

Why We Need Ephesians

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Please be seated. You can turn to Ephesians, the book of Ephesians. Get into the New Testament. You can memorize that by God's electric power company, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. So the book of Ephesians.

You know, every time we meet someone, we inevitably ask them three questions. Who are you? Where are you from? And what do you do?

We ask these questions quite obviously because we're going to get to know someone, to relate to them, to understand where they're coming from. But these are not just questions we ask of others.

[1 : 07] They are ones we ask of ourselves as well. Who am I? Who really am I? We often ask this question in the quiet moments of our lives when looking back over a year, when contemplating the future, when walking through a difficult situation.

Am I just a businessman? Or a plumber? Or a teacher? Or an employee? Am I just trying to make a living? Is that who I am?

Am I just a mom? Blessed with some wonderful kids, but nevertheless trying to stay above water each week and get everyone to where they need to go. More evaluatively, we ask, Am I a success? Am I a failure? Often we're quick to add accolades to describe ourselves. Are we hardworking? Am I hardworking? Ambitious? Am I dependable?

Am I flexible? Am I inflexible? Am I? We may add labels, introverted, depressed, obsessive compulsive, not to mention the labels our culture loves of gender, sexuality, and politics, but is that who we really are?

[2 : 27] This morning we're beginning this study of the book of Ephesians, and the book of Ephesians is one long answer to the question, Who are you? That's why it's in the Bible.

It's a difficult book in many ways. From the second century, Origen said, The Apostle Paul heaped up more obscure ideas and mysteries unknown to the ages in this epistle than in all the others. So welcome to Ephesians. All the unknown obscure things are here. Actually, others believe that it's about Ephesians that Peter was talking when he said some things in Paul are really hard to understand.

It's a delightful book. It's John Calvin's favorite book. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge said, It is the divinest composition of man.

It's delightfulness is in precisely in how it helps us understand who we are. Our Clinton Arnold scholar says, This letter summarizes what it means to be a Christian better than any other book in the Bible.

[3 : 36] That's what this book is all about. Who are you? Who really are you? Throughout this book, The Apostle Paul is seeking to ground us, Shape us, Fortify us by reminding us who Christ is and who we are in Christ.

In every situation, In every season, You must never forget that you are now in Christ. That's where we're going in this book. In every situation, Every season, You must never forget that you are now in Christ.

This morning, I wanted you to hear the book in its entirety. I want to proclaim it to you, Lord willing, From memory, So that we can enjoy the impact of this wonderful book on our hearts And what Paul intended.

It begins, It begins, Paul, An apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. 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 through Jesus Christ to Himself as sons, According to the purpose of His will, To the praise of His glorious grace, With which He has blessed us in the beloved.

[5 : 11] In Him, We have redemption through His blood, The forgiveness of our trespasses, According to the riches of His grace, Which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, Making known to us the mystery of His will, According to His purpose, Which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, To unite all things in Him, Things in heaven and things on earth.

In Him, We have an inheritance, Having been predestined, According to the purpose of Him, Who works all things according to the counsel of His will, So that we who are the first to hope in Christ, Might be to the praise of His glory.

In Him, You also, When you heard the word of truth 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.

For this reason, Because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, And your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, Remembering you in my prayers, That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Father of glory, May give you a spirit of wisdom, And of revelation, And the knowledge of Him.

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, That you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, What are the riches of His glorious inheritance in His saints, And what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, According to the working of His great might, That He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, And seated Him at His right hand, Far above all rule and authority, And power and dominion, And above every name that is named, Not only in this age, But also in the one to come.

[6 : 58] And He put all things 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.

And you were dead, And the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, Following the course of this world, Following the prince of the power, The air, The spirit that's now at work in the sons of disobedience, Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, Carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, And were by nature children of wrath, Like the rest of mankind.

But God, Being rich in mercy, Because of the great love with which He loved us, Even when we were dead, Made us alive together with Christ, By grace you have been saved, And raised us up with Him, And seated us with Him in the heavenly places, So at the coming age, And He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace, And kindness towards us in Christ, For by grace you have been saved through faith.

This is not your own doing, It's a gift of God, Not a result of works, So that no one might boast, For we are His workmanship, Created in Christ Jesus for good works, Which God prepared beforehand, That we should walk in them.

