

Ephesians Recap and Refresh

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Look in the mirror. So this morning I want to start off by asking, when you look in the mirror, what do you see? Well, some of you might be saying, well, I see me when I look in the mirror.

Who are you? Who are you? If I were to answer that question, I would say, well, I'm a white, middle-aged man, married, father of four, got a dog.

[2 : 02] I've got an Italian background, Calabrese. And if I were to be honest, I've got a lot of miles on this chassis. Who are you?

When you're looking in the mirror, what's going through your mind? Maybe here's the most important question of the morning.

When God looks at you, maybe while you're looking in the mirror, what does He see? What does God think when He sees you?

Christian, who does God say that you are? How does God define you? What does God say is true of you in Christ?

Brother, sister in Christ, did you know that when God saved you, He gave you a whole new identity? You are a new creation in His sight.

[3 : 05] You're not who you used to be. And it changes the way that you live your life. Last October, we started the study of the book of Ephesians.

And we took a break from it in July and August to get into Psalm 119, in which we just kind of simmered for two months. It was wonderful. And so this morning, we're back into the study of Ephesians.

We're resuming the study. Now, Ephesians is like an 18-hole golf course. There's the front nine, and then there's the back nine.

And so the front nine of Ephesians, the first three chapters, is all about who we are in Christ Jesus. Passage after passage, God is saying, this is who you are, Christian.

This is who you are. And then the back nine of Ephesians, chapters 4-16, is how we are to live out our identity in Christ.

[4 : 05] And so what we're going to see is, who we are determines how we live. You've got to know who you are. And in order to know that, you've got to know what this book says.

So the first half of Ephesians, who we are in Christ. The second half of Ephesians, how we live as new creations in Christ. And we've turned the corner.

We've turned the corner into the back nine of Ephesians. And so here's what I know. I know that many of you weren't around for the first half of Ephesians. And I know, taking two months out of Ephesians in Psalm 119, we may lose our bearings a little bit in Ephesians.

So this morning, what I'd like to do is review the high points of chapters 1-3 in order to position us to enter the back nine.

I want to remind you, brother and sister in Christ, of who you are in Jesus. You're a new creation with a new identity that results in a new way of walking.

[5 : 14] You've been made alive in Christ. And now we live for Him. Who we are determines how we live. So this morning, three points that will help you understand who you are in Christ Jesus.

Three points, three realities of our identity in Jesus. And so here they are. Christian, you are eternally loved by the triune God.

That's the first thing you need to understand about yourself. It's who you are. First, you're eternally loved by the triune God. Second, you've been radically changed by Christ.

And third, God has very purposefully knit you into a body of believers. You belong to a people now. The Christian life is living out who God has already made us to be in Christ Jesus.

So now let's turn to this first point. Christian, you are eternally loved by the triune God. If you return in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1, I'm going to draw some things out of chapter 1 verses 3 through 14.

[6 : 24] 3 through 14, these verses picture God doing a work in us. He loves us from eternity past. And He loves us for eternally into the eternal future.

Each member of the Trinity loves you, brother and sister in Christ. Let's look at it. God the Father has loved you from eternity past. Look at Ephesians 1, 4 through 5.

Even 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.

He predestined us in love for adoption through Jesus Christ. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us.

Before God created the earth and the fullness thereof, God knew who would be His own. In love, He predestined some sinners to become His sons and daughters.

[7 : 28] Now this is begging a question. How did God do that? What was the basis of His choice? Did He make His choice based on what people in the future would decide?

Or did He base His choice on a sheer act of His sovereign will now? Well, you know what? We're not going to answer that question this morning. We're not going to dwell in how God made that choice.

We're going to dwell on why God made that choice. And if you look at verse 4, at the end of verse 4 into verse 5, you see why.

In love, He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ. In love.

Here's what I'm getting at. From eternity past, God has loved you, brother and sister in Christ. The Father has loved you.

[8 : 26] He sought you from eternity past. It's no accident. You weren't in the right place at the right time. You didn't get lucky.

God sought you. He loves you from eternity past. And the effect that should have on us is this. What an amazing God we got.

He knew who you are, and He was pursuing you from eternity past. God the Father chose us. He loves us.

So God loved you, brother, sister, from eternity past. And He's also demonstrated that love in the present. We can see that in verse 7.

