made possible by the redemption of Jesus Christ has brought us back to God (14).
 - Through the atonement of Christ, we may be holy, blameless, and above reproach in God's sight (22).
- Anyone who sets his mind on wickedness and sinful desires (cf. Jas 4:1-4; Rom 8:7).

6. While God has offered us reconciliation through His Son, we can receive this grace and become blameless before Him only if we continue in the faith and not turn away from the gospel (1Cor 15:1-2; Heb 3:6).
7. The Greek word here is *diakonos* which generally means a servant. The same word is used in 1Tim 3:8 which the English Bible translates as the 'deacon' which we know well. The act of ministration in the church (Acts 6:1) is diakonia which leads one to conclude that the seven chosen in Acts 6:3-6 were the first deacons.
8. The Lord Jesus and His body, the church (1:24).
9. That he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (1:28).
10. Paul is not teaching that there is deficiency in the sufferings of Christ. Rather, he is saying that through his ministry, he continues to bear the afflictions Christ suffered in His earthly ministry. Whenever we suffer for the name of Christ, we partake of Christ's suffering (1Pet 4:13). Thus, to fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ means to suffer as a believer and as a minister of the gospel.
- 11a. As ministers of Christ, it is our duty to preach, warn, and teach everyone in order to present them perfect in Christ Jesus (1:28). In other words, we ought to proclaim the gospel and build up our brethren in the word of God. Our final goal is for all believers to be mature in faith, love, and knowledge (2:2-5).
In ministering to the needs of others, we need to be ready to suffer, for the work of the Lord involves great effort, patience, and endurance (1:29; 2:1). But out of our love for the Lord and for the church, we should rejoice in our sufferings (1:24).
- 11b. The mighty working of God that works in us (1:29; cf. Phil 2:13). It is not by our efforts that we can accomplish our mission. We must constantly depend on the mighty power of God that works in us.

Lesson 28

Observation

Outline

- Being Rooted in Christ (2:4-7)
- Made Complete in Christ (2:8-15)
- Futility of False Religion (2:16-23)

Key Words/Phrases

Deceive, steadfastness of your faith in Christ, walk in Him, rooted and built up, established, beware, cheat, fullness of the Godhead, complete, head, circumcision, buried, baptism, raised, faith, working of God, made you alive, forgiven you all trespasses, cross, triumph, shadow/substance, died.

General Analysis

- 1a. 2:4—... deceive you with persuasive words.
2:8— ... cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
2:18—... cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels.
- 1b. False teachings that attack the completeness and sufficiency of Christ (see 2:9-10).
2.
 1. The insistence on keeping the requirements of the Law of Moses (2:14). Read also 2:16,17 and 2:20-22.
 2. The worship of angels and false humility (2:18,23; This heresy probably taught that the worship of angels rather than God was an act of humility).
 3. Unnecessary asceticism, i.e., punishment of the body as a means to higher spirituality (2:23).

Points 2 and 3 fall under the heresy of the Gnostics. Gnosticism is one of the so-called philosophies in the first ages of Christianity, which claimed a true philosophical interpretation of the Christian religion. Their system combined Oriental theology and Greek philosophy with the doctrines of Christianity. They held that all natures, intelligible, intellectual, and material, are derived from the Deity by successive emanations, which they called Eons.

Source: Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc.

Remark: An agnostic does not deny the existence of God and heaven, for example, but rather holds that one cannot know for certain if they exist or not. The term agnostic was fittingly coined by the 19th-century British scientist Thomas H. Huxley, who believed that only material phenomena were objects of exact knowledge. He made up the word from the prefix a-, meaning "without, not," as in amoral, and the noun Gnostic. Gnostic is related to the Greek word gnosis, "knowledge," which was used by early Christian writers to mean "higher, esoteric knowledge of spiritual things"; hence, Gnostic referred to those with such knowledge. In coining the term agnostic, Huxley was considering as "Gnostics" a group

of his fellow intellectuals, “ists,” as he called them who had eagerly embraced various doctrines or theories that explained the world to their satisfaction. Because he was a “man without a rag of a label to cover himself with,” Huxley coined the term agnostic for himself, its first published use being in 1870.

Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition

Gnostics hold that Christ in the form of flesh cannot be God but is instead an emanation of God. Besides, being in the form of flesh, he is inferior even to the angels. See an answer to this in Heb 2:6-9.

3. 1. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:2,3).
2. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9). Godhead - the essential being or the nature of God (Easton’s Bible Dictionary).
3. He is the head of all principality and power (2:10).
4. He has abolished the handwriting of requirements that was against us. He has triumphed over principalities and powers (2:14,15).
5. He is the Head, from whom all the body nourished and knit together, grows with the increase that is from God (2:19).

Segment Analysis

1. 1. Walk in Christ (6).
2. Be rooted and built up in Him (7).
3. Be established in the faith, as they have been taught (7).
4. Abound in the faith with thanksgiving (7).
2. Tradition of men and the basic principles of the world. The basic principles of the world refers to rituals or observances through which men endeavor to reach God without Christ (cf. Gal 4:3,9-10).
3. The Godhead (*theotes* in Greek) means divinity, i.e., the essence of “goodness.” The only other occurrences on the Bible are in Acts 17:29 and Romans 1:20. Col 2:9 means that the full essence of “goodness” is in Christ; not just a part as was supposed by the Gnostics who probably argued that Christ in the flesh could not be fully God.
4. We have been made complete in Christ, and Christ has triumphed over principalities and powers. Therefore, we should not be enslaved by the principles of this world and hope to obtain righteousness through human regulations.
- 5a. 1. Circumcision is a token of the covenant between God and Abraham (Gen 17:11). Likewise, the blood of Christ is a token of the new covenant between God (Jesus Christ) and man (Mt 26:28). The blood

of Christ is present in baptism to wash away sins (Acts 22:16; 1Jn 1:7; 1Jn 5:6,8).

2. Circumcision was a necessity to belong to the family of Abraham (Gen 17:14). Likewise, baptism is a necessity to belong to the extended family of Abraham through Christ (Gal 3:26-29).
3. Infants born in Abraham’s house were to be circumcised (Gen 17:12). Likewise, Infants of believers are to be baptized (see Acts 16:15,33).
4. Only the circumcised could partake of the passover (Ex 12:47, 48). Likewise, only the baptized can partake of the Holy Communion (1Cor 10:16,17). There being a distinction between those who are called brethren and “those outside” can be seen in 1Cor 5:6-13.
- 5b. Baptism. Through baptism, we receive the circumcision of Christ (11-12).
- 5c. 1. Removal of sins (11).
2. Burial and resurrection with Christ (12; cf. Rom 6:3-4).

The forgiveness of sins results in spiritual resurrection (13). Thus, when our sins are forgiven during baptism, we also receive a new life. That is why baptism is also known as the washing of regeneration (Tit 3:5; Jn 3:3-5).

6. Firstly, the Law of Moses (Torah), and its interpretations by the rabbis (Talmud), was never intended to be permanent (Gal 3:22-25) and it was burdensome and ‘contrary to us’ (2:14). Christ’s death fulfilled all the requirements of the law (Mt 5:17,18; Heb 2:14 and many other parts of Hebrews) and ushered in the new law of faith. This is the true expression of God’s covenant with Abraham which the Law of Moses given 430 years after the covenant with Abraham was not meant to be (Gal 3:17-19). Thus the physical aspects and the interpretations by the rabbis of the Law of Moses need not be kept anymore because with Christ, we are dead from the rudiments of the world (2:20-23).
7. What has been abolished is “the handwriting of requirements that was against us” (14), which refers to the ordinances regarding meat, drink, a holy day, the new moon and the sabbath (2:16). The passage does not speak of abolishing food, drink, festivals, new moons, and the sabbath, for otherwise, we would, for example, not be allowed to eat or drink! Thus, the difficult restrictions imposed by the law on the sabbath such as not plucking grain (Mk 2:23,24) or not travelling beyond a certain distance, called a ‘sabbath day’s journey’ (Acts 1:12), have been abolished. Instead, in the new covenant, we do good and enjoy the sabbath as the sabbath was made for man and the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2:27,28; Jn 5:8-17; 7:21-24). Finally, the fulfillment of the

