

Ephesians 1:1-3 Who are You?

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in
Christ Jesus:

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

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual
blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Today we are beginning a brand new series in the
Book of Ephesians

A)Mt. Everest is the highest peak on the planet

B)The book of Ephesians: Has been called the MT
Everest of the New Testament.

C)It is a book that is Theologically Rich –

1)Study of Doctrine – particular the doctrine of
who we are in Christ –

D)So Theologically Rich – and yet it is extremely
practical

E)Because Ephesians hits on the most important
aspects of our lives – very RELEVANT

THE AUTHOR:

A)Like most of his letters Paul introduces himself
to his readers as the Author – Paul and apostle

B)Background:

1)Paul's story is one of the most compelling for the
validity of the Gospel- SAUL OF TARSUS

C)Religiously trained – by the best teachers –
Gamaliel

1)Saul was a STAR STUDENT

D)Looked at as an Up and coming religious leader –

1)incredible intellect – well respected in the Jewish
religious community of Israel

Saul of Tarsus was A religious Zealot

A)Champion for Judaism and the Old Covenant –
the Law – and withstood anything that seemed
contrary to his faith

B)So when this new movement started – these
followers of Jesus who claimed – he had risen
from the dead.

1)Jesus had ushered in a New Covenant – new way to
Know God

C)Saul was having NONE of that! – Armed with
religious and legal authority – persecuted
Christians

1)Imprisoned and even killed

D)While on one of his missions to Attack Christianity

1)His life was radically changed – encounter with
a Risen Jesus – Damascus Rd

Saul of Tarsus was knocked off his horse by a
light that he states was brighter than the sun at
noon time

A)Blinded by the light – heard a voice – Saul
Why Persecuting me?

B)Saul asked two questions that would change the
whole trajectory of his life.

1)Who are you Lord – what do you want me to do

C)Two questions that would become his passion
and his pursuit – YOUR PASSION?

1)Passion – Who are you – Passion was to know
Jesus

2)Pursuit – what do you want me to do? – Pursuit
was to make Jesus known to the world

D)Paul goes from being the Jesus persecutor to
the Jesus Preacher!

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus goes down in History as one of the greatest testimonies to the Validity of the gospel

A)His life and whole focus was changed – Risen
Jesus

B)We know Him as the Apostle Paul – Famous to
us

1)But his change in focus to following Jesus cost
him everything

C)Wife/ Position as a Pharisee / Friends/ family/
hated/ beaten imprisoned often

But to Paul it was all worth it – Jesus had saved him – rescued him from a life of religion

A) Rescued him from a tyranny of a performance based acceptance kind of life.

B) Tyranny – Never do enough – never do it right

C) Paul was free in Jesus – A whole new focus

D) So Saul of Tarsus was transformed after an encounter with a Risen Jesus – and you can be as well –

1) You surrender your life to him – Passion to know him witness for Christ – His testimony – his calling

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

A) Apostle = sent one – might also use the term Ambassador

B) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ **by the will of God,**

C) Question: Who are you by the will of God?

Maybe you have never thought about that

A) You might say – I chose my profession – school – major – chose my spouse –

B) I picked where I wanted to live –

1) But perspective when you recognize you are EXIST for a higher purpose – higher cause

C) The Bible says that God called you in your mother's womb – before formed you – knew you

D) He saw the choices you would make – decisions that were made –

1) Yes your choice – but he had a hand in all of it

My Dream in high school was to be a professional Baseball player!

A) Senior year everything was falling into place. – Scout team for the Mets

B) Top pitcher in our league – 3rd leading batting average in all of Orange County

C) End of my Senior year – no scholarship offers

1) Vanguard – God kept me close to home and close to CC Costa Mesa – starting to serve in the High School ministry.

D) The last thing on my mind was becoming a Pastor

1) Believers meeting – ignorant of the gifts - God's call

Quit playing ball

A) Shy - Jobs in the Hotel – Host busy restaurant

B) God was working orchestrating everything!

C) Ever thought – **I am where I am by the will of God**

Talking recently young man – struggling –

A) 80% of the people living in the USA are working a job that they don't necessarily like –

B) Pays the bills – maybe you feel stuck – too old – too many bills to start a new career

C) But your job can take on a whole new perspective – you recognize – I am where I am by the will of God

1) His glory – His mission – His purpose!

