

Ephesians 1

by John McGregor

In this sermon, John McGregor explores the profound spiritual blessings and transformative power found in our relationship with Christ as outlined in Ephesians 1.

Duration: 35:18

Scripture: Psalm 34:8, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:1-3, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 1:22-23

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

The sermon transcript is from a sermon on the book of Ephesians, specifically chapters 4, 5, and 6. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding our walk in Christ and highlights the repeated mentions of being in Christ and in accordance with His will in the chapter. The speaker also mentions the concept of being chosen in Him and the significance of being part of the body of Christ. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's blessing and a reminder of the wealth and walk in Christ discussed in the book of Ephesians.

Transcript

I've come to realize in my short... That's a good way to do it, isn't it? Great to be together. I feel like I've been posted missing for a while. And we had a great time at family camp last weekend.

And also a wonderful time last night of praise and prayer. A very special time. And this morning as we come just to spend a little time in the Word of God, if you have your Bible, you could turn with me to Ephesians chapter 1. And we're going to think primarily upon this Word this morning.

And enjoy then our time around the Lord's table. As we finish the message and move that way. Ephesians chapter 1, I'm reading this morning from the New American Standard Bible.

And just follow along in your Bible as we read. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To the saints who are at Ephesus who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. That we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself.

According to the kind intention of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood.

The forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace. Which He lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. He made known to us the mystery of His will.

According to His kind intention which He purposed in Him. With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times. That is the summing up of all things in Christ.

Things in the heavens and things on the earth in Him. Also we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to His purpose. Who works all things after the counsel of His will.

To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also after listening to the message of truth the gospel of your salvation. Having also believed you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. With a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory. For this reason I too having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you.

And your love for all the saints do not cease giving thanks for you. While making mention of you in my prayers. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory.

May give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened. So that you will know what is the hope of His calling.

What are the riches of His glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.

Which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. And seated Him at the right hand in the heavenlies. Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.

In every name that is named. Not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet.

And gave Him as head over all things to the church. Which is His body. The fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Dear Father thank you for this time to worship you. Thank you for your word. And as we worship in your word this morning.

May it please you Father to lift our hearts. And to fill our lives in a fresh way. And to strengthen us with your touch.

May we know Lord indeed that it has been good for us to be here. Because you are here. And you are here to bless and to touch us once again.

May your word and the power of your spirit. Strengthen our lives this morning. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen. The book of Ephesians has just six chapters. The first three talk about our wealth in Christ.

And the last three talk about our walk in Christ. So if you ever wondered how should I walk in Jesus. Go to Ephesians 4, 5, and 6. And it will help you know about your walk.

And I like the first chapter here. Because if you like to underline things or notice things. You will see so often it speaks about He.

He, God. The things that God has done. And it is telling us about all of the wealth.

And the things that we have in Christ. In fact, I believe it says 14 times. In Christ or in Him.

In this chapter. Speaking to us about being in Jesus Christ. And five times it talks about in accordance with His will.

Or in accordance with His plan. And I like that because my life is not just a random thing. There is a plan and a purpose in the hand of God.

For your life and for mine. That encourages me tremendously. But as we begin this morning.

I want to just speak for a moment about being thirsty. You know as we come to worship. One of the things that I often pray for is.

Lauren, I want to meet with you. I am thirsty for you. And there are three things really that make us thirsty folks.

There is thirst and emptiness. And when our lives are empty. We are thirsting for something to fill it.

And we thirst in many ways. And we try in all kinds of relationships and things. To fill that emptiness.

That void that is there. Blaise Pascal. A French physicist of some years ago.

Said there is in every human being. A God shaped blank. And he meant by that.

There is a peace that only God can fill. And we have an emptiness in our lives. Until that thirst is filled.

By the Lord Jesus. There is nothing else that can fill that emptiness. Religion can't fill it.

I have a friend who was an Anglican priest. And still is for that matter. For 14 years he was fully qualified.

Ordained. Leading the services. He came to Billy Graham Crusade in Vancouver in 1985.

And walked to the front to say I need Jesus. You see although he had all the head knowledge and everything. He was still thirsting.

There was an emptiness there in his soul. And when he went back home to his church. He was thinking.

This relationship with Jesus. That I have nigh. This thirst quenching thing of Jesus.

I want everybody to experience that. I would like others to know that. And so Malcolm said that.

He never had a problem getting a message together. Until he got saved. And all that week there was nothing.

He looked through scripture and books. And no message to give on Sunday. And as he sat on Sunday in the church.

He was really just crying out to God. Lord what do you want me to say to the people. This morning in the message.

And at that point. The spirit of God said to him. Look at the candles.