requirements of the law by Christ did not annul the Ten Commandments which is the unalterable core of the law (Mt 22:36-40; Mt 19:16-19; Jas 2:8-12). Thus, the Ten Commandments is sometimes called the moral law. By virtue of being the fourth Commandment, observance of the sabbath cannot be abolished.

8. They are a shadow that points to Christ, who is the substance (17; cf. Gal 3:19-23).
9. Those who adhere to human regulations and the worship of angels seek only an appearance of wisdom (23). They take delight in false humility and are puffed up in their mind rather than hold fast to Christ the Head (18-19). In short, they are driven by pride and are interested only in an outward appearance of piety.
10. They have been set free from the bondage of worldly principles. Instead of depending on observances of traditions, they now fully trust Christ for justification.

Lesson 29

Observation

Outline

- Seek the Things above (3:1-4)
- Put Away the Former Way of Life (3:5-9)
- Put on the New Man (3:10-17)

Key Words/Phrases

Things above, hidden with Christ in God, put to death, put off, put on, new man, Christ is all and in all, love, peace of God, word of Christ, wives, husbands, children, fathers, bondservants, masters, earnestly in prayer, vigilant, thanksgiving, door for the word.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. Above, where Christ is (1,2). Heaven above must be the goal of all Christians, not only because it is a wonderful place (cf. Jn 14:2; 2Cor 12:2-7; Rev 21:1-5), but mainly because it is a place where we can be with our precious Lord Jesus (cf. Col 3:1; Jn 14:3; Phil 1:23). The goal is fundamental—a Christian goes wrong the moment he does not set his mind on things above (1Cor 15:19).
- 1b. Setting our minds on things above means giving God first place in our hearts, always seeking to please Him in our thoughts, speech, and

conduct. On the contrary, setting our minds on earthly things means obeying the desires of our flesh and leading a self-centered life.

- 2a.
 - a. Our life is no longer our own (1Cor 6:19).
 - b. The devil cannot take our life as it is hidden with Christ (1Jn 5:18).
 - c. Our real life is spiritual and is destined for eternity at the appearing of our Lord Jesus (Col 3:4; 1Thess 4:17).
- 2b. See verse 4.
3. Jn 17:14-16: Christians continue to live among the people of the world but are not of them, i.e., we do not identify with them nor with their values. For example, in some societies, teenage dating is encouraged or accepted in the belief that this helps adolescents become mature. Christians must decide whether to do the same not on the basis of what society or culture says but according to what is suggested by the Bible.

1Cor 15:33 : We should be careful not to associate with those who practice evil (Ps 1:1), knowing that we may be influenced by them. We need to imitate our Lord Jesus in this regard. Although He ate and mingled with sinners, these sinners were not unrepentant evildoers. He drew close to them in order to bring them back to God, not to join in their sinful acts.

2Cor 6:14-18 : Verse 14 covers a large area of association and thus definitely includes marriage with unbelievers. The church of God is to be clearly seen as separate from the world.

1Pet 2:9-12: The believers are considered the special people of God. Their behavior and lifestyles are distinct from those of the unbelievers.
4. One possible explanation weaves together Luke 12:15, Luke 16:13 and the first two commandments (Ex 20:3-5). Covetousness is defined here as desiring excessively the material things of the world. This leads to serving and worshipping mammon (money) which is replacing God with another object of worship, an idol.
5. When we are baptized, our old man dies (Rom 6:6-8). The blood of Jesus washes away our sins and we attain the status of a son of God (Jn 3:5; Gal 3:26-4:7). It is clear however that as long as we are in the flesh, we still have the nature to sin. See Rom 6:11-13 and Gal 4:9. These Bible passages tell us that the Romans and Galatians could be swayed to sin implying that the nature of the Christian is a 'work-in-progress'. Thus, one way to change our nature is to be aware of the new status and to live worthy of it (3:9; Rom 6:11-13).
- 6a. When we are baptized, we become a new man and put on Christ (Gal 3:27). We become a new man according to the image of Christ (3:10). We should cherish this affiliation above all human affiliations (3:11).

