Tread: **A Study in Ephesians – wk 1 – You Are Here**

**On a map, the “you are here” sticker / marker. Puts it all in perspective. When you know where you’re standing, you have confidence to move. What if the sticker is moved? You stay or get lost – or misdirected.**

**Before we can run, we must 1st learn to walk – before we can walk - we must first know how to stand. This is Ephesians**

**When you understand where you stand, you find yourself in a strong position to begin your walk.**

**Chap 1-2 tell us, as believers, where we stand in Christ.**

**Chap 3-4 tells us how to walk it out.**

**Chap 5-6 talks to us about how to run!**

**Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle (messenger/delegate) of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to God’s holy people (written to Christians) in Ephesus, (Turkey) the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (We are reading someone else’s mail)**

**By many considered Paul’s greatest letter - “queen of epistles”**

**Paul in this letter speaks of the new man, a new society, and God’s work in us together as a community of faith.**

**So many try to mystify and make God esoteric and complicated…**

**You know the “Dummies” books. Well – Jesus is God for Dummies. God comes to us – so we can see, touch, watch, and know God.**

**Ephesus is Paul’s Jesus for Dummies book.**

**MAP / Story Behind The Book: Ephesians: The who, what, why**

* **Written by Apostle Paul while in prison in Rome.**
* **Paul started the church - lived there 3 yrs. Considered Paul’s favorite place.**
* **Major port city – busy and advanced. Like a Dallas. (modern Turkey)**

**Pics \*\* At one point the center of the Christian faith. John out final days.**

* **Ancient city buildings – large / modern – 4th largest city in Roman empire**

 **Pics \*\* Acts 18-19 – shares the exciting story about Paul in Ephesus…**

**Includes new disciples, the power of God falling, strange miracle handkerchiefs, demonic spirits, city wide riots, a whole cities economy turned upside down… And - CH 20 – a sad heartfelt tearful goodbye.**

**Paul loved these people – this is a letter to them.**

**Ephesians is a challenge for them to – stand, walk – run!**

**Understanding our position in Christ – getting our footing = Tread**

**In ancient Greek (language Paul wrote in), Eph 1:3 - 1:14 is one long sentence. As an opera – it sets the tone for the rest of Ephesians.**

**We are going to just take a look at part today! Paul starts out with a long – praise. A 202-word praising the Trinity.**

* **Eph 1:3-5 = where we stand - with the Father**
* **Eph 1:6-12 = where we stand – with the Jesus the Son**
* **Eph 13-14 = where we stand – with the Holy Spirit**

**WHERE DO WE STAND WITH GOD? If you are a true follower of Jesus Paul is saying if you are a Christian – You are here – In Christ.**

**Only a some this week…**

**He starts off with this - Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**

1. **You are rich! Richer than you think!**

**In Jesus we have everything we need spiritually (aka. sufficiency of Christ). God has not held back from you. His gifts are abundant and flowing richly to his kids. (1 Peter 1:3-4)**

**Ephesus was known for goddess worship of Artemis (Temple of Artemis one of 7 Wonders of the Ancient World.) It contained a sacred stone that had fallen from the sky (Acts 19:35), meteorite. Paul is contrasting the worship of Artemis with the worship of Jesus. Christians in Ephesus you have something greater than a dead rock from a heavenly place. You have life and “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”**

**We have everything we need in Christ! When we get this, we learn to live free from the things that slow us down. We see our richness!**

**How rich are you? Ephesians 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.**

1. **You are chosen!**

**Long before God laid earth's foundations, he had you in mind. He knew us before the earth existed. You did not exist, but we were on His mind.**

**He knew how you would be born, be raised, get a job, lose job, find a new job, lose job. Who you’d marry - marry again. He knew your kids, what makes you laugh & cry. Before creation.**

**Psalms 139:16** **Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand… (you are on the mind of God)**

**From Abraham to Paul – God took the first step to choose us**

**Eph 2:8-10, Isaiah 53:6, Ro 8:28-39, 1 Peter 2:9, John 6:44, 1 Cor 12:3,**

**Jesus is “God for dummies” – how did he chose his followers. He said follow me, and they did. But, He did not ask everyone.**

**Believer – God chose you! What does this mean?**

* **It means - You are not random**

**You are not a mistake! You have meaning! You’re alive for a reason! You have a purpose! You’re meant to do more than just survive!**

* **It means - You have no ability to boast about it – he chose you!**

**Romans 3:10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.**

* **It means – You have a purpose**

**Why did he choose us – “he chose us… to be holy and blameless in his sight.”**

**Holy = different / blameless = to reflective God’s goodness**

**We are chosen to stand out – be different (explain)**

**We are chosen to reflect the goodness of God (explain)**

**This issue is so divisive – Like the Hatfield’s and the McCoy’s.**

**The two main groups are (John) Calvinists and (Jacob) Arminians.**

**Calvinist – emphasizes predestination. God irresistibly reaches out and draws you in. Some have double predestination - some pre-destined to heaven and some to hell. Some say oh no – and they bicker!**

