

# (Ephesians) Introduction to Ephesians

by Brian Brodersen

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*Brian Brodersen introduces the book of Ephesians by exploring the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul and the significance of his calling.*

**Duration:** 44:12

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:1-5, Ephesians 4:1, Ephesians 6:10-18

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Unity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sitting and learning before rushing into serving the Lord. He highlights the wealth and riches that believers have in Christ Jesus, as well as the unity and reconciliation that God has brought between Jews and Gentiles. The speaker then discusses the application of these truths in the Christian walk. Finally, the sermon touches on the concept of spiritual warfare and the need to discern and follow God's will in our lives, just as Paul was called to be an apostle.

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## Transcript

And so here we go on our new adventure here in Ephesians. Let's go ahead and get started with it. Begins with an introduction.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Now, quite often as a pastor and as a Bible teacher, we take things for granted. We assume that when we talk about anyone in the Bible, particularly a person like Paul, we assume that everybody knows who this man is and so forth.

But as I was just looking over the passage today, I thought there probably are some among us who don't really know the background of Paul. We come across his letters in the New Testament, but we need to know who he was, what kind of a man he was, where he came from, and how it is that he became an apostle of Jesus Christ. And so I thought it would be good just to sort of reflect for a moment on who this man, Paul, is.

We're introduced to Paul for the first time in the eighth chapter of the book of Acts, but at that point he is not known as Paul. He is rather known as Saul, and we learn many things about him. He tells us about himself over and over again in his writings.

He tells us that he was, of course, a Jew, and he was born in Tarsus in the city of Cilicia, but yet he was brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of the great rabbinic teacher Gamaliel. We learn that he was a

Pharisee. We learn that he was extremely zealous for the tradition of his fathers.

And so the first time we're introduced to him there in Acts chapter 8, we find that it's in conjunction with the death of Stephen. And there we read that the men who were stoning Stephen to death, they laid their garments down at the feet of a young man named Saul. And so Saul was actually consenting to their crime.

He was holding their garments so they could hurl those stones at Stephen and execute him. And we find immediately after that, going into the ninth chapter, that it's Saul who leads a great persecution of the church. And so he's this out-of-control zealot.

He believes that this new message that's come into Jerusalem is against the God of Israel. And so in his blinded zeal, he's going to go out and do his best to wipe out this new sect. He's a powerful man.

He's a man of influence. He's able to access the high priest, and he's able to get permission from the high priest to travel outside of Israel, to go to the city of Damascus, and to hunt down and arrest any of those who are following Jesus, to bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. And he headed out, as we know the story, to Damascus.

And he was almost there in the city, and suddenly there was a blazing light, brighter than the sun, shining upon him, and a voice that was speaking to him. And he fell to the ground, and the voice said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, Who are you, Lord? And the voice said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. You can be sure that he was absolutely stunned.

Couldn't believe it. Jesus is the Messiah. He's speaking to Paul, or Saul.

He's saying, why are you persecuting me? And then at that point, the Lord commissions him, appoints him to be an apostle, sends him into the city of Damascus, and there he recovers from his temporary blindness, and he's baptized, and he's filled with the Holy Spirit, and he begins to preach the gospel. And he's zealous for the message that he once tried to destroy. And this newfound zeal becomes a great irritation to the Jews who didn't believe, and so they begin to persecute him, just as he had formerly been persecuting the Christians.

And so he has to escape after some time, and finally he makes his way up to Jerusalem, where he spends a bit of time with the apostles, gets to know them a little bit, but then he begins to cause a ruckus in Jerusalem as well. So finally they send him back to where he had originally come from. He goes back to Tarsus, and there he spends some time.

We don't know how long, but he spends some time preparing himself for the work that God has called him to. And at a point in time, this man Barnabas, who had met Paul in the city of Damascus and heard him preach and introduced him earlier to the apostles, at a point in time Barnabas goes to Tarsus, he seeks out Saul, and he basically invites him to join him in spreading the gospel. And so Paul begins to spread the gospel along with Barnabas, and they travel together, they minister together, they're a team.