Therefore remember, You Gentiles in the flesh, Called the uncircumcision, By what is called a circumcision, Remember that you were at that time Separated from Christ, Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, And strangers to the covenants of promise, Having no hope and without God in the world, But now in Christ Jesus, You who were once far off, Have been brought near by the blood of Christ, For He Himself is our peace, Who has made us both one, And has broken down in His flesh, The dividing wall of hostility, By abolishing the law of commandments, Expressed in ordinances, That He might create in Himself, One new man in place of two, So making peace, And might reconcile us both to God, In one body through the cross, Thereby killing the hostility, And He came and preached peace, To you who are far off, And peace to those who are near, So that through Him, We both have access in one spirit to the Father, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,

[9 : 20] But you are citizens with the saints, And members of the household of God, Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, And then the whole structure grows together, Into a holy temple in the Lord, In Him you also are being built together, Into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit, For this reason, I, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, On behalf of you Gentiles, Assuming that you have heard Of the stewardship of God's grace That was given to me for you, How the mystery was made known to me By revelation, Of which I have

written briefly, When you read this, You can perceive my insight Into the mystery of Christ, Which was not made known To the sons of men And other generations, As it has now been revealed To His holy apostles and prophets, This mystery is that the Gentiles Are fellow heirs, Members of the same body, And partakers of the promise In Christ Jesus through the gospel, Of this gospel,

I was made a minister According to the gift of God's grace, Which was given to me By the working of His power, To me, though, And the very least of all the saints, This grace was given To preach to the Gentiles The unsearchable riches of Christ, And to bring to life for everyone, What is the plan of the mystery Hidden for ages, And God, Who created all things, So that through the church, The manifold wisdom of God Might now be made known To the rulers and authorities In the heavenly places, This was according to the eternal purpose, He has realized in Christ Jesus, Our Lord, In whom we have boldness And access with confidence Through our faith in Him, So I ask you not to lose heart Over what I am suffering for you, Which is your glory.

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father From whom every family in heaven And on earth is named, That according to the riches of His glory, He may grant you to be strengthened with power Through His Spirit in your inner being, So that Christ may dwell in your heart Through faith, That you, being rooted and grounded in love, May have strength to comprehend With all the saints What is the breadth and length And height and depth, And to know the love of Christ That surpasses knowledge, That you may be filled With all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able To do far more abundantly Than all we can ask or think According to His power At work in us, To Him be glory In the church And in Christ Jesus Forever and ever.

Amen. I, Paul, a prisoner for the Lord, Urge you to walk in a manner Worthy of the calling To which you've been called. With all humility And gentleness With patience Bearing with one another in love Eager to maintain The unity of the Spirit And the bond of peace.

[12 : 18] There is one body And one spirit Just as there is one hope To which you are called. One Lord, one faith, One baptism, one God And Father of all Who is over all And through all And in all.

But grace was given To each one of us According to the measure Of Christ's gift. Therefore it says When He ascended on high He led a host of captives And He gave gifts to men And saying that He ascended What does it mean?

But that He had also descended Into the lower regions The earth. He who descended Is the one who ascended Far above the heavenly That He might fill all things.

And He gave the apostles The prophets The evangelists The shepherds And teachers To equip the saints For ministry For building up The body of Christ Until we all attain To the unity of the faith And of the knowledge Of the Son of God To mature manhood To the measure Of the stature Of the fullness of Christ So that we might no longer Be children Tossed to and fro By the waves Carried about By every wind of doctrine By human cunning By craftiness And deceitful schemes Rather speaking The truth in love Would it grow up In every way Into Him Who is the head Into Christ From Him The whole body Joined and held together By every joint With which it is equipped When each part Is working properly Makes the body grow So that it builds itself Up in love Now this I say to you And testify in the Lord That you must no longer walk As the Gentiles do In the futility of their mind They're darkened In their understanding Alienated from the life of God Because of the ignorance That is in them Due to their hardness of heart They have become callous Given themselves up To sensuality Greedy to practice Every kind of impurity But that is not How you learned Christ Assuming that you are taught In Him As the truth is in Jesus To put off Your old self Which belongs to your Former manner of life And is corrupt Through deceitful desires And to be renewed In the spirit of your mind And to put on The new self Created at the likeness of God And true righteousness And holiness Therefore having put away Falsehood Let each one of you Speak the truth With his neighbor For he remembers One of another Be angry Do not sin Do not let the sun Go down on your anger And give no opportunity For the devil Let the thief No longer steal But rather let him labor Doing honest work With his own hands So that he might have

[14 : 59] Something to share With everyone Who is in need Let no corrupting talk Come out of your mouth But only such as good For building up As fits the occasion That it may give grace To those who hear Do not grieve The Holy Spirit of God By whom you were sealed For the day of redemption Let all bitterness And wrath And anger And clamor And slander Be put away from you Along with all malice Be kind to one another Tender hearted Forgiving one another As God in Christ Has forgiven you Therefore be imitators Of God As beloved children And walk in love As Christ loved us And gave himself For us A fragrant offering And sacrifice to God But sexual immorality

And all impurity Or covetousness Must not be even Named among you Let all filthiness And foolish talk And crude joking Which are out of place But instead

