

Intro: The book of Ephesians has been called, “full of Paul’s sublime thoughts and doctrines” (Chrysostom), “the crown of St. Paul’s writing” (J. Armitage Robinson), and “one of the most significant documents ever written” (Peter T. O’Brien). It was Jean Calvin’s favorite book, which his wife read to him daily before his death. It is considered the epitome of Paul’s message and of his heart. It is not a normal book, where there is a singular main problem that Paul is defending against or taking issue with. Ephesians is more of a letter written in the grip of worship, a multi-faceted reflection on the grandeur and glory of God in the face of Christ. In this book Paul deals with the glorious gospel of grace, the supremacy of Jesus above everything, the formation, purpose, and relationships of the Church as the body of Christ. Love is a major theme, both God’s love for man and man’s love for each other. Faith in Jesus is strongly and passionately exhorted throughout the book. Peace-making is a part of coming under the supremacy of Jesus. There are many sub-themes in this wondrous letter. But, if anything can be said to be the main theme of Ephesians, it is this: Jesus is glorious above all. Paul wraps up this letter abruptly, but coming full circle to emphasize again the glorious supremacy of Jesus Christ. So, if you leave with any question today of what the Holy Spirit wants you to know about the book of Ephesians, it is this: Jesus is glorious and beautiful above everything!! And, like Paul and Tychicus, I love Jesus Christ!!

1. An Example of a Lover of Jesus: Tychicus

- a. Tychicus was a close friend and fellow servant of Jesus with Paul
 - i. Asian believer who travelled with Paul to Ephesus and Troas (Acts 20), was likely with Paul in Troas when he was arrested (leaving his belongings behind; see 2 Tim 4:13)
 - ii. Paul trusted him enough to have him replace Timothy in Ephesus when Paul called Timothy to visit him before his death (2 Tim 4:12)
- b. He is here with Paul, in Rome, during his imprisonment (see Col 4:7 as well)
- c. It would have been Tychicus who delivered the Ephesian letter, along with the letter to the Colossians, and would have accompanied Onesimus (runaway slave) back to his fellow brother/master, Philemon.
- d. Tychicus will bring news of us.
 - i. beloved brother
 1. Tychicus’ faithful brotherhood to Paul was evident in the fact that he was always near Paul when Paul was in trouble
 2. He is loved by Paul, and by the churches
 - ii. faithful servant in the Lord
 1. Tychicus proved himself faithful to the Lord’s mission, giving his life away time and again for the furtherance of the gospel and the glory of Jesus
 2. He is the Lord’s servants, not Paul’s, hence “in the Lord”
 3. He desires to please Christ more than to please men
 4. He is trustworthy, holding the same firm passion for the glory of Christ in the churches, so that he delivers these letters with more words of encouragement
 - a. He takes over Timothy’s place in Ephesus (2 Tim 4), so he must have been capable of ruling and leading according to the word of Christ
 - b. He also takes over for Titus on Crete for the same purpose, taking oversight of the gospel in the churches there
- e. to encourage (*παρακλετος*) Ephesian hearts
 - i. with news of how they were doing
 - ii. Paul knows that the Ephesian believers desire to know how his health and conditions are, but he does not write it down, but asks Tychicus to deliver the message
 - iii. “encourage” is the same word used of the Holy Spirit, *parakletos*, which means “one called alongside to comfort and/or admonish”
 1. In this case, it is most likely comfort in the knowledge of how Paul and his companions are doing in their imprisonment in Rome.
 2. Tychicus must have been an amazing example of Christ!
 - a. Paul left it up to him to explain the “why’s” of their gospel imprisonment, as well as the “what’s”
 - b. Knowing what we do of Paul and his enormous emphasis on the glory and praise of Jesus, he must have expected Tychicus to glorify and praise Jesus for all of this as well

2. It’s All About Jesus!

- a. The ending of a letter leaves us with what the author wants us to remember. In this case, it’s the same as the beginning, only in reverse order: Peace, Love, Faith, Grace, from the Son and the Father (equally, I might add), and of love toward Jesus as Lord that is perseverant and undying (incorruptible, unending, pure)
- b. Peace and Love with Faith to the brothers