And to make a long story short, at a certain point in time they have a disagreement that causes them to separate, and from that point on the record in Acts emphasizes no longer the ministry of Peter or of John or of Barnabas, but the emphasis now comes to Paul, the apostle. And he's the one who travels throughout Asia Minor and into Europe, planting churches as an apostle all over that region. And he was the one who planted the church in Ephesus that he's now writing this epistle to, but he's writing this epistle

from prison.

He's been to Ephesus, he's spent his time there, he's planted the church, he's ministered to them, he's moved on to other things, but in his zeal to witness to his countrymen in Jerusalem, he ends up being arrested, and finally he's taken to Rome, and he's put in a prison cell. And it's from that prison cell that Paul writes many of his New Testament epistles, Ephesians being one of them. And so Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee, the zealot, the persecutor of Christians, now an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

An apostle is someone who is commissioned to represent another, someone who is sent, somewhat like an ambassador. An ambassador goes from one country to another with the full authority of the country that they're representing. And so here's this man, Paul, he's a representative of Jesus Christ.

He has the full authority of heaven behind him because he hasn't taken this commission upon himself or appointed himself, but he's been appointed by Christ. So he's his special designated messenger, and that's how he introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. It was God's will for Paul to be an apostle.

It was God's will for Peter to be an apostle. It was God's will for Philip to be an evangelist. It was God's will for Stephen to be a deacon.

It's God's will for me to be a pastor teacher. And what is God's will for you? That's the important question. It's a question that we all ought to always be contemplating, and it's an issue that we all ought to be continually seeking clarity on, knowing the will of God, being in God's will.

And for Paul, it was to be an apostle. For you, it might be to be a school teacher. It might be to be a faithful mother at home, tending to your family and to your children.

It might be to be a computer programmer, a businessman out in the community. It might be to be a mechanic. It could be any number of things.

The important thing in life is to be whatever we are by the will of God. If we're in the will of God, then we're living and functioning for what we were created to accomplish. And that causes life to flow just a little more smoothly.

If we're out of the will of God, then we're out of sync with everything. So to get into the will of God, to discover the will of God, and then to flourish in the will of God, that is something that we all need to seek to do. Paul knew what he was called to be.

It was an apostle of Jesus Christ. And so he writes to the saints who are in Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Now, I want to give you a little background on the city of Ephesus.

There's a tendency for us to think that life is so much different today than it was back in biblical times. There are some people that go as far as saying the Bible is irrelevant for today's problems because today's problems are unique. We've never experienced the sorts of things that we're experiencing today before in history.

But as you study history, and as you go back and you look at civilizations in the past, as you go back to biblical times, you find that life hasn't really changed too much at all with just the exception of added

modern conveniences because of technological advancements. But life is pretty much the same today as it was back then. And as we look at the city of Ephesus that Paul went into, we're going to see that Ephesus was like any large population center today.

Ephesus was one of the largest and most impressive cities of the ancient world. It was a political, religious, and commercial center in what was known then as Asia Minor, but what is known today as Turkey. Ephesus had a population of over a quarter of a million people.

There was an outdoor theater there in Ephesus that's been uncovered by the archaeologist that was able to seat 25,000 people. There was a great library, the Library of Celsus in the city of Ephesus, and its most celebrated structure, the Temple of Artemis or Diana, a magnificent building four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens. So this incredible structure, one of the wonders of the ancient world, this Temple to Artemis was.

The temple was a depository for huge amounts of treasure and was in effect the Bank of Asia. Inside the temple, idolatrous worship flourished and hundreds of temple prostitutes made themselves available to fulfill the fantasies of the multitude of pilgrims and merchants coming from all over the empire. According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, it was also a sanctuary for the criminal, a kind of city of refuge, for none might be arrested for any crime whatever when within a bow shot of its walls.