Let there be thanksgiving For you may be sure Of this That everyone Who is sexually immoral Or impure Or who is covetous That is an idolater Has no inheritance In the kingdom Of Christ and God Let no one deceive you With empty words For because of these things The wrath of God Comes upon the sons Of disobedience Therefore do not Be partners with them For at one time You were darkness But now you're light In the Lord Walk as children Of the light For the fruit of the light Is found in all That is good And right And true And try to discern What is pleasing To the Lord Take no part In the unfruitful Works of darkness But instead Expose them For it is shameful Even to speak Of the things They do in secret But when anything Is exposed by the light It becomes visible For anything That is visible Is light Therefore it says Awake oh sleep And arise from the dead And Christ will shine Upon you

Look carefully then How you walk Not as unwise But as wise Making the best use Of time Because the days are evil Do not be foolish But understand What the will of the Lord is Don't get drunk With wine For that's debauchery But be filled With the spirit Addressing one another In psalms Hymns And spiritual songs Singing and making melody To the Lord With all your heart Giving thanks Always and for everything To God the Father In the name Of our Lord Jesus Christ Submitting to one another Out of reverence For Christ Wives Submit to your own husbands As to the Lord For the husband Is the head of the wife Even as Christ Is the head of the church His body And is himself Its savior Now as the church Submits to Christ So also wives Should submit To their own husbands Husbands love your wife As Christ loved the church And gave himself for her That he might sanctify her

Having cleansed her By the washing of water With the word That he might present The church to himself In splendor Without spot Or wrinkle Or any such thing That she might be holy And without blemish In the same way Husbands!

Love your wives As your own body He who loves his wife Loves himself For no one ever Hated his own flesh But nourishes And cherishes it Just as Christ does The church Because we are members Of his body Therefore A man shall leave His father and mother And hold fast to his wife And the two shall become One flesh This mystery Is profound And I am saying It refers to Christ And the church However Let each one of you Love his wife As himself And as his own body And let the wife See that she respects Her husband Children Obey your parents And the Lord For this is right Honor your father And mother This is the first commandment With a promise That it may go well With you And you may live long In the land Fathers do not provoke Your children to anger But bring them up In the discipline And instruction Of the Lord Slaves Obey your earthly masters With fear and trembling With a sincere

[19 : 16] Heart As you would Christ Rendering service With a good will As to the Lord And not to man I skipped one verse In there What is that?

Yeah Slaves Obey your earthly masters With fear and trembling With a sincere heart As you would Christ Not by way of eye service As peaceful pleasers But as servants of Christ Doing the will of God From the heart Rendering service With a good will As to the Lord And not to man Knowing that from the Lord Knowing that whatever Good anyone does This will receive back From the Lord Whether he is a bond servant Or is free Masters Do the same to them And stop your threatening Knowing that he Who is both their master And yours Is in heaven And there's no partiality With him Finally Be strong in the Lord And in the strength Of his might Put on the whole armor Of God That you may be able To stand against The schemes of the devil For we do not wrestle Against flesh and blood But against the rulers Against the authority Against the cosmic powers Over this present darkness And the spiritual forces In the heavenly places Put on Take up the whole armor Of God That you may be able To withstand

In the evil day And having done all To stand firm Stand therefore Having fastened on The belt of truth And having put on The breastplate Of righteousness And as shoes for your feet Having put on The readiness given By the gospel of peace In all circumstances Take up the shield Of faith With which you can Extinguish all The flaming dark Of the evil one And take the helmet Of salvation And the sword Of the spirit Which is the word of God Praying at all times In the spirit With all prayer And supplication To that end Keep alert With all perseverance Making supplication For all the saints And also For me That words May be given me And opening my mouth To proclaim The mystery Of the gospel That I may For which I'm An ambassador In chains And I may declare It boldly As I ought to

Speak so that you may know how we are doing and what we are doing. Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister of the Lord, will tell you everything I have sent him to you for this very purpose that you may know how we are and he may encourage your heart. Peace be to the brothers and love with faith from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love. Incorruptible. Amen. What a wonderful book I just saw. As I was driving in this morning, every giant in my life has read these words. The apostle wrote them. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards spent time reading these words. This is God's message to you.