6b. The church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:22,23). One's affiliation with the church is established by three sacraments intimately linked to Christ and thus to salvation. Baptism washes away our sins and makes us a new man. Footwashing lets us have a part with Jesus (Jn 13:8-10). The apostles were disunited, mistrustful of one another and held together only by the love for Jesus. The Lord wanted them to know that all disciples have a part with Him and thus form His body (the church) after He has ascended to heaven. Footwashing was instituted to induct the individual into a community where Christ is. This induction ceremony is unique in the sense that the leader washes the feet of the inductee showing that the church is an organization of humility and that those having a part with it must also be of the same nature. If we refuse footwashing, we refuse to have a part with the body of Christ. Holy Communion is taken as a church and not individually (1Cor 10:16,17; 11:33). It is the communion of the body of Christ.

In summary, our most important affiliation is with Jesus. But the Lord has also established His body on earth, the church. Through mutual edification based on the words of Christ and His love, members of this body may be built up in the faith (1Tim 3:15; Eph 4:11-15). Thus, the church is a necessary and important affiliation in our lives as she herself is intimately associated with Christ, being His body and His bride (Eph 5:31,32).

- 7a. Aspects of character that the elect of God should have—holy and beloved of God, merciful, kind, humble, meek, longsuffering, forbearing and forgiving.
- 7b. God has promised that He will provide for our needs if we seek first His kingdom and righteousness (Mt 6:33). Although it may seem necessary to sacrifice our Christian principles in order to compete with the people of this world, we should resist such temptation and remain faithful to God. Consider the meek Isaac, who conceded to his oppressors but was blessed by God with prosperity (Gen 26:12-33).
8. Unity is strength but unity by itself is not a virtue (cf. Mk 3:22-27). In striving for unity and peace in the church and in our lives, Christians must not compromise with regard to the truth. When the truth was attacked, Jesus (cf. Mt 23) and Paul did not hesitate to rebuke in love (1Tim 5:19,20; 2Tim 3:16-4:2).
- 9a. Doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus does not mean invoking the name of Jesus when doing even the most trivial things. Instead, it means doing all things in a manner that is worthy of the name of the Lord, and nothing we do should ever dishonor the name of Christ (cf. Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10).

9b. The goal of all the commands and exhortations in this passage is to live a Christ-centered life. Although Paul covered many aspects of Christian living, his instructions are not meant to be an exhaustive code of ethics. Thus, in conclusion, he reminds the believers to do all things in light of the fact that they bear the name of Christ. A Christian who always desires to glorify the name of the Lord Jesus will naturally conduct himself in a manner worthy of the Lord.

10. **The individual:**

1. Renewed in knowledge (3:10). The word of Christ dwells richly in him (3:16).
2. Identifies himself, first and foremost, as a Christian (3:10,11).
3. Holy and beloved of God, merciful, kind, humble, meek, longsuffering, forbearing and forgiving (3:12,13).
4. Loving (3:14).
5. At peace and thankful (3:15,17; Jn 14:27; Phil 4:6,7; 1Thess 5:18).
6. Sings with grace in his heart (3:16).
7. Does all in the name of the Lord (3:17), i.e., he always thinks of the Lord in his life and acts to glorify Him (Isa 43:7; 1Cor 10:31).

