

# **Walk Through The New Testament**

## **St. Matthew's Parish**

### **Shirley and Church Streets**

#### **New Providence,**

#### **Bahamas**

**31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

## **The Epistle to the Ephesians**

### **Summary of Introduction & Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the Epistle.**

#### **Introduction**

Ephesus was a city known for its intellectual and religious practices. While some have argued against Paul's authorship of this epistle, more than likely he was the one responsible for its writing while he was in prison.

There are two themes which dominate this epistle: 1. Christ has reconciled all of the created order to Himself and to God; and 2. Christ has united people of all nations to himself and to one another.

#### **Summary of Chapter 1:**

- Paul recognizes the faithfulness of the saints at Ephesus
- Paul provides a list of all the blessings that they have received because of Christ's atoning work; God has predestined them to be his people in Christ; God has adopted them as his children; In Jesus they have been redeemed and God has poured his riches blessings on them; In Christ, God has provided all wisdom and insight for them to know the will of God; everything which has happened to them is a part of the mystery and will of God.
- They are growing in their spiritual discernment and they are being enlightened as they understand their hope in Christ. Indeed, they are growing in subjection to the authority of Christ.

## **Summary of Chapter 2**

- Humanity was lost under the influence of Satan, and led by the passions of the world and the flesh.
- God, in his infinite mercy and out of pure love rescued humanity by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Incarnate Lord.
- We are saved by Grace and not by works. Even the faith we have is a gift from God.
- God predestined us for good works which he prepared beforehand.
- Gentiles have become a part of the covenant and commonwealth of God's people through the atoning blood of Jesus.
- Christ's death has not only brought peace with God, but also has taken down the dividing walls between other groups in humanity.

## **Summary of Chapter 3**

- Paul's journey from being a persecutor, to becoming a prisoner for Christ has been for the sake of God using him to declare the message of salvation to the gentiles.
- The mystery of this process of salvation was revealed to Paul who revealed it to the gentiles.
- Both Jews and Gentiles have become joint-heirs in the promises of God.
- Even though Paul considered himself the "least of the saints" his message and ministry has been for the sake of the world and the heavenly powers so that all may understand the breath, length, height and depth of the love of God for all people.
- Paul ends this section praising God and reminding his readers that God is able to do more than anything they can imagine in this life.

## **Structural Summary of Chapters 4 and 5**

### **I. Unity of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:1–16)**

A. Exhortation to unity (Eph. 4:1–6)

B. The different gifts (Eph. 4:7–10)

- C. The gifts for edification of the church (Eph. 4:11–16)
- D. Paul’s Testimony (Eph. 4:17–24)
- E. Exhortation to an Edifying Lifestyle (Eph. 4:25–32)

## **II. New Life in Love (Eph. 5:1–20)**

- A. Exhortation to self-sacrificial love (Eph. 5:1–2)
- B. Instruction in holy living (Eph. 5:3–20)
- C. Submission to One Another (Eph. 5:21–6:9)
- D. Submission in general (Eph. 5:21)
- E. Wives and husbands (Eph. 5:22–33)

We now turn our attention to Chapters 4 and 5 of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

## **III. Commentary on the Text for Ephesians 4 & 5**

### **1. Ephesians 4:1-32 Now to The Practical Application of the Doctrines**

- a. 1-6 Paul declares that true faith must express itself in a lifestyle that demonstrates their devotion and loyalty to Christ. It is a life marked by humility, restraint, patience and tolerance in love. It is a life marked by every effort to keeping unity in the fellowship of the saints. What is clear is that the Christian life is opposed to pride in any form. There is One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all who is over all. In other words they belong to One Universal church that has only One Lord, and practises the same beliefs in their local context.
- b. 7-16 Paul indicates that God has given a gift to every believer for the wellbeing of the entire church. By His ascension, Christ has triumph in the

heavenly places, but the gifts have been bestowed for the sake of making Christ's presence a reality in His church. Paul begins to provide a list of gifts that should equip the saints for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. The utilization of the gifts is to help to bring the church to some level of fullness and maturity. They are intended to bring stability in the Body of Christ so that believers are not thrown about by false teaching or the trickery of others. The gifts are intended to unite and facilitate growth in the Body of Christ in an atmosphere of love.

- c. 17-24 Paul insists that those who profess the gospel of Jesus Christ must leave behind their former way of life. The darkness, wickedness, ignorance, insensitivity, lewd behaviour, lust and impurity should never be named among them. Rather they should be dressed in the newness of life after the likeness of God in holiness and righteousness.
  
- d. 25-32 According to Paul they are to let truth be the hallmark of their life. Paul cautions them about allowing the sin of anger to lead to further sin. Stealing which was common was should not be even mentioned among the children of God, but their lives should be marked with honesty. Even the intention of their communication should be to build up the body of Christ. They are to make sure that they do not grieve the Holy Spirit by deeds of evil acts. Bitterness, slander, wrangling, and malice should never be named among the people of God; rather they needed to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, and merciful towards each other just as Christ has been merciful to them.

## **2. Ephesians 5:1-33 Imitate God and NOT the World**

- A. 1-2 After telling the Ephesians to be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving toward one another just as Christ has forgiven them, Paul begins this section by asking them to follow the example of God as His dear children. Their lives and their behaviour must be governed by the love of Christ

which is sacrificial and produces a beautiful scent acceptable in the presence of God.

- B. 3-5 Motivated by Christian love the Ephesians are to flee fornication, lust, unclean living and greedy desires. In fact, Paul tells his readers that such behaviour should not even be mentioned among the Children of God. They are to avoid all base and lewd behaviour and talk. Why??? Because such behaviour would exclude one from the Kingdom of God.
  
- C. 6-14 There were some who already believed that the outward behaviour does not affect the inner state of a person's life; Paul however differs with them on this point. Nor is his advice to be taken lightly. They are to behave like Children of The Light in all that is good, right and true, and not like those who are still walking in darkness. There must always be a willingness to discern what will please God and a determination to make sure that one does not take part in the works of darkness, but rather the task of the Christian is to expose them. The Christian must call upon those who are asleep and dead in sin to awake and arise so that Christ may give them light and life.
  
- D. 15-21 Care and caution must mark the life of those who intend to walk in the light. Even time is a gift given by God and it must be used properly. Foolishness for Paul would be ignorance of their duty and neglect of their souls. Paul goes on to tell them that they are not to try and raise their spirits by getting drunk, but rather they should seek to (keeping on) being filled with the Holy Spirit that will inspire them. Their lives should be marked with joy and doing everything in submission to God and to one another.
  
- E. 22-33 Paul begins to describe the duty of husbands and wives. Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands in love; and the duty of the husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for

the Church. Husbands are to love their wives just as they love their own bodies-making sure they look after themselves and her. Paul concludes this section by reminding his readers that mutual love and respect should be shown by both husbands and wives towards their spouses.