Now I got to figure out how to say something after all that. But I really believe God's called us to this book and I'll get more to that in just a minute. But a couple things that are helpful for an introduction. Type of message. We gotta shift gears a little bit. But who wrote Ephesians? Greek letters typically begin. Let me open my Bible. Typically begin by telling you who wrote the actual book or actual letter. We begin our letters saying dear so and so or something like that. But they begin with the author. So it begins Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. This is according to this, the apostle Paul. Now it's important to say at the outset that many do not believe the apostle Paul wrote this. Now that's not surprising. If you study the New Testament, people say that they say the book of Ephesians

[23 : 32] Is too impersonal. You notice that the only thing personal in that letter specifically personal was Tychicus. And that came in at the last four verses. Too impersonal of a letter to be from Paul. It says there's too many differences between his other letters. In the book of Ephesians there's there's also too many similarities between Ephesians and Colossians. They say for it to be Paul many argue that a disciple of Paul wrote this letter and then wrote Paul on it. Now there's many issues with that theory that I don't have time to break out. But there is in the first century while there is evidence of fraudulent letters being written in the name of a leader or something like that there is no evidence of any document known to be fraudulent received as authoritative when found to be fraudulent in the early church and this was found it was thrown out as invalid. So authorship was important.

For determining validity in addition it was believed to have been written by Paul for 1800 years as a church and C.S. Lewis would warn us about chronological snobbery as if the scientific age were just smarter and better thinkers than everybody before us and was accepted by the early church as foundational and authoritative. Precisely or one of the reasons because they believe Paul wrote it. It is still more impersonal than any of his other letters. At the end of Romans, Romans 16 Paul mentions 26 people in the church in Rome by name. Paul spent three years in Ephesus. How come he doesn't mention anyone? The problem is that's an argument from silence. It's not a good way to make an argument. In my opinion the case is still stronger that Paul wrote this letter. F.F. Bruce says and I think it's a helpful way of saying it. He's one of the most important scholars from a century ago or not a century ago. A generation ago. He said the man who could write Ephesians must have been the apostle's equal. If not his superior in mental stature and spiritual insight. Of a second Paul. Early Christian history has no knowledge that's the equivalent of a scholar. Mike Drop okay so he's saying it's not strong and because for 1800 years the proof has to be defended the other way because 1800 years it's been a solid united testimony. Okay so it's written by the apostle Paul. Now that may not interest you but I feel like for sake of integrity I have to say all that type of stuff but it's striking that Paul introduces himself as an apostle by the will of God. What does that mean?

If there was any individual in the history of Christendom that was saved kicking and screaming it was the apostle Paul. He was a Pharisee circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel. A Hebrew of Hebrews. He was trained by a very important Jewish teacher named Gamaliel. After Jesus was raised and Christians began telling others that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah this man from Bethlehem Paul opposes them. Persecutes them. In his own words is a blasphemer persecutor. An insolent opponent. Famously he's on the way to Damascus going to the synagogue to take names of all who confess Christ in the city of Damascus and he was struck down. By light. Johnny Cash wrote a book on that chapter. The man in black met the man in white. No doubt a bit of an autobiography for Johnny himself. Paul was the man in black. The Lord says why are you opposing me?

Because you're opposing me. When you oppose my church completely unexpectedly and inexplicably Paul was saved by the will of God. Of God. This is your conversion too actually. Then

he was sent To preach the gospel All throughout the world Especially the Gentile world The Lord said He's a chosen Instrument of mind But now he's in prison You saw that In 3-1 and 4-1 He references himself Being in prison A prisoner For Christ Jesus And a prisoner For the Lord After being converted He planted as many As 20 churches God Blessed this man Now he didn't do it In his 20s When he was young And agile And flexible He did it Probably starting out In his 50s And planted it In his 70s He focused mainly On the Gentile world Modern day Turkey And Greece One author believes

[28 : 19] He traveled At least 15,500 miles Of which Some 8,700 Was by land Much of that By foot So over a 30 year period Paul averaged Nearly 300 miles Per year on foot And about the same On small boats Not quite The navigational Vessels That we have now But now he's in chains I love the way He says it In 620 I'm an ambassador In chains An ambassador Known What?

For not being Chained anywhere But being Wherever God would call him And he's an ambassador In chains That prisoner For the Lord Has a double meaning He's a prisoner But in a much more Important sense He's a prisoner Unto the Lord And unto his will And that's what he sees His slavery as So it's A.D. 60 When Paul wrote The book Or the letter Of Ephesians From Rome Who are the Ephesians?

After the person Writing Greek letters Typically included The name of the recipient So he says To the saints Who are in Ephesus Now depending on Your translation Of the Bible Mine that I have Right here You'll notice A little footnote There And says In Ephesus Is omitted From most Old manuscripts Or some manuscripts Omit In Ephesus These manuscripts That omit In Ephesus Are very early In fact The church fathers That reference This letter And these opening verses Do not quote In Ephesus Why?

