

Eph 1.1-2 An Introduction to Ephesians

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[0 : 00] to the book of Ephesians. As you're turning there, a brief introduction to the book of Ephesians. Ephesians is a pastoral and theological letter written to Christians to fortify church unity.

And church unity is here fortified in this letter, first with doctrine, then application. This letter, containing six chapters, can be categorized into two parts.

The first three chapters, doctrine. The last three chapters, application. First principles, then practice. First knowing, then living.

Orthodoxy, then orthopraxy. Teaching, then exhortation. So the first part, the first three chapters, is what is to be believed. The second part, the last three chapters, what is to be done.

First, an enlightened mind, then the subsequent walking in the light. Thomas Goodwin summarizes the main argument of this book of Ephesians by saying, To lay open the doctrine of free grace and of God's eternal love in and redemption by Christ, and the blessings issued therefrom, and the dependence that our salvation hath on them.

[1 : 22] So if you have your Bibles open there, we'll read the first chapter of Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and 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 the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he made us accepted in the beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in him.

In him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.

[3 : 29] Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over the things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Amen. Let's pray. Our great God, as we come and gather together this morning to hear from your word, I pray that indeed you would be in our midst in a particular way and that by your spirit, you

would illuminate your word to us and enlighten our minds that we might have knowledge and a right understanding of your truth.

I pray, Lord, that you would indeed fortify us in unity. I pray that you would spur on and equip and encourage and edify the saints. I pray that we would see your kingdom expanded here locally.

I pray, Lord, that if it be your will, you would be pleased to build us up into a God-fearing, Bible-believing, gospel-preaching church. I pray that you would bless your people this morning, that you would feed and nourish by the means of your word.

[5 : 21] I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So our text this morning is going to be verses 1 and 2. We're going to work through what is contained in that text.

So keep your finger there and if I happen to lose you at any point, that is where we will be returning to continue through that text. So that will help you to discern where we're at. So again, keep your finger there.

That will be our text for this morning. Now, when somebody writes a letter, the greeting or the salutation that they use when they write that letter would typically indicate or give a clue or a hint to some of the history or the background or the context of the relationship behind the letter.

For example, if a husband is away from his wife and he writes a letter to his wife, his cherished wife, whom he loves, he probably is not going to address the letter by saying, to whom it may concern. Hopefully, the address or the greeting or the salutation of that letter would contain a greeting of endearment that represents the relationship, affection, and history behind the relationship.

[6 : 34] Now here, this structured salutation introducing the letter of Ephesians gives us an understanding of the history and background between its author, its recipients, their relationship, and Paul's affection for them.

So as such, we're going to look at three particular things and each thing broken down in different categories, but number one, we're going to look at the author. And while we look at the author, we're going to look at his conversion and apostolic office.

The second thing we're going to look at is the recipients of the letter. And the third thing that we're going to look at is the salutation contained within the letter. So we're going to examine the context, the history, and the background behind these things to better understand what it is we're looking at and what it is we're reading as we work through this letter to the Ephesians.

So first of all, the author. To our text, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. First, we'll look at Paul and then the apostolic office, its prerequisites, its authority and position over the church.

Now, when we look at Paul, we're familiar with Paul. If you remember, we read about Paul when we read through the book of Acts. When we read through the book of Acts, we saw that Saul of Tarsus in Acts 7 and 8 was a strict Pharisee that ravaged and persecuted the church and was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.

[8 : 01] Paul was converted en route to Damascus, if you remember from the book of Acts. Now, Paul, by his own admission in 1 Timothy 1, says that he was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, an insolent opponent, but received mercy, confronted with the light of the risen Christ, later filled with the Holy Spirit and then baptized.

Now, keeping your finger in Ephesians, flip back to Acts chapter 9 and we'll quickly review some of what we read about Paul's conversion. So, Acts chapter 9, starting in verse 1.

We'll read verses 1 to 6 and then jump over to 15. So, 9, 1. Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogue of Damascus, so that if he found any who were on the way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

As he journeyed, he came near Damascus and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

And he said, Who are you, Lord? Then the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads. So he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what do you want me to do?

[9 : 28] Then the Lord said to him, Arise and go into the city and you will be told what you must do. Now, we're going to jump over to verse 15 where here the Lord is speaking to Ananias about Saul.

But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.

And Ananias went his way and entered the house and laying his hands on him, he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you came has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales and he received his sight at once and he arose and was baptized. So, when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

So, here we see the conversion of Paul, Paul's conversion and Paul's conversion is very unique. We can refer to it as the road to Damascus conversion and sometimes you might hear that as a phrase to refer to somebody who has an instantaneous 180 turning to Christ, a road to Damascus type of conversion.