- i. These are the most emphasized qualities of the Spirit that are emphasized in Ephesians
 1. Peace with God and each other through Jesus Christ
 2. Love from God and toward each other through Jesus Christ
 3. Faith in Jesus Christ and His glorious atoning work on the Cross and His Holy Spirit's transformation within all of us together
- ii. We have been instructed in this letter to "work hard to maintain unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:3), and to "attain the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God..." (4:13)
 1. We do not create unity, but rather maintain the unity of faith through the Spirit of God
 - a. Not some commonality outside of Jesus, but rather IN CHRIST we find our unity and our peace together
 - i. Worshipping the same Triune God
 - ii. Together dependent upon Jesus Christ alone to make us righteous before the Father and the Spirit transforming us together by His grace
 - iii. All together saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ's blood and righteousness imputed to us by faith, not works
- iii. SEE the GOSPEL of JESUS!!
 1. His peace-making toward us leads to our peace-making toward others
 - a. See your sin as egregious as it really is: Jesus had to die for you
 - i. sin causes death, God HATES sin, it is completely unlike Him and rebellious against Him as King, it saddens His heart, grieves His Spirit, angers His justice, and invokes Him to wrath: it is a dangerous and terrible thing to fall into the holy hands of the living God
 - ii. Seeing the reality of the heinousness of your own personal sin keeps you from puffing yourself up and depending upon your own goodness as the means for your self-importance
 1. When we don't treat our sin as great as it really is to the HOLY God, then we will look down on those who haven't performed as righteously as we perceive ourselves to be
 2. We will draw the line between the "big sinners" (like *those* people) and the "little sinners" (like me) and so disintegrate and destroy God's people
 - b. Recognize that you are saved by grace alone, forgiven solely because Jesus paid down your debt against God with His own blood: Jesus did die for you
 - i. When we are walking in the light of the gospel, i.e. by the Spirit, it is possible, even natural, for the Spirit-transformed and fully-forgiven heart to completely make peace with those who have sinned against you
 - ii. When we see *how much* we have been forgiven in the light of God's holy perfection and our deep depravity, and we see *how far* God went in sending Jesus to make peace for us, we are humbled into the dust and make peace with those who wrong us
 1. Matt 18:21-35
 - a. Others' sins against us are a pittance compared with our sins against God
 - b. To demand vengeance and repayment of others is to treat God's grace toward us with contempt and presumption
- iv. See the vertical peace we have with God so that we can give horizontal peace w/each other: It is All About Jesus Christ!! WE SEE JESUS!!
 - a. This leads all of us to praise Jesus Christ above everything else!
 - b. We are all equally dependent upon Jesus alone to satisfy God's just wrath and to bring us into the adoption of sonship that we *have been given* in Him (1:3-14)
 - i. "Are we not all of us, as saints of God, dependent upon Jesus? – are not all of us hanging upon Jesus? – Do we not all receive from Jesus? The blood that cleanses us, the righteousness that justifies us, the grace that sanctifies us, the sympathy that

comforts us, the hope that cheers us – is it not all derived from the fullness that is in Christ? Are not all clinging to that one dear Savior, depending on His finished work, and all drawing from His infinite resources? Oh, yes! Where do the saints of God the most frequently meet? Is it not at the feet of Jesus?...of His fullness have we all received; and all alike living upon Christ's fullness, nourished by His grace, kept by His power, soothed by His love, fed by His hand, guided by His counsel, and bound together in the same heart of God, supplies us with one of the strongest and most persuasive motives why we should love one another..." (Octavius Winslow)

c. Grace be to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible love

- i. Loving Jesus is natural to the Christian, for He is a child of God (John 8:42)
- ii. Loving Jesus is necessary to be a Christian (1 Cor 16:22; Matt 10:37)
- iii. How does Gospel come from Grace?
 1. Gospel proclamation!!
 2. The love of Christ is much deeper than the love of God toward the suffering. It is the love of God toward His rebellious enemy! It is grace, not pity. It is grace, not something God owes us! The deep mysterious truth that Jesus Christ has poured Himself out for a ragtag group of rebels is utterly amazing grace!
 - a. "Grace is something much more profound than God responding in sympathy to our suffering – it's all about Jesus, intentionally pouring Himself out in love for people who should rightfully have received just the opposite. I have a great disposition to see only my own suffering, but in order to see grace I need a reality check. I have to see that sin is truly sin – and then I can see that grace is truly grace. When I see that sin is appalling then I can see that grace is amazing."
(Charles & Janet Morris, *Saving a Life*)
- iv. Why is Jesus (as Lord) listed as the object of love and not the Father?
 1. **John 6:45-51** It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me - ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."
 2. **John 14:9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
 3. **2 Corinthians 4:4-6** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants¹ for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- v. What is the incorruptibility of love? (see Thyatira in Rev. 2)
 1. Not "perfect" love, but "incorruptible" love: perseverant, does not rot or spoil or go towards death.