Because it wasn't In the manuscripts They had So was this book Written to the Ephesians? Some say It was a circular letter Written to be read To all the churches In Asia Now if you've ever Taken a New Testament Origins class Which I took a lot of them And your kids Might be taking some Secular Or not secular But liberal New Testament studies People think This is a total Takedown It's a circular letter Total takedown Or something like that Like that just Makes the New Testament Fall apart It seems Well Paul Understood That all of his letters Would be read By other people So a circular letter Is not surprising He knew he was writing Authoritatively That's another thing They argue People were making Paul say something He wasn't trying to say But he believes that And I could make that Argument in a longer Time if I had it In fact At the end of Colossians He says Read this letter To Colossi But also In the Laodicea So perhaps That's what Ephesus was

A circular letter That's a That's a helpful Theory I think Perhaps Ephesus Also was left off So that other cities Could be Put in there So when they're In Laodicea To the saints Who are in Laodicea The problem is There's no manuscripts That preserve In Laodicea Or any other place So While the early church Attests to In Ephesus Not being in The early manuscripts Interestingly This letter Has always been Associated with Ephesus And we know Ephesus Was an important place So Polycarp Was there In 105 He references This letter As written To the Ephesians Even though He doesn't Reference in Ephesus As original To the manuscripts Does that make sense So even though In Ephesus Might not be original I think it's A strong case That this letter Was read first To the Ephesians And then in many Other places And read to you

[32 : 15] Today in Athens Tennessee Just as God Had planned And Paul Had presumed Or knew Or hoped So Ephesus In the first century Was a large Spectacular city With over 200,000 residents It had a thriving Harbor So for trade Coming in It also has A perfectly Well located For overland trade As well So it was A prosperous place Magnificent Theater Stadium Two large Agoras Impressive gates It was the capital Of the Roman Province Of Asia That's very Important For what Understanding Ephesus And understanding Its significance It's a very Spiritual city There was much Worship of the Emperor So the Emperor cult That's what You might read The idea is You would Make sacrifices And pay homage To the emperor But there was All types Of spirituality Magic Exorcisms

We read about In Acts 19 All sorts Of Spiritual warfare If we could Put it under That title There are many Gods and Goddesses Now that's Not uncommon In a Roman City There was a Massive temple To Artemis The Greek God of Chastity Fertility And hunting Odd combo The last part Probably fit in Pretty well Here It was one Of the seven Wonders Of the ancient World About four Times the size Of the Parthenon In Athens So the idea Is massive Temple And there were Jews there Who worshipped In the synagogue That's where Paul went first A very spiritual City A hotbed

Of religion Generally in the First century They were fine With addition Of more and More gods They were fine So Pantheon You ever heard of The Pantheon A big building All gods That's what that Literally means in Greek So they're just fine Okay we're going To have a temple Just bring them All in here The idea is

If this one Doesn't cover my Bases Then this one Will And if this one Doesn't This one Will So just this Idea of Kind of a Pluralistic Or mini god Approach Just to cover My bases On all possible Sides So they were Fine with Addition in That respect Which is why They were fine With worshipping The emperor As well But they were Not fine With subtraction And that's Why Christianity Caused a problem It was a very Exclusive Religion There is Jesus is the way The truth And the life In a very Inclusive You don't use that Language Culture So that became Clear When Paul went To Ephesus first In 51 AD He went to the Synagogue Many believe I think Believe His first converts Were then In 52 He came back And he stayed For three years It was quite Successful We have it for you First Corinthians 16 8 9 He says I will stay In Ephesus Until Pentecost For a wide Door For effective Work has opened To me And there are Many adversaries The success In some ways Is confirmed By the opposition He faced Many were Converted From paganism And burned Their books So they Converted From magic And stuff Like that They came And burned Their books It was the Equivalent Of 50,000 Days wages In American Dollars I did the Calculation This morning They burned Books Of a value Of 11.2 Million Dollars No wonder It got the Town's attention It's a Massive So So they're Fine Right I said With addition They're not Fine With subtraction And what was Going on Around the Temples Here And the Spiritual city There's all Sorts of Peddlers Selling the Equivalent Of first Century Bobbleheads Of Artemis So you go Get your

Bobblehead You get Your silver Shrine You get Something Dedicated Artemis You're in The big City You go Home Put that On your Mantle Or something Like that Well When Christianity Came to Town People Stopped Buying It was An economic Problem Before it Was a Spiritual Problem And Demetrius Gathered People Together You can Read about This in Acts 19 And said We got a Problem on Our hands That guy This guy Paul Is creating Quite a Stir And so A riot Broke out And we Know riots Do nothing But good In this Country So A riot Broke Out And they Started Shouting Great Is Artemis Of the Ephesians And Paul Left After The Uproar He never Went back He did Meet the Elders In Miletus Sometime After A year Later It seems The church Continued To grow Ephesus Is a Large Important City Continues To be Very Important For the Apostle Paul Jesus Writes One of The Seven Letters In Revelation Two As we Studied