There sprang up therefore about the temple a village in which the thieves and murderers and other criminals made their homes. Not only did the temple bring vast numbers of pilgrims to the city, but it employed a host of people apart from the priests and priestesses. Among them were the large numbers of artisans who manufactured images of the goddess Diana or shrines to sell to the visiting strangers.

So that was the city that Paul came into with the gospel. It was in this environment that God began a work that would impact all of Asia Minor. The seven churches of Asia Minor, which we read about in 2 and 3 a while back, those churches were probably started as a result of Paul's ministry in Ephesus.

People who heard him preaching the gospel in Ephesus would go back to those surrounding cities and they would set up Bible studies which would then ultimately become larger congregations. The 19th chapter of the book of Acts gives us the historical account of Paul's visit to Ephesus, and I think it would be good just for our background to go ahead and look at that together. It's an exciting account of the activity there in Ephesus, and so I'll go ahead and read it to you.

And it happened while Apollos was at Corinth that Paul, having passed to the upper regions, came to Ephesus and finding some disciples, he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Now, Paul had visited Ephesus briefly on another occasion, and on that first occasion he had encountered a few disciples there and they begged him to stay and help them, but he was in a hurry to get back to Jerusalem. He wanted to be there for a particular feast, and so he said, I've got to go, but if the Lord wills, I'll come back to you. And so evidently God did will that he come back, and so he's come back now, and he finds this small group of believers, and so he asked them that important question, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? So they said to him, we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.

And he said to them, into what then were you baptized? So they said, into John's baptism. Then Paul said, John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized in the

name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about 12 in all. So notice this, this is the beginning of the church in Ephesus, the church that would ultimately impact all of Asia Minor, and it begins with a dozen people, just a handful.

You know, it's amazing what God can do with just a few people that are serious about him. When we think back to the beginning of the ministry of the gospel, there were just 120 people gathered together in that upper room, and it was through that 120 that God ultimately spread his word throughout the known world. When we were in Europe, getting together with the missionaries, some of them are seasoned in one sense.

They've been there for quite a while, and some of them have seen a significant amount of success in their ministries. A few of the churches are up in the high hundreds, even close to a thousand. But the majority of the churches there are quite small, and some of them are much like this church here in Ephesus, just a dozen people or so.

But because of what we read here in Ephesus, we don't look down upon that, or we're not discouraged about that dozen people. We look with expectation and excitement, thinking, wow, the Lord can do something through this fellowship like he did with the Ephesian church, just starting with this handful of people. And so Paul, he's going to stick around now for a while, and he went into the synagogue, and he spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. So Paul ministers, first of all, in the synagogue. After a while, they're no longer receptive to his message, they kick him out.

So he goes and he finds a philosophical school that basically rents him a room. It's kind of like how many of the churches that we've been involved planting have gotten started, just renting a school room somewhere, just a small little place where people could gather to hear the gospel. That's what happened there.

And this continued for two years, listen, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. So people were coming and going constantly, and this man Paul, who was over in this room that he had rented, was sharing this message that was impacting the lives of these people, transforming their lives. This was a revival taking place.

It was an outpouring of God's spirit. And as people would come in and listen to the apostles' message, they would come under conviction of sin, and they would recognize the lordship of Jesus Christ, and they would surrender their life to him, and then they would go back out. Some of them right back out into Ephesus, others into the surrounding communities.

But ultimately, all throughout Asia Minor, the word began to spread because of this ministry of Paul here in the school of Tyrannus. Now, God worked unusual miracles by the hand of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out of them. So God is really confirming that this is his man here.

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, we exercise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches. Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.

Notice that the demons are acknowledging Paul, they knew him. He was the one that was putting a massive dent in the kingdom of darkness. So this became known, this whole incident with the attempted exorcism, became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus, and fear fell on them all.

And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, and many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all, and they counted up the value of them, and it totaled 50,000 pieces of silver. That's a large amount of money.

A piece of silver was roughly a day's wage. And so wages for 50,000 days were probably quite a few people that were involved in a cultic activity, but they've now made such a turnaround in their lives, they're taking all of this that they were formerly involved in, and they're just doing away with it completely. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

And when these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent to Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time. And about that time, there arose a great commotion about the way.