[10:42] Some Christians have that instant moment of turning from sin and this world to Christ and they can even mark the exact date and time. However, some Christians they cannot and perhaps struggle with assurance of salvation without knowing the exact moment, the exact date and the exact time of when that 180 occurred.

So, there are different experiences that occur in different people's conversions. Some can relate to a type of road to Damascus type of conversion that instant 180 turn some cannot.

Although not every conversion is like Paul's, what every conversion does have in common is that all true Christians have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Ephesians 2.1, the letter that we're looking at, and you he made alive who were dead in trespasses! And you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. All things that are exposed are made manifest by the light for whatever makes manifest is light.

Therefore he says, awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead and Christ will give you light. All true Christians are called out of darkness into marvelous light. Consider how Oliver Cromwell describes his conversion.

[12:00] The Lord accept me in his Son and give me to walk in the light as he is in the light. He it is that enlighteneth our blackness, our darkness. I dare not say he hideth his face from me.

He gives me to see light in his light. One beam in a dark place hath exceeding much refreshment in it. Blessed be his name for shining upon so dark a heart as mine.

You know what my manner of life has been. Oh, I lived in and loved darkness and hated the light. I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true. I hated godliness.

Yet, God had mercy on me. Oh, the riches of his mercy. Praise him for me. Whether a Christian's conversion could be coined as a road to Damascus type conversion or whether they do not know the date or time, all true Christians are called out of darkness into marvelous light.

So, what exactly is this light? You recall in Genesis 1, God said, let there be light and there was light. God's speaking is his power effecting or working of his almighty power.

[13:13] Scripture is the breathed out word of God. There is power in God's speaking. God speaks light out of darkness illuminating our minds.

So, you might be asking, by what means does this illumination now take place? It is by the word and spirit.

It's two things, the word and spirit. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. 2 Peter 1.19 says, and so we have the prophetic word confirmed which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place.

John Calvin in his commentary on 2 Peter 1.19 says, without the word there is nothing left but darkness. As God by his almighty power spoke light into existence in Genesis 1, so God by his almighty power speaks light into darkness by his breathed out word enlightening our minds.

2 Corinthians 4.6 says, for God who said let light shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[14:35] Calvin again in his Institutes of Christian Religion states that into this darkness God shines the light of his word. So if faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God then how did this light of God's word come to us in written form which is necessary for man's salvation.

2 Timothy 3.16 you're familiar with it it says all scripture is given by inspiration of God. In 2 Peter 1.21 So the writers of this breathed out word of God they were not in a type of a trance where they

did not know what was going on and what they were writing.

They were not in a robotic trance during the inscripturation of the written word. Rather they were carried along by the Holy Spirit in that they had an inspired judgment to record in written form and being the word of God inspired by God it was kept pure preserved and protected by scripture's inspirer.

So because it was an informed judgment by the writers you see the distinction of styles throughout the different books yet being God the author of it there's that unity of scriptures.

So in other words the author of scripture was God. inspiration was an act of God's spirit immediately imprinting or infusing into the writers' brains.

[16:14] These holy men spoke as they were moved or carried by the Holy Spirit. So it was these holy men being moved or carried by the Holy Spirit. Who were these holy men and what authority did these holy men have to write scripture?

This is an important question to ask. So this brings us to our next point. Who were these holy men and what authority did they have to write scripture? Continuing in our text, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

So we're going to look at the nature of the apostolic office of Paul, the author of this letter. To be apostolic is to be witness to the risen Lord, divinely commissioned and sent by Christ.

The apostles were as such the foundation of the Christian church under Christ, given by Christ.

Now Paul says an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

This was divine, sovereign calling. Paul was not an apostle by his own self-appointing, it was divine appointing, sovereign calling. This apostleship is an extraordinary office as the foundation and first rearing of and governing of the New Testament church to equip the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

[17:42] So on that premise, can anybody be an apostle? The Ephesians had to contend with men who claimed, had counterfeit claims of being apostles.

They had to contend with counterfeit apostles. Today, we hear of people claiming to be apostles.

Can anybody be an apostle? So we will examine the prerequisite of an apostle and the authority of an apostle.

And as we examine these things, the prerequisite and the authority of an apostle, ask the question, as we look at it, ask the question, by measuring the criteria of apostleship against this question, are there apostles today?

There are current day claims of apostleship, are there apostles today? So, the prerequisite of an apostle, what makes an authentic, genuine apostle?

We're going to look at two specific criteria. The first one is to be a witness of Christ's resurrection, a witness of the resurrected Lord and receive direct revelation from him. So, at our context, looking at Paul, an apostle, Paul's prerequisite as an apostle is Paul included as the apostles.