[37 : 16] Last Year To Ephesus Interestingly We Mentioned Tychicus Right At the End Or We Didn't Mention Paul Mentioned Tychicus The Word Of God Mentioned Tychicus When Tychicus Came In 80 60 So Whatever Six Years Later He Brought This Letter To The Ephesians Colossi Was Very Close He Brought A Letter To The Church In Colossians We Know That From Colossians 4 He Also Brought The Letter To Philemon A Member A Person In The Church A Man In The Church In Colossi So Tychicus The Idea Is An Ancient Letter Like This Part Of Proving The Veracity Of It The Truthfulness Of It Is The Courier You know You don't Get your Postal Man's Name Probably When He Brings You Mail But It Was Important For This Contact Of Saying This Is Who The Correspondent Is From So The Letter Includes Stuff With Tychicus Interestingly

The Greatest Similarity Between Ephesians And Colossians Is Not On Some High Point Of Doctrine Which You Would Expect If It Was A Copiest The Greatest Similarity Is On Tychicus Why Because That's Very Formulaic But I'm Running Out of Time So So He's Coming In AD 60 I Find That Fascinating These Letters Weren't Delivered In A Vacuum They Were Delivered To Specific Recipients In The First Century And Tychicus Delivers This Letter To The Apostle Paul The Faithful Minister Beloved Brother Why Do We Need Ephesians That's The Burning Question You Should Have In Your Heart And I Certainly Do In Mine Why Do We Need It Our Culture Has Many Answers To The Question Who Are You But The Most Important Question You Can Ask Is Who Are You Now Who Am I Now That I In Christ Who Am I Now That I In Christ And I Just Want To Say A Few Things About This You Know You Are In Christ What Does It Mean To Be A Christian The New Testament's Answer Is You Are In Christ The Bible Uses The Word Christian Twice In The New Testament Most I Think Derisively At Least One Of The Times If Not Both But It Uses In Christ To Describe Who You Are 130 Times 30 Times In This Letter What Paul Is Saying When He Says You're In Christ What You Must Know About You Before You Know Anything Else About What It Means To Be A Christian Is That You Are In Christ Now Now There's We're Running!

If You Are In Christ You've Been Objectively Saved You Were Chosen You Were Adopted 1-5 You Were Redeemed Brought Near By The Blood Of Christ He Loved You And Gave Himself To You You Are The Recipient Of A Massive Inheritance What It Is Saying Is All That Christ Did Through His Death And Resurrection And All That He Should Have Received Because Of What He Did Has Been Credited To You You Are Treated Like God's Beloved Son Because You Are By Faith In Christ All Of God's Saving Benefits Come To You Locationally!

In Christ And So It's No Wonder That The Greeting Paul Says Or The Way Begins Is Grace To You Most Greek Greetings Were Simply Greetings But It's A Similar Word Group Karain Grace To You Right Now We Live In A World Of Endless Customization You Can Go To Pepo's And Order Standard Fair Mexican And 100 Modifications You Can Go To Starbucks I've Never Done This And Order A Venti Iced Americano Five Shots Decaf With Almond Butter Extra Ice Eight Honey Seven Matcha Double Blended Double Cup And Split Into Three Tall Cups I Looked Up The Stupidest Order From Starbucks Yesterday And That's What I Got But With That You Can Customize [41 : 45] Your Life You Can Become The Best Version Of Yourself That You Want To Be But The Customization That Has Overtaken The Way We Think About Our Identity Has Not Led To Joy And Peace It's Been Oppressive Am I Pretty Enough Successful Enough Intentional Enough With The Kids Giving Them All The Opportunities That They Need To Prosper And Succeed In This Land Have I Lost My Have I Made A Dent In The Industry!

I'm In Have I Done All The Good Compounded On Social Media Because You Can Compare All The Stuff You've Done With The Stuff This Person Over Here Has Done And It's Left Us Deeply Oppressed All The Options Have Not Set Us Free They've Left Us More Enslaved Than Ever Before If There's One Word Our Culture Needs And Understanding Who We Are It Is Grace All These Little Things That You Care About So Do Not Matter Ultimately What Matters In The First Entrance Is Are You In Him And Are You Not God Accepts You By Grace Alone In Christ Or He Doesn't Accept You At All But It's Not As Though According To Ephesians It's Not As Though We're Objectively Saved Only We're Personally Transformed We're Sealed With The Holy Spirit That's Talking About A Dynamic Work That Takes Place In You We Come To Possess Us He Comes To Possess Us Until We Possess Our Full Inheritance That He's Given To Us We're Raised With Christ I love That Cluster There We're Made Alive With Christ We're Raised Up With Him And Seated With Him In The Heavenly Places All Of It's Past Tense We're Made!