For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation and said, men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover, you see and hear that not only at Ephesus but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.

What a testimony, one man. And the whole guild of craftsmen are now gathering together. This is a union meeting.

And they're all coming together to consider what to do about this guy who's basically putting them out of business. Their business was idolatry. Their business was making images to worship these false deities.

And Paul is preaching and people are getting saved and they're no longer purchasing the idols. And so these guys in their little booths outside of the temple, nobody's coming around. Nobody's coming to buy the little amulets and things.

And it's hitting them in the pocketbook. So they're angry. They're upset.

They've got to do something about this man. So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship. Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians.

So the whole city was filled with confusion and rushed into the theater with one accord having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. And when Paul wanted to go into the temple, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia who were his friends sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Some therefore cried one thing and some another for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. So there's just a mob that's gathered together. Most of them didn't know what in the world they were even protesting.

So they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. Now this is an interesting occurrence here. Alexander is a Jew.

Paul is a Jew. Paul is preaching a message that's putting the idolaters out of business. The Jews in the community, they want to make sure that Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen know that they have no connection with this man, Paul, so they can go on and carry on business in the city.

You see the hypocrisy with these guys. Now they were supposed to be the ones who were worshiping the one true God and abhorring idolatry, but they've just really joined up with the idolaters, and they're part of the whole money-making scheme there. So Alexander's coming to say, hey, wait a second, this guy, you know, I know he's a Jew, but he's not with us.

You want to make your images? We're supportive of that. We're behind that. That's basically what Alexander was there to say.

And so the Jews put him forward, and Alexander motioned with his hand and wanted to make a defense to the people, but when they found out that he was a Jew, it didn't work. It backfired. All with one voice cried out for about two hours, great is Diana of the Ephesians.

And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana and of the image which fell down from Zeus? Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are pro-councils.

Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly, for we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar. There be no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.

When he had dismissed these things, or when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly, and after the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. So there's a couple of year period crammed into just a few paragraphs. But this was the birth of the church in Ephesus.

This is how it all got started. Just a dozen men in this city of over a quarter of a million people, and Paul comes to town and hooks up with them and prays for them, and they receive the baptism of the Spirit, and God begins to move, and pretty soon there's a great and thriving church that's established in this great city of Ephesus. And so this is the background to the epistle that Paul writes.

Many years have passed now, and as I mentioned, Paul is now in prison in Rome, but he's writing to the churches, and he's writing words of encouragement to them. What we see here is that Ephesus and Paul's day was similar to any large city today, full of sin and misery and in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are so many places today where we need to see the testimony of Christ proclaimed, and I have a desire.

I think God put it there, but it's a desire to see Bible-believing, Christ-centered churches in every city. Why not? That's my question. I look at what God's done here.

I look at what God's done in a variety of places, and I think, you know, I can't believe that God doesn't want to do that everywhere. We know that God loves people. We know that cities are inhabited by large amounts of people, and so it seems to me that those are the places to go, not just big cities like Ephesus, but small cities as well.

Some people point out Paul's strategic maneuver here to go into Ephesus. It was one of those sort of hub type of places where you could reach out to the world at large through Ephesus, which we did see happening, but Paul didn't always go to those kinds of places. Sometimes he went to places that were small and insignificant, and we see that God cares about all kinds of people in all kinds of situations.

It's not just in the big cities where life is difficult. It's everywhere. It's in the small villages and hamlets.

We see the Lord working and wanting to work, but as I look at this, it just inspires me today to want to get the word out. We were in Austria, and I went to two cities that I'd never been to in Austria before. I went to a city called Linz and a city called Graz, and as I walked through the streets of both these cities, I just thought, you know, these are places where we ought to have churches established.

There's people. There's lost people. There's young people around that don't know the Lord.