In Him, we have redemption through His blood. So, God chose us. The Father chose us. The Son redeemed us in the present.

[9 : 25] God demonstrates His love for us by redeeming us. Jesus delivered us from slavery to sin, from slavery to guilt, from slavery to fear and death, and He delivered us to holiness and joy and confidence.

And He did it through His blood. Now, you hear the word redemption. I don't know what goes into your mind, so let's get on the same page with this word redemption.

When you hear the word redemption, you need to be thinking slavery. Now, slavery was a common practice in the Greco-Roman culture that this letter was written in.

But you know what? It was a different kind of slavery than what we think of that took place in the United States for so long, which was an atrocity, by the way.

So, the slavery taking place in the first century Greco-Roman culture, though it wasn't the same as what happened in the United States, it was a kind of slavery nonetheless.

[10 : 36] Now, what Paul is doing here, he's taking a common practice that all his readers would have known about and all of them would have experienced.

They would have seen it being played out day after day, and he's using that practice to paint a picture of what God has done for us in Christ.

Christ has redeemed us. To redeem is to purchase a slave out of slavery into freedom.

And the purchase price to pay for a slave's freedom was called a ransom. And Jesus paid our ransom. And He didn't pay it with His credit card so that He can get extra miles.

Jesus paid our ransom with His blood. In Him, we have redemption through His blood. He gave His life so that we can be ransomed from slavery.

[11:40] Remember Mark 10.45, Jesus says this, I came not to be served, but to serve and to give my life, to shed my blood as a ransom for many, as a ransom for you, brother, for you, sister.

Now technically, Jesus paid your ransom 2,000 years ago on the cross. And that ransom price was applied to you the moment you believed in Jesus.

At that moment, you were set free. Why would Jesus do that? Because He loves you.

But God demonstrates His own love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He shed His blood for us.

He loves us. He loves us. Here's what Ephesians 1.3-14 has taught us so far. We've been chosen by the Father from eternity past.

[12:44] He loves you. He's always loved you. You were redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus in the present. And the last thing I would like you to see is that you were sealed by the Spirit of God, guaranteeing in eternity in the loving presence of God.

He will always love you. You've always been loved. You are loved right now. And you will always be loved. Would you look at verses 13 and 14 of chapter 1?

In Him 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 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

The moment a sinner believes in Christ, at that moment, they are sealed by the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Now when you hear the word sealed, don't think ocean mammal.

Or, or, or. Not that. And when you hear the word sealed, don't think your kitchen sink. You know when you drop a kitchen sink in, you kind of put a silicon seal around it so it doesn't leak in underneath that.

[13:55] Paul's not talking about silicon caulk right here. He's not. He's writing of an authoritative mark that is impressed upon an official document that signifies its legitimacy.

It's authentic. We see that mark in all sorts of things. Birth certificates. Marriage licenses certificates.

I think car titles have them as well. You know, those kind of raised seals that you feel to make sure that this document is legit. What Paul is saying here is that the Holy Spirit is impressed upon a Christian the moment that they believe.

Legitimizing the fact that that Christian now and forever belongs to God. Do you see the extent of this?

Verse 14. Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. The Holy Spirit indwells us the moment we believe and makes us God's own guaranteeing an eternity with God.

[15:06] Jesus is coming back. And we live in between the comings. Jesus has already come the first time. And now we're sitting on G waiting for O from the Father for Jesus to come back.

and when He comes back He's going to make all wrongs right. And so right now we await His second coming. He's going to come like a thief in the night.

Now I know that for some of you in that room that can kind of stir up some fears in your heart. But brother, sister in Christ we don't have to be afraid of His second coming. We don't need to be afraid of Jesus' return.

And here's why. The Holy Spirit in us guarantees that when Jesus comes back He will claim us as His own.

It's guaranteed. I guarantee it. When we talk about seeing Jesus when He comes back it rightly has the effect on our hearts.

[16:09] It stirs a longing doesn't it? When you think about Jesus coming back you're like I can't wait to see Him. I can't wait to be in His presence. I am so looking forward to that.

But let me float something by you guys this morning. Brothers and sisters in Christ could it be could it be that your risen Savior longs to see you face to face more than you long to see Him face to face?