God And True Righteousness And Holiness When Paul Says That He's Not Saying Don't Act Like You Were In Your B.C. Day Which You Shouldn't Act Like You Were In Your B.C.

Days But That's Not What He's Saying He's Saying You Put Off Your Old Self Because Christ Has Intervened And This New Life Is Broken Into The World And You've Been!

[44 : 09] To Him Your Point Is What He Did In Raising You From The Dead It's All Past Tense To Make It Very Clear All Of It Is Finished It's As Good As Done And So Paul Does Not Want You To Think About You Without Thinking About Christ There's A Wonderful Sense In Which Christ Is Your Past Right Christ Is Your Present And Christ Is Your Future There's A Deep Security!

That You Also Are Members Of One Another And We Desperately Need This The Second Part Of The Greeting Is Peace From God Our Father And The Lord Jesus Christ Peace Is A Massive Theme In This Letter You Heard It The Good News Is The Gospel Peace He Who Preaches The Gospel Preaches Peace And Announce The Finished Work Of Him Who Is Our Peace He Said Peace To You For Peace To Those Who Are Near He Anigns Us Together In A Bond Of Peace Why Is He Talking So So Much About Peace Because Apparently There Was A lot Of Conflict Among The Church In Ephesus The Church Began With Jews In The Synagogue That's Very Common In The New Testament Paul His Missionary Strategy Was To Go First To The Synagogue! And Preach To The Jews And Then When They Rejected The Gospel He Would Go To The Gentile So The Church Began With Jews But Many Gentiles Came To Christ They Had A Hard Time Getting Along Imagine Some Christians Having A Hard Time Getting Along That's A Head Scratcher Jews Hanging Out With Gentiles Is Like Volunteers Hanging Out With Gators Like Them We Hate Them But The Mystery Of The Gospel Is That Jews And Gentiles Are Together Both Are Partakers Of The Promise Through Christ That Might Be The Core Of The Verse This Mystery Three Six Our Core Of The Book If They're One In Christ Paul Says You Must Strive To Be One With Them If You're One With Them In Christ Then You Must Strive To Be One With Them In Practice I Don't Know If Ephesians Learn This Lesson Revelation 2 That Letter Is Very Much

Confronting!

Them For A Lack Of Love For One Another So Perhaps The Peace Well We Live In A Divided Age I Don't Have To Tell You That No!

[47 : 05] The book Crucial Conversations Has sold Over Two Million Copies You Know Why? Because No One Knows How To Talk Anymore Without Blood Vessels Bursting But The Church Must Be A Place Of Peace And Unity Not Because Christians Dress The Same Way Or Say The Same Things You Know But Because They Found That Uniformity Is Not The Key It's Not The Key To Peace Jesus Is And So The Church According To Paul According To This Epistle The Church Is To Be Ground Zero For World Peace You Want To Know What Christ Is Going To Do In The World To Come He's Going To Unite A Whole Bunch Of People Different Colors Different Background Different Socioeconomic Levels Around Jesus Christ And So It's To Be An Exhibit It's Like

The Church Makes A Massive Mistake If They Just Get Into The Political Game In My Opinion Instead Is To Be Exhibit Because This World Is Not Our Home And So We Need That You Know It's A Call To Community!

It's A Call I Mean That Sounds So Generic You Know Because We Just Hear That All Time I'm In The Community Well Great I have About Ten Other Questions To Find Out If That's True He's Saying You Jews What Saying To You Can't Be Christians And You Can't Be The Christians God Has Called You To With Just Yourselves You Gentiles Can't Be The Christians God Has Called You To But Just You Gentiles He's Saying The Same To You You You Think You Must Think Or You Must Not Think About You Without Thinking About The Church He's Calling Us To Something So Much More Than A Week In Commitment He's Calling Us Into A Family With Brothers And Sisters That You Have Been Called To Keep Now In Our Culture And The Movies The Hero Is The One Who Needs Nothing Depends On No One And Conquers His Mission Alone William Muni John Wick Walter White Maverick And So On But The Man Alone In The Bible Is No Hero He's A Fool That's

Who He Is He Might Have A Bass Boat But He's Still A Fool He's A Sitting Duck Worse Still For The Accusation Of The Enemy And The Allurements Of The World So You Are Members One Of Another He Says!

