Same God: **Ephesians – wk 1 – You Are Here**

**On a map, the “you are here” sticker / marker. It puts it in perspective. When you know where you stand, you have confidence to move.**

**What if the sticker is moved? You stay or get lost – or misdirected.**

**Ephesians is a big - God is here and you are here sticker. It’s about who God is and how he works in our lives today. The same God who created the universe works in his people here.**

**Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, (messenger / delegate - God handpicked 13 apostles – to be his voice – Paul one of them) to the saints who are in Ephesus, (Christians in Galatian - Turkey) and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (We are reading someone else’s mail)**

**Considered by many, 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 new community of faith.**

**You know the “Dummies” books. Well, Jesus is God for Dummies = and 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. Paul’s favorite.**
* **Major port city – busy & advanced (think Dallas).**

**Pics \*\* At one point, the center of the Christian faith.**

**John lived out his final days. Large modern city. 4th largest city in the Empire.**

**Acts 18-20 shares the exciting story about Paul in Ephesus…**

**Includes new disciples, power of God falling, strange miracle handkerchiefs, demonic spirits, whole cities economy turned upside down, city wide riots...**

**And then - CH 20 – a sad heartfelt tearful goodbye to some of his best friends.**

**Ephesians is a challenge for them to hold tight to Jesus**

**and understand their position in him.**

**A letter loaded with foundational theology and doctrine.**

**Chap 1-3 Our position in Christ - God’s plan to us**

**Chap 4-6 Our practice in Christ – God's plan for us**

**Paul wrote in Greek – in Greek Eph 1:3-14 is one long sentence**

**\*\* A 202-word praising the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he (the Father) chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he (the Father) predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his (the Fathers) will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he (the Father) has blessed us in the Beloved.**

**7 In him (Jesus Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he (the Father) lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he (the Father) set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.**

**11 In him (Jesus) we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him (the Father) who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him (the Father) you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (the HS) 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**

**Paul starts out with a praise opera, which sets the tone for the rest.**

* **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**

**We are only to unpack part of this today – v. 3-6.**

**WHERE DO BELIEVERS STAND WITH GOD?**

**Paul is saying if you are a Christian (follower of Jesus), “You are here.”**

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

1. **You are rich – in Christ! You are richer than you think!**

**\*\*\* This is known as - The sufficiency of Christ - In Jesus, we have everything we need spiritually for salvation and growth. God is not holding back from you. No secrets. His gifts are abundant & flow richly.**

**(pic) Ephesus was known for goddess worship of Artemis (Temple of Artemis one of 7 Wonders of the Ancient World.) Contained a sacred stone that had fallen from the sky (Acts 19:35), a 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.”**

**1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you…**

**2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence…**

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

**When we can see what we have, we don’t fixate on what we don’t have. We see our true richness! (1 Tim 6:6 – true wealth is contentment in Jesus. / Phil 4:12-13 – learning contentment is true strength in Jesus.)**

**How rich are you? He goes on - Ephesians 1:4 …even as he (the Father) chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. (This is salvation) In love 5 he (the Father) predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. / 11 In him (Jesus) we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him (the Father) who works all things according to the counsel of his will…**

1. **You are chosen – by the Father! (us – believers)**

**Long before God laid earth's foundations, he had you in mind. He knew us before the earth existed. We did not exist but were already known.**

**Ps 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.**

**God knew how and where you would be born, raised, work, lose a job, find a new job, lose a job. Who you’d date, break up with, and marry. He knew your kids born and lost, what makes you laugh and cry. And who would say yes to salvation. All before He said, “Let there be light.”**

**If you are a Christian, the Father chose you for salvation. When? v4. “He chose us in him before the foundation of the world.”**

**\*\*\* This is known as – Predestination.**

**“Here we go again.” We preach through the Bible – and guess what, it’s there… a lot. It can’t be avoided. It is a Biblical doctrine.**

**Some don’t like that word, but it is in the Bible, and the concept is widespread in Scripture. (Matt 11:25-27, Mar 13:20, Lu 22:22, 10:22, John 15:16, John 5:21, John 6:37,44,65, John 1:12-13, John 8:29, John 10:27-29, John 15:16, Acts 2:23, Acts 4:28, Acts 13:48, Rom 8:28-33, Rom 9:15-23, Gal 1:15, Eph 1:4-5, 11, Eph 2:8-9, Col 3:12, 1 Thess 1:4, 2 Thess 2:13, 2 Tim 1:9-10, Titus 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2:9, 1 Cor 12:3, Jam 1:18, Rev 13:8, Psalm 139:15-16, Job 23:13-14, Jer 1:5)**