And you know. They had forgot to light the candles. And he got up and spoke about how his life was like that candle.

It had a purpose. But without being lit. There was no fulfillment.

There was thirsting. After a fullness. And at the end of the service.

He just as normal in Anglican services. Turned his back to give the benediction. And he is facing the altar.

And the congregation are standing. And he just said to his congregation. Maybe your life has been like mine.

And there is no fullness there. There is an emptiness. Why don't you just come and stand behind me.

And pray. And know this Jesus. Who quenches our thirst.

And you know to Malcolm's great surprise. The whole of his church was there. Standing behind him.

When he turned around. You see. There is nothing that can quench the thirst.

Of emptiness of life. Like Jesus. And all his fullness.

And friends that is what this table is about. It is about the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a second thing that makes us thirsty.

And that is. When we are just dry. And Christians get this way sometimes.

It is hard for us to admit. But we just get dry. We don't have a nearness with God.

It seems as though he is far away. And we are just dry. And you know it is a wonderful thing.

To just drink in from his word. The things that he is speaking. You see he hasn't moved at all.

We might have. But he hasn't. And there is a third thing that makes us dry.

And that is when we are satisfied. You say John what kind of a statement is that? How can you be satisfied and dry? The psalmist says in Psalm 34 and verse 8. Oh taste and see that the Lord is good. And you see the fact is once we taste of him.

We are longing for more. There is a great sense in which we are thirsting for more of him. And when you think with me this morning.

Through Ephesians chapter 1 here. Of just the things that God has for us. His wealth for you and me.

May it continue to build in us. A great thirst as a people of God after him. As you look with me here at Ephesians chapter 1. You see so quickly that there are blessings when we are in Christ.

Most of the letters of Paul start with a phrase like this. To the saints who were at Ephesus in Christ Jesus. Or at Thessalonica in Christ Jesus.

Or at Rome in Christ Jesus. You see it is not about the physical location. It is about the spiritual sense of being in Christ Jesus.

And you can know about him and still not be in him. You can accept him as a teacher or as a prophet. And still not be in him.

But as Paul talks here. He talks about the things that we have. For those who are in Christ Jesus.

In verse 3 he says we have every spiritual blessing. That is a woo hoo moment. Every spiritual blessing.

One or two maybe. But every. Wow.

That is something to chew on for a while isn't it? Something to think about. And so often we are looking for something here or there. Or perhaps delving into things and hoping.

I hope I will get some blessing out of this. Maybe I will go to this concert. Maybe it will bless me.

And sometimes there is great blessing there. There is no doubt. But we have in Christ.

Every spiritual blessing. So that takes us to him doesn't it? And in verse 4 it says we are chosen in him. Now maybe you like me have stood in a line waiting to be chosen for the team.

Anybody ever done that at school? I know school is different in Canada. But we used to have sort of to line up. And they would pick two captains.

And then the captains would go down. And they would start with all their friends. And they would start with all the really good people who could play the games and stuff.

And then at the end. Whoever was left kind of got sorted out. You go here.

And you go here. And you go here. Nobody picked you.

But you can play on that side. Okay? Didn't that make you feel special? Didn't that make you feel blessed? But look at this verse. Somebody chose you.

To be in him. Before the beginning of the world. That's love.

And that's amazing isn't it? Yeah. And we see in verses 7 and 8 that we are given grace. And it says in verse 8, He lavished it on us.

Hmm. Brad when you think about being lavished with something. Drenched in it.

That's a good word. Wish I'd thought of that. Lavished with grace.

Poured out upon us. And you think so often about the problems that we carry. And the burdens.

And the things we can't fix. And we wish we could. And health issues.

And all of those other kind of things. But this morning before we come to meet him at his table. Just think about it.

The blessings that he has given to you and me. Lavished his grace. Oh.

Oh you're facing that this week. Here. Here's a load more.

Drenched with it. Covered in it. Enabled by it.

Lifted in it. Lavished upon us. No wonder we can come to him.

His resources are completely limitless. We're reconciled to God in him. It says in verse 10.

To bring all things together in him. It happens in Christ Jesus. Destined to spend eternity in him.

With him. Says verse 11. You get the idea that in Christ we have so much.

You know. I like to think of it this way. You ever come across doors that say staff only? Or admittance forbidden? Or credentialed people? Or whatever.

How do you feel about that? I look at it and say I can't get in. But you know one day as I watched a staff only door. I see this pregnant lady.

And she goes over to the door. And goes in. And I thought to myself.

Only one of them is staff. Yeah. Only one of them is in staff.

So how come the other one gets to go? Because that other one is in. The one who has authority. What a picture of you and I in Christ Jesus.