The church:

1. Christ is all and in all (3:11).
2. Bound by love (3:14; 2Cor 5:14,15).
3. At peace with one another (3:15).
4. Teaching and admonishing one another in the wisdom of the word of Christ and in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (3:16). The church is a place of prayer, praise, and learning and living of the truth (4:2; Mt 21:12,13; Lk 2:46-39; Acts 2:46,47; 6:2-4)

Lesson 30

Observation

Outline

- Commands to Specific Groups (3:18-4:1)
- Exhortation to Prayer and Thanksgiving (4:2-4)
- Towards Those Who Are Outside (4:5-6)
- Greetings (4:7-18)

Key Words/Phrases

Wives, submit, the Lord, husbands, love, children, obey, fathers, bondservants, masters, prayer, vigilant, thanksgiving, walk in wisdom, greet.

Segment Analysis

2. Paul repeatedly stresses our accountability to the Lord in obeying these commands. This principle is especially clear in the command to the bondservants. Whatever we do must be done for the Lord's sake with all sincerity.
- 3a. Being vigilant in prayer means leading a life of earnest prayer, being constantly aware of our spiritual state and examining ourselves in light of God's word. Those who are spiritually alert do not indulge in pleasures and are not weighed down by the cares of this life. Like trained soldiers, they guard themselves against the attack of the evil one. Like faithful servants, they remain true to the Master's commands and serve the needs of everyone in the house. Such preparations and service entail continual prayer and intercessions. This is why Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing" (1Thess 5:17).
- 3b. We need to pray for our own spirituality ("being vigilant" in verse 2) and for the ministry ("praying also for us" in verse 3). In terms of our attitude, we need to be watchful and thankful in our prayers.
- 4a. Those who are not of the church. By 2:12, this will mean those who are not baptized into Christ (see also Gal 3:26-29). In other places, they are those who are not named brother (1Cor 5:11-13) and are called unbelievers (1Cor 6:6; 7:15) and Gentiles (1Cor 5:1; 3Jn 6,7), which is to be understood as spiritual Gentiles in relation to those in Christ as spiritual descendants of Abraham (Col 2:11; Gal 3:27-29) and as different from Gentiles in the flesh (Eph 2:11).
- 4b. To preach the gospel to them so that they too can be 'in the Lord'. To this end, Paul exhorts the Colossians to pray that 'God would open ... a door of utterance' to speak about Christ (4:2-4).
 1. Walk in wisdom (4:5): This means that we ought to use the wisdom of God to discern what we ought or ought not to do when with unbelievers for the purposes of trying to save the unbelievers. Jesus taught us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves because we are as sheep among wolves (Mt 10:16). This means that while we should be sincere in our speech and actions toward unbelievers, we also need to have the discernment to know how to answer or react to those who are hostile to the gospel message.
 2. Redeeming the time (4:5): We ought to manage our time wisely when we are with unbelievers. Our objective is not just to have a good time with them, but, more importantly, to care for them, help meet their needs, and lead them to Christ. At the same time, we should not neglect spending time with fellow believers to encourage one another and to do the work of God (Heb 10:25).
3. Good speech (4:6): gracious and beneficial (seasoned with salt—see Mt 5:13); able to give a good answer to every man regarding the truth (cf. 1Pet 3:15; 1Thess 2:2-5; Mt 10:19).
- 5a. Tychicus (4:7,8): of Asia and a travelling companion of Paul (Acts 20:4), apparently Paul's letter bearer and messenger—to the Colossians (4:7,8), the Ephesians (Eph 6:21; 2Tim 4:12) and perhaps to Titus (Tit 3:12).
- 5b. Onesimus (4:9): a runaway slave of Philemon who later converted to Christianity and who was very dear to Paul (4:9; Phm 10-20), also apparently Paul's letter bearer and messenger (4:8,9).
- 5c. Aristarchus (4:10): fellow prisoner with Paul (4:10), a Macedonian of Thessalonica and one of Paul's travelling companions on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2), fellow laborer (Phm 24).
- 5d. Mark (4:10): cousin of Barnabas (4:10), family home used as prayer house (Acts 12:12), deserted Paul and Barnabas at Pamphylia on first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:13), cause of Paul's dissension with Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40), Paul's change of heart apparently because of Mark's change of character (4:10), reconciliation and found to be useful to the ministry (2Tim 4:11), believed to be the author of the gospel of Mark.
- 5e. Barnabas (4:10): an apostle (1Cor 9:5,6), a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith (Acts 11:24), received and recruited Paul (Acts 9:26-27; 11:25-26), fellow worker with Paul on first missionary journey (Acts 13:2ff), probably sold all that he had to work full-time for the Lord (Acts 4:36,37), a man who encouraged the weak and would not give up on them easily (Acts 4:36; Acts 15:37-40), a moment of weakness (Gal 2:11-13).
- 5f. Jesus who is called Justus (4:11): a Jew and fellow worker of Paul (4:11), two other references but probably not the same person (Acts 1:23; 18:7). Since Jesus or Joshua or Yahshua was a common Jewish name, it is an interesting conjecture that this man changed his name to Justus to avoid the embarrassment of having the same name as God.
- 5g. Epaphras (4:12): a Colossian himself, was one of the early workers in the church there. He was with Paul at that time and kept him informed on the situation of the church at Colosse.
- 5h. Luke (4:14): author of the gospel of Luke and Acts (compare Lk 1:3 and Acts 1:1), beloved physician (4:14), fellow laborer (Phm 24), friend to the end (2Tim 4:11).