Is it possible? Oh yeah. He has put His Spirit in you to seal you for Himself guaranteeing that He will see you face to face.

You know what this means? He longs to see you. He longs to be with you. He loves you. God the Father has loved you from eternity past.

God the Son loves you. He redeemed you in the present. And God the Spirit has sealed you guaranteeing being with God for eternity experiencing His love.

[17:17] Now you might be sitting in your pew right now and you're like thinking does God really love me like that? Does He really long to be with me like that?

Based on what the Bible says oh yeah He does. He does. He longs to be with you. Now if you're not a Christian in the room let me ask you this question.

Are you aware of your sin? Are you aware that when you sin when you do wrong that it is against God? Are you aware of that? And if you're aware of that and you're wondering what you should do here's what you do.

You cry out to Jesus who shed His blood for you. That's what you do. So brother, sister in Christ tomorrow morning you're looking in the bathroom mirror you're asking yourself who is this person? Chosen by God the Father from eternity past you're loved. Redeemed by the Son in the present you are loved. Sealed by the Spirit for eternity you are loved.

[18:30] Loved by God. Eternally loved by the triune God. Is it true? Is it true? It's true!

God's Word says so. So now our response is we believe it. We trust it. We trust that what this says is more true of us than the way we may feel.

This is what God's Word says. So the first thing that you need to know about yourself brother and sister in Christ is that you've been eternally loved by the triune God.

The second thing I want you to see is that you've been radically changed by Jesus Christ. If you just look at Ephesians 2 1 through 10 if you look in there there is a radical change described right there of a Christian.

Radical. What kind of radical change are we talking about? You were dead to God and God made you alive to Him through Christ.

[19:41] That is a radical change. This past June I was walking my dog by the Southport Beach House.

And I was walking my dog and I happened to look out onto the water and I noticed something floating on the water four or five feet out from the shoreline.

Instantly I knew something wasn't right. So I started hustling down to the water and as I came up on the water my eyes saw this. I saw an elderly man floating on his back face in the water.

I ran into the water. I pulled him over and as soon as my skin touched his skin I knew this man was dead.

I pulled him out of the water onto the shore and I was just surveying him I was looking at his face I'm looking for any signs of life. No breath no heartbeat no movement in his eyes this man was lifeless unresponsive this man was dead.

[21:01] God wants us to understand our spiritual condition. He wants us to understand that before we became Christians we were dead.

We were dead. And what Paul is saying here he's not speaking of a physical death he's not saying let's see here he's not saying and you were physically dead in your trespasses and sins he's saying you were spiritually dead in your trespasses and sins.

And here's what that means you were dead to God dead to God flat lined cold you didn't care you didn't give a rip didn't matter you were dead to God you may have been physically alive but you were spiritually dead you were cold to God unresponsive to Him you were lifeless here's the deal if you don't understand your spiritual condition before you become a Christian who you were you were dead in your trespasses and sins if you don't understand that you're not going to really fully appreciate who you are now in Christ what God has done for you through Christ that you were dead and now you are alive you were dead to God but through Christ you are now alive to God in Christ Jesus so Ephesians 2 1 through 3 show us that we were dead and not only just dead we were in danger we were under

God's wrath you see that in Ephesians 2 3 but here's what God did here's the radical change you were dead but God made you alive look at 2 verses 4 and 5 but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us think of an eternal love of the triune God right there but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved by grace you have been saved we were made alive by God with Christ better yet we were made alive to God through Christ God united us to Christ in his death and in his resurrection we are united to Christ and we were even seated with Christ in the heavenly places it's amazing of what God has done for us it's a radical change it's all by his grace unmerited unconditional we were unresponsive he did

something in us radical change dead to God in danger of his wrath and then God in Christ made us alive seated us with him in the heavenly places in that moment you believed you were eternally changed your eternities changed right there done awesome but not only your eternity changed you were changed you were dead and then God made you new the basis of this this radical change is Christ's radical love he died in your place for your sin and then was raised so that you too could live a new life for God that's awesome who were you you were dead to God who are you now now you are alive to God and you have Christ Jesus alone to thank for that Paul says it this way in 2nd Corinthians 5:17 you're a new creation the old has gone the new has come in Ephesians 2:10 we see that this this is all moving in a certain direction