Right? He's blessed us with all of these. So many blessings. From the beginning to the end.

The Christian life is in Christ. It is centered in him. In that personal relationship with him.

That nothing can replace. And we are in Christ. Saved.

And he is in us. Then in this chapter we see the strengths that we have in Christ. You know where sometimes people will say to me.

It's kind of a mystical union between Christ and the believer. That's not actually a biblical term. And if you think about the union that we have with Jesus.

It's actually an amazing thing. You know we come to the table this morning. And partake of the bread and the juice.

And we are remembering Jesus as we do that. Because we have a union with him. We are in him.

And let me just give you a couple of thoughts here. About the kind of union that you have in Christ Jesus. It's a covenant union.

Because it is built upon that New Testament. That new covenant. That new agreement that God makes with you and me at the cross.

Where we come into that relationship with him. It is the covenant of his grace. Keep your finger there in Ephesians for a moment.

And slip back with me to Romans. And Romans chapter 5 and verses 18 and 19. It just reminds us that there have been two covenants.

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men. Even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners.

Even so through the obedience of one. That's Jesus. Many will be made righteous.

In Adam he had a covenant with God. But it's the covenant of works. And it failed.

But in Christ there is the covenant of grace. And it will not fail because of his grace. And because of his spirit.

It is a flesh union. Whoa. Yes it is.

Jesus it tells us in Philippians 2 came in the flesh. He took our flesh on him. He understands all about you and me.

It is a flesh union. He walks or walked in a body the same as yours and mine. And knows and fully appreciates all of the things that we face.

And walks in union with us. He gives us his spirit to live inside. And the spirit also walks alongside.

As guide. And as comforter. And as counselor.

And the list goes on and on. Doesn't it? He became flesh for us. We remember that this morning.

It was not a mystical body that died on the cross. But a body of flesh and blood. That understood the pain.

And took it for you and for me. It is a spiritual union. Because the spirit of God comes to dwell in the believer.

And we are not alone. We walk in the strength of his spirit. And in the strength of his truth.

And it is a faith union. I smile sometimes when I see the great debates. Creation or evolution.

And I'm Irish. So you'll have to forgive me for being Irish for a minute. You cannot prove faith.

You cannot prove it. It is a gift of God. You can only accept it.

And so the argument goes on and on. And sometimes I just smile to myself and say. You know.

What a surprise and a shock it will be. At the end of days. When everybody says.

Oh. I didn't evolve. Goodness.

The Bible was actually true. But I could only accept it by faith. We live in a world that promotes all kinds of facts.

But faith is that gift which God gives to you and me. Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 says so. We are united to Christ by faith.

There was a shoe salesman. As Joel said last weekend out at camp. As he was preaching.

Who shared the gospel with D.L. Moody. And he went on down through the story. Of those whose lives were influenced all the way to his own father.

But you know there came a day in D.L. Moody's life. Where all that he had to say about it was this. I had a moment.

So holy. I can't speak about it. Can I ask you a question this morning? Is there a thirst in your heart? For a moment like that? For something that God could do in your life.

And no one else can. Because that's the thirst. That drives us to meet the One.

Who has provided all things in Him. For you and for me. It is a union of life.

That we have in Christ. Life. I like to shout woohoo from time to time.

As you know. And sometimes it gets me in trouble. I remember preaching one time.

And one guy said to me afterwards. I appreciated the message. But why so loud? I said oh.

I'm sorry. I didn't even know that I was getting loud. You know.

He said there's one thing for sure. Nobody's going to say that you don't have life when you're preaching. I just kind of smiled.

But it made me think. It's not my life. It's His.

It's the life of Christ. That we are to live. Day by day.

We have this union with Him. Thirdly as you look at this chapter you see. The transformation that happens in Christ.

In verses 18 through 21 especially. You see Paul is speaking to them. About the greatness of God.

And the rule of God. And the fact that He puts all things in submission to Him. Who is the head of all things.

His sacrifice brings our pardon. Of that there is no question. His resurrection brings to us the power to change.

The transforming power of God. So that we need not stay as we are. But our thirst goes on having tasted and seen.

We want more. And to know more of His change. So that we might become more like Jesus.

That's what Romans 8 and verse 29 shares with us. Is the goal of the Christian life. To be conformed to His image.

You know. That's a good question for me to ask this morning. As the years go by.

Can you say. I see more of Him. That's the longing of our hearts.

Isn't it? And there is a cost. You say. Wait a minute John.

Salvation is free. Yes it is. But Jesus said.

If anyone will follow me. Let him take up his cross. Daily.

And follow me. It's not about self. It's about Christ.