- 5i. Demas (4:14): a sad example of a worker of God who fell in the end because he loved the world (Phm 24, 2Tim 4:10).
- 5j. Nymphas (4:15): home used as a church (4:15).
- 5k. Archippus (4:17): apparently a worker of God (Phm 2) who was slackening and needed to be reproved and reminded to fulfill the ministry which he had received in the Lord (4:17).

Appendix

Salvation through Faith

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (Jn 3:17).

Sin, the disobedience of God’s will, separates man from his Creator. Ever since our progenitors, Adam and Eve, committed the first sin by eating the forbidden fruit, sin has continued to plague mankind, bringing in its wake, hardship, pain, sorrow and disaster, both on an individual and on mass level. God did not have to send his Son into the world to condemn it - the world stood condemned on its own. “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

“...but that the world through Him might be saved” are words that sound hopeful to men who seek reconciliation with God and freedom from the bondage of sin. Jesus Christ came to this world to show man the way of salvation. He said in Jn 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus is the Savior of the world. He is the way of salvation. But what do all these mean? How do these relate to us? “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). These are questions of vital importance to Christians, in particular to us of this era where differing concepts on salvation abound and misconceptions proliferate because of a shocking lack of seeing what the Bible, the Word of God, has to say.

The apostle Paul sums up salvation brilliantly as a two-fold action.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8).

By Grace

The first and absolutely necessary part of salvation was fulfilled in the one word ‘grace’ “Even when we were dead in our trespasses, (God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Eph 2:5). Salvation would never have been accomplished without the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, who through his body opened a new way, tearing down the dividing barrier of sin. It is not our own doing; “it is the gift of God.” For without Christ, there is no salvation and it is not surprising then that Paul reiterates this.

Through Faith

So it is that the second part of salvation comes in ‘Faith’, As ‘grace’ is the giving of salvation by God, so ‘faith’ is the accepting of salvation on our part.

What Is Faith?

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1 NRSV) By the above scriptural definition, faith, being likened to an ‘assurance’ and a ‘conviction’, can be seen as an abstract entity, a thing of the mind.

James, in his epistle, saw the misconception that could possibly arise from the definition and stressed the absolute necessity of the projection of the abstract entity into action (which he terms as works), rejecting the conception of faith as a thing purely of the mind or heart, independent of the actions proceeding from such an assurance and conviction.

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*” (Jas 2:14-17; emphasis added)

A Dead Faith Is Not Faith

Faith, like love, is a dynamic abstract entity. Both entities do not reside purely in the mind but overflow into action. One can very well claim to have love but if one’s actions do not correspond with the actions of love, the claim stands ridiculed.