**Pre-D is connected and flows from God’s unchanging character, sovereignty, power, and foreknowledge.**

**Predestination - *Greek word proorizo =* “to predetermine beforehand,” “to ordain,” “to decide ahead of time.” The point is (PRE = before)**

**What did God predestinate? v. 5 “he predestined us for adoption to himself”**

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

**Galatians 1:15 - But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles…**

**John 15:16 - You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide…**

**\*\* How do we know who God chooses? Jesus says follow me, and they do – before they’re dead. Believer – God chose you!**

**What does this mean?**

* **You are not random –**

**You are not a mistake! You’re meant to do more than just survive!**

* **It means - You cannot boast about it your salvation**

**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. (He chose you)**

* **It means – You have a purpose!**

**You have meaning! You are created to know and glorify God.**

**Being “chosen” is a divisive issue Like the Hatfields and the McCoys.**

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

**\*\* Calvinist – emphasizes predestination. God calls, draws, saves, and keeps - monergism. Some - double predestination - Some -“oh no.”**

**\*\* Arminians – emphasize libertarian free will and choice. God reaches out and taps on your shoulder, you choose to respond – synergism. Some argue once you choose, you can un-choose. Other, “oh no!”**

**Both acknowledge that it all begins with God working in us**

**Both are acceptable views – we don’t have to fight.**

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

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

**But yet they cage fights! Hatfield and the McCoy war!**

**And God is watching, saying, “Great, I got you thinking!”**

**That God predestines who will be saved, and we must choose Christ in order to be saved. Both facts are equally true.**

**The truth is the Bible speaks clearly about our responsibility and powerfully expresses God's ultimate supremacy.**

**Romans 11:33 “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”**

**So how does that all work out… I don’t know.**

**The tragedy is - 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).**

**Things we will never understand in our life. Some day we will stand before God and go, “Ooh, why didn’t I see that?”**

**You can end up on whichever end you want (I have). But at the end of the day, we must ask what will teach us to live as V.5,6 says - “in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace”**

**How can we live to lift up Jesus for his glory!**

**You are here - Eph 1:4-5 …In love he (the Father) predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will…**

1. **You are His child by Grace!**

**\*\*\* This is - Adoption – God picked you like a parent in an adoption agency. We were spiritual orphans, and God, in his love, will, and mercy chose us to be his kids.**

**Here is a hard 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 who are without a family and desire to be wanted. Apart from Jesus, we are the same.**

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

**Paul says we are adopted! How? “through Jesus Christ” (the cross)**

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

**Our heart cries out for a father. When we don’t have one it wreaks havoc. A good one gives us a glimpse of heaven.**

**In Christ - we have family**

**Our heart cries out for community. When we don’t have one, we wander the earth. A good one gives a glimpse of heaven.**

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

**Once a spiritual orphan - in Jesus, we are now a child of the king! No longer outside God’s household. This is a positional move. A new family! We become a son and daughter.**

**Two types of adoptions in Roman Culture:**

**Adoption – was then and is now – a 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 lives from destitution, starvation, and sex slavery.**

**2 - The wealthy would adopt males as legal heirs to rule and reign over their estates. Past debts were paid, and one was given a new inheritance. The new son has new responsibilities and status.**

**These are the images that came to their mind for them.**

**In Christ, we are full-fledged kids of God. Not kinda sort maybe. You are his son/daughter – with full rights, privileges and benefits. With 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. That is now us and God – in Christ.**

**Out of the Father’s love - You are adopted for two reasons:**

**Eph 1:4 “(chosen) to be holy and blameless in his sight.”**

**Eph 1:5 “(for) the purpose of his (the Father’s) will.”**

* + **To live holy unto God and wholly for the will of God.**

**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: a 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**

**(last one – you are here) Eph 1:6 …to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he (the Father) has blessed us in the Beloved. (KJV has accepted - Blessed = bestowed favor, accepted, freely given in Christ)**

1. **You are accepted by God’s grace**

**I was always the weird new kid - the one left out, rejected, excluded. 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 you are in Christ, it makes stepping out in faith 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 struggling to find acceptance from a parent, friends, or spouse.**

**God is calling you – God accepts you – in Christ.**

**You might feel left out, left behind, or left alone - but in Jesus, you are rich with every heavenly blessing. 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 who Jesus is, who we are, and how to walk it out. Thank God, he does not let us stay who we are.**

**So far, in Christ, you are spiritually rich, chosen, adopted, and accepted! Is that what you see when you look in the mirror?**

**\*\* Apart from Christ - you are not blessed / chosen / adopted / favored / and accepted… but you can be.**