D) Until he opens up a door to do something else or do this somewhere else – I am going to do it for Him

E) I am here by the will of God – I will be a bright spot for him in this company – profession

F) **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,**

1) He is writing to People living in the city of Ephesus

THE CITY - Large and popular

A) "Ephesus was a world-class city an enormous cosmopolitan city of some 250,000 people.

B) Travelers from all over the Roman Empire passed through because of its strategic location:

1) a **massive harbor** on one end facilitated travel and trade via water,

2) and a **highway system** enabled travel and trade via land.

C) Ephesus was geographically central.

1) "A recent study of Roman milestone markers demonstrates that mileage to other cities in Asia Minor was measured from Ephesus."

Wealthy

A)The city was wealthy because of its enormous trade and banking center

B) Because of its pagan Temple of Diana, declared to be one of the **Seven Wonders of the ancient world**.

1)Ephesus was a Popular tourist destination

C)Politically important

1)Ephesus was politically powerful and functioned as the Roman provincial capital of Asia Minor

Pagan

A)Ephesus was a highly spiritual but pagan city,

B)Ephesus was known as the center of supernatural and paranormal activity for the worship of Diana,

1)involving demonic activity, widespread sorcery, and witchcraft.

Sexually Deviant - steeped in sexual sin.

A)Prostitution was common, temple prostitutes

B)Archaeologists have even uncovered what they believe to be an ancient brothel connected to the library by a secret underground tunnel,

C)enabling men to commit adultery when their wives thought they were hitting the books.

D)Temple Prostitutes and sexual possibilities made Ephesus **A haven for immorality visiting sailors**

1)What happens in Ephesus stays in Ephesus

Why does all of this matter? THE RELEVANCE OF EPHEBUS - Why is that important for us to know?

A)Often times when we read the Bible the setting can seem more rural – farmers and shepherds – living a simple life

B)And we can wrestle with how that relates to us living in our metropolitan busy culture – city life

C)Subsequently, we wonder if the Bible can actually speak into the troubles of our time

1)and the “temptations we face.

D)Cities like Ephesus remind us that Christianity is rooted and flourished in difficult urban contexts, 1)where people struggled with the same things you and I do today.

If ancient Rome was like New York or London, Los Angeles then

A)Ephesus was like a San Diego!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

B)Consider our city

1)Decent size – over 2 million –

C)Wealthy city – Important city with our military bases – Popular city – Tourism big

But it is a pagan city- Major drug problem – proximity to Mexico

A)San Diego is home to 158 street gangs

B)Sex trafficking is a major Problem

1) San Diego is ranked by the FBI as one of the nation’s top 10 cities for human trafficking

C)Generating over \$810 million dollars to the underground economy

D)My point is this- Ephesus was not that much different from San Diego

E)Which means that this Word and the focus of this Book are relevant to us today in every way!

THE FOCUS - IDENTITY IN CHRIST

A)In Ephesians alone, Paul spoke of believers as being “**in Christ**” twelve times overtly and twenty-two other times in various forms.

B)To these believers living in this great city – that was full of wealth, prestige, paganism, promiscuity

1)Paul wants them to find their identity in something greater

C)Who they are in Christ! –

1)BecauseThat changes everything

It’s safe to say that everything broken in culture had its beginning with an *identity crisis*.

A)Our first parents were intended to be defined by their relationship to their loving Creator.

B)They were made to bear and reflect the image and glory of God.

1)EVERYTHING broken in the world is rooted in the moment when man chose to believe “**the Lie of lies**” —

C)Which says that man can find meaning and identity from something other than God;
1)from created things — rather than the Creator.

So Rather than finding their true identity in bearing the image of God,

A)Reflecting the glory of God, and living for the glory of God,

B)They sought to establish an identity that was rooted in their independence from God

1)and the pursuit of their own glory.

Bb)Every since man has been suffering from what some call – REPLACEMENT IDENTITY

C)Result - we try to derive our identity — our deepest sense of meaning:

- You are what you do
- You are what you have
- You are who you know
- You are where you live
- You are what you drive
- You are what you wear.