A Simple Illustration of Faith in Its True Sense

Fire envelopes, the multi-story office block where you are working. It is unfortunate that your office happens to be on the twentieth floor, The sprinkler system is defective. Screams fill the air. People are rushing about. Pandemonium reigns.

Out of the blinding smoke and chaos, you sight a fireman breaking through the flames. Salvation! You have faith in him, in his ability to save you from a fiery end.

He beckons to you. You go to him “Down on your knees,” he orders. “And crawl.” Down on your knees, you go. “Up the stairway” Up the stairway. “Turn left, then right.” Turn left, then right “Jump!” Jump? “Jump!” Jump.

And you’re saved.

The illustration serves to underline the intrinsic relationship between obedience and faith; action and faith. Is it possible for you to be saved from the fire if you have faith in the fireman but do not follow his commands? Is it possible to separate faith and works?

“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” (Jas 2:22).

True faith, saving faith, then is faith with works not any kind of works, but works which originate from or have their source in the assurance and conviction of Christ as the Savior.

Saving Faith—Faith in Jesus

Saving faith is a faith in Jesus, in these words – His claims, His promises, His commands, and His way of salvation.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16). “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).

The doctrine that salvation is effected at the moment of confessing Jesus Christ faces serious disagreement in the light of Mark 16:16 and Matthew 24:13. The first commands the believer to be baptized for salvation. If one’s salvation is effected at the point of open confession, why this verse? The latter goes even further. It advocates a lifetime of faith, not a single important moment of faith alone. Salvation is to one who remains faithful to the end.

Is this what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote “... saved by grace through faith”—a faith only at the moment of conversion?

Such a doctrine faces serious disagreement in the light of the Scriptures “He who believes and is baptized will be saved;” (Mk 16:16) “But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Mt 24:13).

Mark 16:16 commands the believer to be baptized for salvation. If one’s salvation is effected at the point of conversion, why this verse?

Matt 24:13 goes even further. It advocates a lifetime of faith, not a single important moment of faith. Salvation is for one who remains faithful to the end. Since it is faith with works that save, are we to neglect these two verses which effectively nullify the concept of salvation effected at a single moment of faith? No, we must take all these five verses together to give a full picture of just what God meant by Salvation. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17). Yes, faith in Jesus gives us life, but let us not forget the other implication of this verse—faith in Christ Jesus also *sustains* this life. It is with this opening insight that we try to piece together God’s plan of salvation through faith.

Salvation—A Way

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Mt 7:13-14).

Salvation begins (not ends) with belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior. Then the question “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37), To which Peter replied “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus

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Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

The next step is then reconciliation with God through the removal of the barrier of sin by Jesus’ blood in water baptism (cf. Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21) Whereupon, in due time, we will be sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance (Salvation) (cf. Eph 1:13,14) Our feet are now firmly planted on the road to salvation. But the way stretched on for a lifetime, a lifetime to be saved by the Spirit “for if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom 8:13).

What does it mean - to live by the Spirit? “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tit 3:5).

It is a process of renewal, growing in the Lord, not an accumulation of ‘works of righteousness’ but a living by faith, quickened by the Spirit. It is the supreme manifestation of true, saving faith.

It is the Christian who is led by the Spirit that truly loves God and has as his guidelines in life, the commandments of God. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1Jn 5:3).

Some professing Christians and even pastors remark that one should not ‘burden’ Christians with ‘unnecessary rituals’ such as baptism, the Holy Communion and keeping the Sabbath. Such concern, though well-intentioned, is not only unscriptural, it undermines the very way of salvation that God has revealed to us through His commandments. “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (Jn 6:63).

As earlier stated, it is emphasized that saving faith is faith that results in obedience to the Words of the Savior and His commands concerning salvation. And this faith is a continuous faith by which we live. “The just shall live by faith.” (Rom 1:17).

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