It's about Him. All of His blessings come to us. On this simple condition.

Surrender. My will. My way.

My walk. It's about Him. You ever hear somebody say.

About another person. He's so gracious. She's so gracious.

What are they talking about? They're actually seeing the work of the grace of God. In that heart. Over the while.

The change that Jesus is making. As time goes along. As an easy illustration.

The man who wrote Amazing Grace. John Newton. Once a slaver.

But at the end of his life. Such grace. No wonder he wrote that great hymn.

Transformation. And it brings fruit to us. Let me just quickly sum things up this morning.

Before we come to the table. This union with Jesus. Brings great dignity to your life and mine.

You see. When we think about meeting the Lord. And taking these elements.

We're told to examine ourselves. And confess our sin. And then to meet Him.

Cleansed and renewed. And when I look at my life. I can see failure.

And sin. And shame. And disgrace.

But the ultimate truth is. And when I look at it. I am united to Christ.

And the joint heir of all that He has. Now that gives me power. To live.

And that gives me the uplift. Day by day. That I need.

Because it's not about John and his failings. And so on. It's about the greatness of the one.

Who washes it away. Rick last night in the prayer meeting. Quoted that great verse.

But such were some of you. But you are washed. You are cleansed.

You're free. From those things. In Christ.

That's where the power to live. Really is. Isn't it? And this knowledge of being in Christ.

Gives us confidence in prayer. Do you know. That God keeps your prayers? You can check it out.

In Revelation 5 and verse 8. It says He keeps them. Collects them in a golden bowl. Becky happened to leave this one.

On the altar for us. This morning. Think what prayer must mean to God.

When you come in sincerity to talk to Him. When you pour out your heart before Him. Nothing of that is wasted.

He knows that deep hurt and woundedness. And all of the things that are there. And all of the struggles.

And everything else. And in it. He says I'll collect them in the bowl.

You think about God. He heard you. He knows.

He'll bless you. It gives us great confidence in prayer. Two Sundays ago.

I was preaching in Durban in South Africa. Two services. One at 7. One at 9. And after the 9 o'clock service.

Was over about 10.30. I needed to be at the airport. 45 minutes away. To check in for a flight.

And so I was hastily coming down the aisle. And a lady stopped me. And there was all kinds of prayer ministry going on at the front.

With the leaders of the church. It was wonderful. And I was retreating as quickly as I could to the airport.

And the lady stopped me. I didn't get her name. And she said, You have to pray with me before you go.

You spoke about rejection. And I've struggled with it all my life. So will you pray with me before you go? Okay.

So we're about one third of the way down the aisle. And I took her by the hands. And started to pray.

And I was in a rush. Are you ever in a rush when God isn't? I said, Lorne, Fear is the center of rejection. And your word says that you have not given us a spirit of fear.

But of love and power and of a silent mind. So Lorne, Would you fill this lady with your Holy Spirit? So that she will no longer be afraid of rejection. But be walking in your strength and in your truth and in your power.

Make a long story short, Before I left, I also prayed with her and her husband. And as she looked at me, Hastily going out the door, She said, Lorne, I'm free! The power is not in John. The power is in the one who answers prayer.

Isn't it? It's His power. And His strength. I can approach Him today in humble confidence.

And before I take these elements, I can say to Him, Lorne, You know the things that are in my life. Lorne, I want to be cleansed. I want to be free.

I want to just know Your nearness. Friends, let me wrap up. Our union with Christ is both profound and practical.

And as we come to the table this morning, We're His invited guests. We may approach prayerfully in confidence to Him. But can I ask, What areas of your life need to be transformed? Rather than just going through the motions of another communion Sunday, What are the areas that you need the Lord's touch in? As you know, at each communion service, We have a time of prayer afterwards.

And I'll ask the elders and their wives to come and minister at that time. But what are the things this morning that you thirst after transformation? This is a great day to bring it to Jesus. Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You for the many things that we have in Christ. But Father, we must beg Your forgiveness this morning. Because so often, we neglect to come to You for those things.

When we try to live in our own strength and way, Lord, the simple truth is we need You. We're asking that You would touch us this morning. That Your love would flow from Your heart to ours.

Father, if there is someone in here this morning and you're not sure of your relationship with Jesus, there's a hunger in your life that's never been filled, a thirst because of emptiness. Friend, this morning, right where you're sitting, would you just pause and taste and see that the Lord is good? You can call out to Him from your heart this morning. Begin that relationship of being in Christ with all of its blessings and benefits.

You can simply say to Him, Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner. I know I've done wrong. I repent of that, Lord.

Please forgive me and come and live in my heart that I might be in Christ. Father, we ask You would guide us as we meet You at the table now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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