**Arminians – emphasize choice. God reaches out and taps on your shoulder, you chose to respond. Some argue over once you chose if you can un-chose to follow God. They have their family squabble too.**

**Both acknowledge that is all starts with God working in us**

**Calvinist – lift up the sovereignty and absolute power of God**

**Arminians –focus on our responsibility and God’s mercy**

**And they fight! Cage fights! Hatfield and the McCoy war!**

**Some like ask people questions to see if they are a H or M.**

**And God is watching saying, “Great, that is why I wrote that!”**

**The truth is the Bible speaks clearly about our responsibility and powerfully expresses God supremacy and that he cannot be stopped.**

**So how does that all work out… I don’t know. The tragedy is so many move from learning how to live and walk in Christ - to arguing about it.**

**Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.**

**(Larry Osborn) 4th dimension truth (the unseen realm) – Explain. Things we will never understand in our life. Some day we will stand before God… and go oh… why didn’t I see that?**

**You can end up on which ever end you want (I have one I lean toward)**

**But at the end of the day, what will teach me to live as V.5 says - “in accordance with his pleasure and will - 6 to the praise of his glorious grace**

**Not to argue about it, but to live and lift up Jesus for his glory!**

**You are here - Ephesians 1:4 …In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will…**

1. **You are His child!**

**Here is a Biblical truth… not everyone here is one of God’s kids. We are not all God’s children. Some of you are...**

**The desire to be loved – to belong – to be wanted – to be chosen – to be cared for. The desire for family. Kids in the system that are without a family and desiring to be wanted.**

**There is a deep spiritual connection to this in our life.**

**Paul says we are adopted! How? “through Jesus Christ”**

**In Christ - we have a perfect Father**

**Our heart cries out for a father. When we don’t have one – it often wreaks our life. A good one give us a glimpse of heaven.**

**In Christ - we have family**

**Our heart cries out for a father. When we don’t have one – it often wreaks our life. A good one give us a glimpse of heaven.**

**In Christ - We are loved and wanted**

**Once a spiritual orphan – In Jesus you are now a child of the king! No longer outside God’s family. This is a positional move. A new family! We become a son and daughter (John 1:12)**

**Two adoptions in Roman Culture:**

**Adoption – was then and is now – legal family. As one of your own.**

**1 - Unwanted people were thrown away, abandoned, and sold away – most legal adoptions in ancient times were not infants. Adoption literally saved a life from destitution, starvation, and sex slavery.**

**2 - The wealthy would adopt males as heirs of this estate. To rule and reign their affairs. Legal heir – past debts are paid and given a new inheritance. The new son has new responsibilities and status.**

**These are the images that come to their mind.**

**In Christ - We are full-fledged kids of God**

**Not kinda sort maybe – you are his son / daughter – with full rights, privileges and benefits. You have access to your Father**

**My kids have access to me that your kids don’t – they’re mine! They can come without fear of rejection. I give my life to them. They can come to me freely and confidently.**

**Two responsibilities as God’s kid:**

* **To live – holy**

**Ephesians 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.**

* **To love – wholly**

**Ephesians 5:1 Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

**Children naturally imitate their parents – They want to be like you. We are imitators of God – because we children of God.**

**We are to be the greatest lovers on planet earth! Sadly we are often identified as haters… That is not who you are.**

**You are adopted for Paul says – Eph 5:1 “for his pleasure and will”**

**Over time we act more and more like our father!**

**Believer, are you living as a child of God or an orphan? Is your identity in who he says or in who you see? It’s time to walk as a child of God!**

**Only 2 types of kids in this room: Spiritual orphan or a child of God**

**How do you become a child of God? And part of his family?**

**John 1:12 - But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.**

**Galatians 3:26 - For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.**

**This can be you – no longer alone, but a part of the family of God.**

**Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV) - to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. (bestowed favor, blessed, freely given in Christ)**

1. **You are accepted! (Ro 15:7, 1 Ti 1:15, Ps 139:14, Col 1:21-22, John 7:37)**

**I was the weird new kid - the one left out, rejected, excluded, odd. The things we do to fit in. to be accepted. To feel a part. To feel loved.**

**But guess what? In Christ, I am chosen – adopted – accepted!**

**Let me tell you - When you realize how accepted we are in Christ, it makes stepping out a lot easier. If you don’t like me – that’s okay, I’m loved by God. If you don’t choose me – that’s okay, I’m chosen by God. If you don’t accept me – that’s fine, God receives me and picked me to be on his team to shape the world.**

**You might have gone your whole life and still struggle to find acceptance from a mom or dad. From friends - Maybe a marriage where you feel no love or acceptance. God accepts you.**

**You might feel left out, left behind, or left alone, but in Jesus - you are rich in so much. There is so much to be thankful for.**

* **God accepts you as you are, but He doesn't want you to stay the way you are**

**Ephesians covers the next steps after you discover where you are – Thank God he does let us stay who and where we are.**

**So far in Christ you are – spiritually rich / chosen / adopted / accepted! Is that what you see when you look in the mirror.**

**This is where you are… in Christ. Apart from Christ you are not those things. Without Christ you are not blessed / not chosen / adopted / favored / and accepted… but you are loved.**