They're just, you know, hanging around, getting into trouble, getting drunk and doing drugs and getting involved in sex and all of this stuff that most young people are doing in our world today, and it's just ripe. It's a place to go in and see the Lord work, and all over Europe, you just see that kind of a setting, that kind of an environment, but we don't have to go to Europe. We see it all around us, and so Paul was a man who was on the move, and he was going from place to place with that same kind of conviction.

God wants to do a work. He was being led by the Spirit, and he was setting up churches, and God was blessing, and this is one of the churches he set up and one of the churches that God was blessing. So back to Ephesians, here in his introduction, he says to the saints who are in Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

So the epistle is not only for the saints who lived in Ephesus 2,000 years ago, but the epistle is for all the faithful in Christ Jesus, us tonight, 2,000 years later, on the other side of the world, gathered together, but that message that was given to them back then is the message that God wants to give to us as we begin to study this epistle, that message of his grace, and so Paul says, then, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the way that Paul will typically address or begin to address his listeners, grace and peace, and he says from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I take this to be the stamp of inspiration upon these epistles.

What God is saying to them, or what Paul is saying to them, in effect, is what I'm about to say to you is what God has to say to you, and he begins by telling them grace and peace to you. It's from God, not from

me, not from Paul the apostle, but grace and peace to you from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's Paul's introduction.

Now, as we look at Ephesians, and tonight we're just going to have the introduction, and then next week we'll actually jump into the text, beginning in verse 3, but as you look at Ephesians, you see that, as with many of Paul's epistles, there's a consistent layout, a layout that always begins with a fresh reminder of who God is and what God has done for us. One of the curses upon the Christian church has been a lack of teaching, and a lack of teaching has resulted in an emphasis, quite often, upon what people should be doing for God. Now, exhortation is an important thing.

We need to be exhorted. We need to be challenged. But we should only be exhorted once we've been taught, because exhortation concentrates on the practical application of things.

If a person's ministry is solely a ministry of exhortation, what they end up doing is telling people to do all kinds of things for God but never giving them a basis for doing it, never giving them that strong foundation or footing from which to operate. When I first began teaching, and, you know, several years after I was teaching, I found it quite easy to preach to people. It wasn't hard to get up and tell everybody where they were blowing it and how they ought to get it together and how they ought to be doing more for God and those kinds of things.

That's easy to do. But to actually be able to go into the riches of what God has done for us, and to just dwell on that, and to contemplate that, and absorb that, to soak that in, to make it part of our lives, that's another story. And you know what? That's the important thing.

The most important thing is what God has done for me and what God has done for you. Our response is just that. It is a response.

We love him because he first loved us, and we serve him because he saved us. And so Paul, in all of his epistles, or most of them at least, and particularly in this one, he has this outline so clearly, beginning with what God has done. And he spends the first couple of chapters just really glorying in what God has done for us.

He begins by referring to the spiritual blessings. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. And then for the next couple of chapters, he just elaborates on that.

He just goes on and on and on, talking about the spiritual blessing that God has done. Everything is, and God has done this, and he's chosen us, and he's redeemed us, and he sealed us. And you know, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, he made us alive together in Christ.

And he's reconciled two parties that were at enmity, the Jews and the Gentiles. And he's brought us together as one in Christ, and he's made us members of his family, and all those things. That's what he just goes on and on talking about.

And he does that, really, for the first three chapters. And then it's not until halfway through the fourth chapter that he really gets down to the application part of it. And so commentators have sort of tried to summarize the book, and they've actually come up with titles for their commentaries that are somewhat a summary of the epistle.

And one writer entitled their commentary on Ephesians, The Wealth, the Walk, and the Warfare of the Christian. And what they're doing is they're capturing the flow of the epistle, the wealth, the riches that we have in Christ Jesus, the walk, that which we are to do now in applying the truth of God to our lives. And then the closing part of the epistle has to do with spiritual warfare.

Another commentator entitled their commentary, Sit, Walk, and Stand. And so, again, beginning with the emphasis of just sitting and listening and learning. You know, it's a great thing to serve the Lord.