And Ephesians 4 26 What We Need So Desperately Three Your Saints Set Apart For Holiness And Righteousness Saints Set Apart For Holiness And Righteousness If You Look Back At The Way He Addresses The Ephesians He Says To The Saints Who Are In Ephesus Saints Now Saints Is A Word That Has Been Misused By The Catholics For A Long Long Long Long Time It Does Not Refer To Super Spiritual Christian Or Super Active Christian Or Super Deserving Of Honor Christian It Simply Refers To A Christian It Has Its Roots In The Old Testament Exodus 19 6 You Shall Be To Me A Kingdom Of Priest And A Holy Nation A Set Apart Nation So Throughout The Book Of Ephesians Paul Calls The Gentiles Saints That's Scandalous

[50 : 37] That's Fighting Words You Know In That Church With The Conflict Between The Jews And Gentiles What Are You Calling Them Saints He Said You're No Longer Strangers And Aliens Who Are Those Are The One Outside The Covenant In The Old Testament!

Now! You're Fellow Citizens With The Saints And Members Of The The Word That He Might Sanctify Us What That's Pointing To Is When God Rescues Us He Sets Us Apart For Himself No Longer You To Live For The Things That You Live For You're Set Apart And Then You're Set Towards This Goal Of Pleasing Him And So Too It's A Call This Book Is A Call And You Heard It Through All Those Exhortations In Ephesians 4 And 5 It's A Call To Holiness The Days Are Evil Paul Says And We Could Add Our Amen Word Of

God Is Discarded Sexual Immorality Is Celebrated Filthiness And Foolish Talk Are Incessant There's No Encouragers Out There In This World And There May Not Be A Temple To Artemis In Athens Tennessee But There Are Temples Everywhere The People Of God Are Called To Be Saints Striving To Grow In Holiness And Righteousness Not Because We Need To Grow To Please Him But Because He's Pleasing We Want To Be Like Him Be In Imitators Of God As Beloved Children The Beloved Came Before The Imitation That's The Gospel One Of The Greatest Fears Of My Life Is Settling The Greatest Fears I Have For This Church Is Settling We're Coming On Six Years In One Sense You Cannot Do Anything Godly In Your Life Until You Settle You Will Not You Will Not Get Married Until

You Settle You Will Not Have Children You Won't Be A Good Neighbor You Won't Be A Good Employee You Won't Be A Healthful Person To The Betterment Of Society Until You Settle There's

A Very Real Sense In Which As You Grow In Life Your Life Should Be More Definite Or More Defined By Your Commitments Than Your Opportunities More Things Set More Things Fixed Less Flexible You Should Not Look Like You Did In High School Or College If You Do In Your Forties There's A Problem You're Shirking Responsibility It's Not Pleasing But There's A Danger In Settling Too At A Certain Point In Life Those Things Begin To Settle You Get Married You Settle Into Life Married Life You Get Children You Settle Into Being A Family There Much Of That Is Good But The Danger Is As Things Settle As The Pattern

And Rhythm Of Life Set In As Responsibilities And Obligation And Pressure Increases Our Attention To Our Hearts Often Goes Away Richard Baxter Once Said Apostasies Have Small Beginnings Where Do They Come From A Neglecting Of The Heart Most Men Do Not Fall Into A Midlife Crisis Because A Pretty Girl Suddenly Walked Into The Room But Because They Began Neglecting Their Heart A Long Time Ago And The Same Happens With Churches Don't Lose Your First Love He Tells The Ephesians The Lord Says!

[54 : 34] That's What He's Telling Us I Don't Want To Settle I God Want To Settle I Don't Want To Figure Out Christianity I Don't Want To Neglect My Heart I Don't Want You To Neglect Your Heart I Want To Grow I Don't Want To Be The Same Person A Year From Now Or Ten Years From Now Or Fifteen Years From Now I Don't Want That I Don't Want You To Want That If You Don't Want To Grow You You're In The Wrong Place We Got To Grow God Wants It In This Age That's What We Need So That We Might Be Presented To The Lord Holy And Blameless Pleasing Every Situation You Must Never Forget That You Are Now In Christ May

God Help Us And Be With Us As We Go Through This Wonderful Book Father In Heaven Oh Lord We Thank You That We Serve A God Who Has Spoken We Thank You That We Do Not Gather To Worship At The Pantheon To Cover Our Bases We Gather This Day And We Conclude This Day Celebrating The All Struck Reality That You Have Spoken That You Have Sent Your Son To Save That You Through Your Word Continue To Sanctify Us In The Truth And Set Us Apart To Follow You To Know You And To Be With You Oh God Would You Help Us We Believe By Your Providence And By Your Spirit You Led Us To This Book Would

You Send Forth Your Word Heavenly Father To Accomplish The Purpose For Which You Send It Would You Make Us A More Peaceful Church A More Joyful Church More United Church A More Devoted Church To One Another More Active Church And Things Of God And Good Works A More Righteous And Holy Church Lord Would You Make Us Church We Know You're Pleased With Us Through Jesus Christ But We Want To Please You Would You Make Us A Church More Pleasing To You A Fragrant Offering To You Which Is Our Spiritual Worship We Love You And Thank You In Jesus Name Amen To