[25 : 09] God made you alive for a purpose to walk in the good works which God prepared beforehand for you Christian to walk in he gave you new life so that you could live for him that's how dead you were now we've got to remember that who we are determines who we live and if we were dead and were made alive it changes the game we now can live for God all praise to Jesus Christ this is who you are now you were dead you're dead no longer Christian now by God's grace you've been made alive and now we're called to walk it out to live out who God has made us to be radically changed we've been radically changed new creations so let me ask you the question is it true is

Ephesians 2:1 through 10 true of you is it true believe it trust it you're a new creation in Christ that's who you are now the third thing I want you to see to help you understand who you are you've been eternally loved by the triune God you've been radically changed by Christ made alive in him and the third thing I want you to see is that God intentionally sets you into his body he knits you into the body of Christ we see in Ephesians 2:11 through 4:16 this big stretch of Ephesians it's all about the church it's all about the church those people that Jesus has redeemed and brought together as one new people there's just a few things I want you to see here it's really this is really amazing in Ephesians 2:11 through 22 here's what we read here's what it's getting at the blood of Christ that united us to God the same blood that united us to God has united us to one another how about that blood that's thicker than water man and we've got some differences in our midst don't we we've got some differences in this room some of us have European backgrounds some of us have African backgrounds some of us have Asian backgrounds some of us have Indian backgrounds some of us have Central or South American backgrounds some of us we're still kind of wondering what your background is but despite all our differences in our ethnic backgrounds we all have something in common that is far more important that is far more powerful than our ethnic heritage let me put it this way being

Italian doesn't save me have an Italian background doesn't save me it's got no power it's Christ that saves us Christ is our life we're different but what unites us is far greater than any differences we may have and let me just add this when God brings a people together with many differences and unites them in Jesus he gets a glory that is unique to him it is a full glory when people of diverse backgrounds come together and we're saying it's all about Jesus he is our life that gives God a greater glory our identity now is in Jesus he saves us he gave each of us a new identity and that trumps our ethnic heritage so does that mean

I cease to be Calabres it doesn't I'll be Calabres till the day I die but here's what it does mean in light of what Christ has done Christ defines me now I use my Italian background for the glory of Jesus now it's all about him and he has united us together we've been united by the blood of Jesus and we're now a new people that's what Ephesians is saying we look at Ephesians chapter 4 verses 1 through 16 and we read this that God has purposely gifted each of us and knit us together as a local body not only have we been united together by the blood of Jesus God the Father has purposefully gifted each of us and knit us together as a body he doesn't make mistakes we are interdependent members of the body of

[30 : 26] Christ that's who you are now we have a corporate identity not only do we think in terms of me and I we think in terms of us us we're the body of Christ so we're united by the blood we've been knit together as a body this is who you are it's who we are and then 3:10 what I want to show you is this God made us alive united us knit us together in order to make known his manifold wisdom to everybody look at 3:10 will you so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places we exist as a church to make known God's glorious plan for the fullness of time and that plan is to unite all things in

Christ starting with the people here's what that means we're living proof we're living proof that the triune God is purposefully saving people in uniting them together for a people for his own namesake that's what he's doing we exist for his glory who are you tomorrow morning you look in the mirror who are you well you're a gifted member of the body of Christ you've been united to other people you exist for the glory of God now we're defined by relationships with other Christians we have a corporate identity is it true yes it's true you know what that means if you don't have a church family you need one God has designed it that way it's part of who you are so let me wrap this thing up tomorrow morning tomorrow night tonight you're looking at yourself in the mirror what are you more aware of more aware of the crow's feet the grays or are you more aware of how God sees you we forget don't we we forget who we are we forget what God and Christ has done for us we forget that's why he's given us his word so that we remember and remember and remember remember that you're eternally loved by the triune God radically changed by Christ and intentionally knit into the body of Christ this is who we are this is who we are this fall what we're going to do is this we're going to learn how we live out who we are together as a church that's where we're going how to live for Jesus who we are determines how we live Christ is our life so we together live for him let me pray God in heaven it's amazing what you've done for us in Christ Jesus it's amazing to think about your love for us and as we do as you think what you've done for us in Christ your whole hearted devotion to us our response is all our hearts all our ways all our time all our days it's just that simple the math is clear God we love you we want to give you it all we pray this in the name of Jesus amen