D)HERE’S THE TRUTH — You are not what you do.

If our identity is in our work, rather than Christ, success will go to our heads, and failure will go to our hearts.- Timothy Keller

Before coming to Jesus we are always trying to find our replacement identity —

A)And then we’re always trying to *protect, preserve and enhance* that identity.

B)Life without Jesus is exhausting!

1)Life without Jesus consists of non-stop — moment-by-moment concern with,

2)“How will this make me look? What will I get out of this? How will this make me feel more secure about who I am?”

“Jesus came to announce to us that an identity based on success, popularity and power is a false identity- an illusion! Loudly and clearly he says: 'You are not

what the world makes you; but you are children of God.”

— Henri J.M. Nouwen, Here and Now: Living in the Spirit

The solution to our search for identity and meaning is a Person

A)The answer to our question — WHO AM I? — is answered in a Person.

B)Your identity is found in that relationship and connect to Jesus

1)Paul is going to unpack that in a major way in this book

C)Ephesians breakdown

- **Ephesians 1-3 Wealth** – who I am in Christ
- **Ephesians 4-6 Walk** – how am I to walk as one who knows who he is in Christ
- **Ephesians 6:10- Warfare**- How am I to wage warfare as one who knows who he is in Christ

Starts with the Wealth

The very first Verse - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

A)The first thing he tells us about our identity in Jesus is this **In Christ – I am a Saint –**

Aa)Catholic tradition dead people who lived an almost perfect life could be considered for Sainthood.

B)Professional researches are hired to do research on a person – the cost ranging – \$50K to \$250K

C)Pass the test – become a saint

D)Reminds me of the story of a man who tried to buy the Saint title for His brother. –

1)**Compared to his brother he was a Saint**

The term Saint = Set apart one

A)Set apart **to someone** – To God

B)Nothing you did – receive his grace and gift of Salvation – faith in Christ –

1) You are a Saint – Set apart to me - Special relationship – Mine – Bought with a price

C) My kids were set apart – Special to me – Special interest

1) Special watch – do anything for my kids

D) My grandson is set apart – special – I am attentive to him.

1) If I am out somewhere – and some kid is fussy – thinking – why doesn't someone shut that kid up

E) My grandson is fussy – What is wrong buddy – Papi – need to get you some ice cream?

1) Set apart – different – special –

You are set apart to God

A) You have also been set apart from the world –

B) Your New identity is not as someone living for this world

1) Being influenced from the world

C) Come out from among them and be separate says to the Lord

1) Switchfoot – New way to be human – no longer living to please self – controlled by our passions

D) Don't conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

Set apart to God

Set apart from the world –

AND

Set apart for something – God's Purpose and mission

So the first thing Paul wants us to know about our identity in Christ is – We are SAINTS

A) SET APART –

B) The 2nd thing he wants us to know about our identity is that we are Blessed!

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

In Christ I am blessed

I am Chosen in Christ (1:4)

I am Adopted in Christ (1:5)

I am Accepted in Christ (1:6)

I am Redeemed in Christ (1:7)

I am Forgiven in Christ (1:7)

I am Made known His will in Christ (1:9)

I have an Inheritance in Christ (1:11)

I am Glorified in Christ (1:12-13)

I have Hope in Christ (1:18)

I have Power in Christ (1:19-20)

I am Made alive in Christ (2:5-6)

I am Brought near to God in Christ (2:13)

I am connected with other believers in Christ (2:21)

I am Built-up in Christ (2:22)

I am a Partaker of His promise in Christ (3:6)

I have Boldness and access through Christ in Christ (3:12)

So that is the Peak we are going to be climbing – treasures we are going to discover

Closing

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

Grace and peace – Siamese twins –

Been called The 2 great heritages of the Christian are grace & peace.

Grace is all God's power, all his love, all his beauty, available to you. **G.R.A.C.E.**

Grace is who God is and peace is the result of knowing him

“But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” Romans 5:20

Tim Chaddick — There is more grace in the heart of God than there is sin in the heart of man

Peace with God

Peace within

Peace with others