

A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You Ephesians

It's a good life. You know, actually, it's a great life and there's no greater life than knowing Jesus as our Savior. And it's going to be even greater when we see Him personally. The Bible teaches us that one day, those of us who are alive shall be caught up into the clouds with the Lord when He comes back and says, "Come up hither." And of course, those who have gone on before us, they're going to be raised incorruptible before we go to be with the Lord. Now, they're with the Lord right now, but that means that their bodies are going to be changed. The old grave at that point, we know it's already finished because Christ said, "It is finished," when He was on the cross, but those bodies will be raised incorruptible. Now, they're with Him right now. Not in those new bodies that they will receive, that's those who have gone on before us, and at the time of His coming back for us at the rapture of the church, He will say, "Come up hither," and we will be changed. Our vile bodies will be changed and we'll have a new body fashioned like our Lord Jesus Christ. What a great life it is to know Jesus as our Savior.

Let me remind you to look at our website today, www.LRWM.org. On the website you can download a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." You can also listen to other programs of "It's a Good Life" on that website. You can leave prayer requests. You can find Bible study helps. There are so many things on the website that will help you as a Christian. And if you've never trusted Christ as your Savior, may I invite you to go there and it'll show you and it'll tell you through the Word of God how that you can know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. My prayer for you today is that, if you do not know Jesus as your Savior, that you will ask Him to come into your heart. And if you are saved, that you are living for Him and you are a witness for Him, helping others come to a saving knowledge of the Lord.

Now, today, we continue our study in "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. Today, we're studying number ten, the book of Ephesians. And once again, I remind you, we're not going in depth in these books in these studies. What I'm trying to do is give us an overview so we can think our way through the New Testament.

Well, some of the background on the book of Ephesians. We look at this and we see that the author was Paul the apostle who had preached the Gospel in Ephesus for over two years, influencing all Asia. Ephesians 1, verses 1 and 2, says, *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.* He's saying that he's the one who wrote this book. He's writing this to the Ephesians. *To the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* And I would remind you that he's not only writing to the church at Ephesus, but he's writing to you and me. He says in verse 1 there of Ephesians chapter 1: *And to the faithful in Christ Jesus.* In other words, those people who are saved. Now, if you're saved today, you can take to heart and you can listen to the words of Paul the apostle under the inspiration of God as he was penning down and writing these things to the church at Ephesus. We can take those things to our heart as well and follow his admonitions as he is giving them to the church at Ephesus.

Now the date for the writing of this is during Paul's final imprisonment in Rome. He's awaiting death. And this would be approximately A.D. 62-63, and the setting as Paul wrote his to the church to be what God wanted them to be. He wants these people to understand that this is written to Jew and Gentiles to be united in one body.

And the key verses here are Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3-14, and I would call your attention

especially to verses 6, 12, and 14. Verse 6 says, *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* And verse 12, *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.* And verse 14 says, *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Until. Until the redemption. We have been redeemed, but it isn't complete yet. We will be transformed, as I said earlier. We're going to be transformed into glory when He comes back for us who are saved. We will be transformed. The redemption of this old sinful body will be complete. The body will be changed and we'll be with the Lord forever.

Well, the purpose of the book and there are several things we can look at here, but we know that it was to show the Ephesian church their blessings in Christ are not just for themselves. Their blessings in Christ are for the higher purpose of bringing praise to the glory of His grace through both Jews, Gentiles, and as united as God's children in Jesus. Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 5 talks about that.

It's also to accomplish the purpose for which the letter was written to them. It was to accomplish this purpose. They needed to grow in certain things. Their understanding needed to grow in what God had done in Jesus and in all believers. Chapter 1, verses 15, through chapter 2 and verse 10, talk about this.

Chapter 1 verse 17-23, let's read that. ¹⁷*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:* ¹⁸*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,* ¹⁹*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,* ²⁰*Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,* ²¹*Far above*

all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ²²*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* ²³*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Paul wrote the book of Ephesians to the church at Ephesus because they needed to understand what God had done in Jesus and in all believers.

And notice something else. They needed to grow in the practical knowledge of the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 11, through chapter 3, verse 13, talk about that, and in Ephesians chapter 2, let's read a couple of verses, starting with verse 11 there. It says, ¹¹*Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;* ¹²*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

We're all one, and Paul is trying to tell us and tell the Jewish and Gentile believers there in Ephesus that those who have trusted Christ are one through the blood of Jesus Christ. They also needed not only to have their understanding enlightened. They needed to grow in a practical knowledge of unity, but their knowledge of the working of love needed to grow as well. And we read about that in chapter 3, verses 14-21. In verse 17 of that chapter, it says, *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge....* They needed to grow in love and so do we today who name the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And their participation needed to grow in bringing praise to God's glory through their relationship, first of all, the body of the church and the leaders. We need to understand that we are one in the body of Christ, that is the church, those people who name the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapter 4, verses 4-16, let's read a couple of verses there. It says, ⁴*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;* ⁵*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,* ⁶*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Now, there's one body. We are not separated. Whether you are Jew or Gentile, we are all saved the same way, and that is through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to bring praise to Christ today, according to Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17-24. The first part of that chapter says, ¹⁷*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* We need to live for the Lord today. And verse 21 says, *If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:* ²²*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;* ²³*And be renewed in the spirit of your mind,* Paul says.

And they needed to praise God in submitting themselves to one another. This is hard to do sometimes, and when someone despitely uses us, we need to pray for that person and we need to submit ourselves to each person in the body of Christ in love. Ephesians 5:1 says, *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.* Ephesians 5:15 says, *See then that ye walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise.* Ephesians 5:21 says, *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

There are many things we can look at today concerning this. They needed to submit themselves in love and this would be reflected in their lives as Christians, and something that we need to look at as well is why have we been blessed so greatly through Jesus Christ. Mainly, so that God will be praised. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 1-14, talk about that. Verse 14 says, *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.* God is true and there are no valid barriers between believers, according to the book of Ephesians. No racial barrier. No ethnic, no social barrier. No financial, no intellectual barrier. We're all one in Jesus Christ.

Do you know Him today as your Savior? Have you trusted Him? Have you asked Him to come into your heart? You could pray something like this. "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Lord and my Savior today."

Why not ask Him to come into your heart right now? For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you're saved today and you're not living for Him, bow your head and ask Him to forgive you and ask Him to help you to live more for Him today, tomorrow, and the next day and the rest of your life to live more for Him than you have in the past. Live for Him. Trusting Him. Doing what He would have you to do in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me remind you once again to look at our website, www.LRWM.org.

Until this same time when you'll hear me say, "It is a good life," my prayer for you is that you will be happy in the Lord because it is a good life. May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.