Loving Jesus is not the same as obeying all of Jesus' commands. Jesus said, "If you *love* me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). That means that obedience to the commandments is the *result* of loving Jesus, not the same as loving Jesus. Love is something invisible and inside. It is the root that produces the visible fruit of loving others. (John Piper)

2. For love to be incorruptible (unrotten, immortal, uninterrupted by death), there must be the enabling grace of God.
3. This love never dies, it perseveres to the end! It is a love that goes deep, much deeper than a love for the world or a love for pleasure, even a love for one's own blood!

- a. "Lord"
 - i. Not a "love" that makes Jesus into my own image, what I think He should be, but rather a love that submits and accepts His revelation of Himself
 - ii. One of the dangers of suffering in this world is to see oneself as the victim, and that Christ is here to serve you only
 - 1. TV view of God is that he moves to make you happy with the things of this world, rather than with Him
 - 2. That's not love for Christ, it's abusive manipulation, making Jesus out to serve your idolatrous needs
 - iii. There is an inherent cost in love. To say that we love Christ but will not follow EVERYTHING that He has said is not to love Jesus, but to use Him.
- b. **Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which¹ the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

3. I LOVE JESUS CHRIST!!!

- a. Consider Jesus Christ:
 - i. Fully God, submitted Himself to the Father and became fully man, so that you and I might be set free from sin's grasp and God's wrath through His atoning death in our place: BEHOLD YOUR REDEEMER
 - ii. He redeemed you according to His all-powerful love poured out for you: BEHOLD YOUR LOVING GOD
 - iii. He brought to you the adoption as sons, where you no longer are treated as enemies, but as sons and daughters of the Most High: BEHOLD YOUR SAVIOR-BROTHER
 - iv. His blood is effective to save you and His Spirit is powerful to transform you into His likeness, giving all glory and boasting and praise to Jesus Christ: BEHOLD YOUR POWERFUL KING
- b. Let these doctrines sink deep within your soul
 - i. There is no need which Jesus cannot meet with His very presence and His glorious word cannot save
 - ii. Every wound has a balm; every fear has a promise; every battle has armor; every hunger has sufficient morsel in Jesus Christ
- c. Remember Who Reigns
 - i. Do not love this world, for it is fading away
 - ii. Do not love the power of this world
 - iii. Rest in the grace of God shown to you through Jesus Christ
 - iv. Remember His return for you. He is coming to take you home. Love Him!
- d. Loving Jesus means:
 - i. I adore Jesus Christ far more than any other human or angelic being
 - ii. I enjoy His ways and His words more than I enjoy the ways or words of anyone else
 - iii. I want to please Him more than I want to please or placate anyone else
 - iv. I want to be with Him more than I want to be with anyone else
 - v. I feel more gratitude toward Him than for what anyone else has done for me
 - vi. I trust His words more fully than I trust what anyone else says
 - vii. I am more glad in His reputation being built up than I am of anyone else's, including mine

Conclusion:

Adoration presupposes the giving of all of oneself. It is the love that makes everything else dim in the exclusive glory of its object. To adore and love Jesus Christ is to fix one's eyes and soul so closely upon Him that all of life is reshaped and redirected according to His glory, His words, His life. And the wonderful thing about the Gospel is that Jesus, knowing our wayward hearts so well, has endeavored to place His own Holy Spirit within us so that we would walk with such fixed gaze and adoring steps.

So, our purpose as a church, and as individuals, is to cling to Jesus Christ, to proclaim His gospel to ourselves and others as our source and substance of hope, praying at all times that our hearts would be strengthened to fully comprehend how wonderful and beautiful that He is. God has been so gracious to us in His Son. Step forth and love boldly, boast in the glorious Cross of Christ by which you have been crucified to this world. Serve humbly and faithfully, give generously and boldly, forgive recklessly and completely, walking worthily out of deep, deep, love for Jesus.

"Though you have not seen him, you *love* him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

Now is the time to rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory...it's time to praise Him!!