And when we come to Christ, we do want to serve him, generally. God's saved us, and we're thankful, and we want to do something for him, and that's a great desire. But it's important to sit for a while.

Not to say we can't do anything at all, but it's important not to rush off and, you know, just immerse ourselves in duty before we sit for a while and just learn about what God has done for us. When I first began pastoring back in Vista many years ago, I came into a small church there, and they had a different mentality about ministry there. And I remember the first week I was there, somebody got saved.

And one of the guys who, I think he was an elder or something, he ended up being the biggest pain in the neck that I've ever experienced in the ministry. But before the person could, you know, finish saying the sinner's prayer, he had them signed up to teach Sunday school next week. You know, and he was telling me, we got to get them into service to the Lord.

And I said, let's let them get settled in the faith first. Let's give them some time to grow. How are they going to go in and teach Sunday school? They just got saved.

They don't know anything. But he was sort of the personification of the attitude of many. There is that legitimate time to just sit.

And actually what we would do in the ministry there in Vista is when somebody would come to the church, didn't know where they came from. They might have been Christians for quite some time. They might have come from a different church, or maybe they just recently got saved or whatever.

They were new in the church, and quite often they would come with the desire to serve. And I would say to them, well, we'd love to have you serve the Lord with us here, but what we're going to ask you to do is for six months, just sit, just come and let the word of God enrich you. And after six months of sitting and just worshiping and studying the word with us, if you still feel like you want to serve, then come and talk to me and we'll get you involved in service.

But I figured in six months, they're going to figure out whether they really want to stay in the church. And if they do decide that's what they want to do, they're going to get grounded a bit, and they're going to be able to give something. So there is that place for sitting.

And then as we've sat for some time, we begin to then walk, begin to walk and to serve, and then to stand. Here was the final thing in the title of that other commentary, standing against Satan on the evil day and so forth. So that's basically the outline of the epistle to the Ephesians.

And so we're going to spend some time just sitting at the feet of Jesus, spend some time just getting to know the riches and the wealth in this relationship that we have with the Lord. And after we've basked in that for some time, then we will get into the walk and to the service to God. And then we'll talk about the warfare because that's a very real part of what we all experience.

So as I was praying about what to teach, Ephesians just presents us with so many, I think, relevant issues for our situation today. And two things in particular that stood out to me, one was the teaching on marriage and the family, which is something that we've touched on a little bit when we were going through 1 Peter, but I think we need something a little more in-depth, a little more lengthy and thorough. And so as we get into chapter 5, it'll give us an opportunity to really look at the issues of marriage and the issues of family, and then that issue of warfare as well.

There's so much about spiritual warfare that we need to understand. We live in the midst of it daily. If we don't realize it's going on around us, we can become a casualty in the conflict.

And so we'll take some time as well. And more or less as we go through, we'll sort of do a couple of mini-series on marriage and the family and on spiritual warfare. So it'll take us quite a bit of time to get through Ephesians, but unless the rapture happens, we've got plenty of time.

And if that happens, we don't care anyway, right? So that's where we're going. And next week we'll pick up in verse 3. Father, we thank You, Lord, for Your Word. We thank You that we can gather together and sit at Your feet and receive from You, Lord, that we can come to understand by the help of Your Spirit the wealth that we have in Christ.

And so, Lord, as we embark upon this study of Ephesians, may we understand the riches that are ours in Christ Jesus. And Lord, just bring us along, sitting, walking, standing. Lord, bring us along as we meditate upon Your Word.

Lord, thank You that just like You sent Paul to Ephesus, that great, wicked city where You had a great work to do, that You're working today, that You're sending people out today. And Lord, we think of our world that desperately needs the testimony of Christ in big cities and in towns and in villages. And Lord, we pray that You'd send out more and more workers to bring Your Word to the places that don't have it.

And so, Lord, just work in us that we might be able, like Paul the Apostle, to describe our vocation, our purpose in life, and to with assurance say that we are what we are by the will of God. Bring us to an understanding of Your will that we might live in the center of it. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11652.mp3>

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