[18:58] In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul states, we see in 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrected Lord was seen by all the apostles, then, last of all, he was seen by Paul also, as by one born out of due time.

So, Paul witnessed the resurrected Lord and received direct revelation from him. The second prerequisite is authenticated by miraculous signs and wonders.

We see this in the book of Acts, but particularly Hebrews 2, verses 3 to 4 tells us, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.

Of note, at this point, in the New Testament, provisions are made for the continuation, an appointment of elders and deacons for the continuing offices in the local church, but there are not for appointment of apostolic succession.

The implication, therefore, is that there were no other offices other than elders and deacons for the continuation of the church. We see that in Philippians 1.1, 1 Timothy 3.1-13.

[20:24] Next, we're going to consider the authority of an apostle, apostolic authority. First of all, apostolic authority to reveal divine truth by the Spirit of God.

Jesus said in John 14, these things I have spoken to you while being present with you, but the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

And then later in John 16, however, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth. So as apostleship, having authority to reveal divine truth by the Spirit of God, the apostles' words are therefore received as binding authority, as the Word of God.

Paul states in 1 Corinthians 14, the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. And Paul again in 1 Thessalonians 2, when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the Word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

So the contents of Scripture is the Word of God. This criteria for the authenticity of apostleship is very important, and it is neither obscure, nor is it left out.

[21 : 48] It is important for the Ephesians, who are content with false apostles, and it is important for us, who have to contend with claims to present-day apostolic appointment. If being apostle gives authority to reveal divine truth by the Spirit of God, and that divine truth to be received as binding authority over the church, then the criteria for the authenticity of apostleship is very important.

apostolic authority means apostolic position over the church. This means authority for all time.

There is no continuance of apostolic office and no continuance of revelation. All that we need for life and godliness is contained in the Scripture. The church, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, is the spiritual temple comprised of all the elect of God on the foundation of the apostles.

The foundation has already been laid. James Renahan states that the extraordinary officers, because their call derives directly from Jesus Christ, enjoy the privilege of universal responsibility and authority.

They speak to each and every church. This is the doctrine of the universal church, which Christ is the head, and he has given some to serve as his instruments and laying the foundation for the church.

[23 : 13] So with the continuation of the church and the ordinary officers of elders and deacons, as it continues on, it continues on not by signs and wonders, but by apostolic doctrine.

As we see in Acts 2.42, they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. O. Palmer Robertson explains that it can be expected that the historical completion of the work of redemption by Christ in his death and resurrection will be accompanied by a rounding out of revelation as the significance of those events is fully interpreted.

If certain offices and functions such as apostle and prophet are treated in scripture as foundational for the establishment of the church, it should come as no surprise that the extraordinary gifts associated with these offices should cease once the historical foundation of the church has been laid.

Modern day miracle workers claiming authority and message are fakes. So what about these movements, these modern movements, for example, the new apostolic reformation?

That sounds pretty important. Sounds like it holds a lot of authority. Apostolic. We just looked at the authority that is held by the apostolic office. Reformation. What about the new apostolic reformation?

[24 : 36] With claims of present day apostles. Claims to be miracle workers and bring with them a new and different doctrine that is inconsistent with the teaching of the apostles and scriptures.

We have to contend with these modern claims of apostleship who bring a new, according to them, message from the Lord. An example, I was trying to research a seminary on Google.

I had to look something up on it. And how it is with Google, you type something in and it lists a bunch of options. I didn't really look close enough. I just clicked the first option. And it said, what I was looking for, it said theological seminary.

Sounds good, doesn't it? Theological seminary. And looking at it, it appeared it was not the reputable seminary that I was looking at. So I was curious and looked a little further. And this seminary, their vision or mission statement, if you will, said, a unique call to raise and train those who are called into the five-fold ministry, especially those called to the offices of apostle and prophet, with capital A's and capital P.

We are here to help students equip and activate your prophetic gifts. Sounds interesting. I clicked on the faculty and discovered one of the faculty members is, with a capital A, Apostle Janine, instructor of prophetic art and dance.

[26 : 04] I'm not making this up. In this class, the instructor teaches by demonstration in art. With the aid of music in both prophetic painting and dance interpretation with understanding the

garments of the priest.

Is Janine an apostle? No. This theological seminary claims that she is an apostle with a capital A. They claim to be equipping and activating apostles with prophetic gifts.

Is this authentic? Do we have a way to authenticate or to measure these apostolic claims from scripture, which is not obscure to authenticate it?

Apostles need to meet the biblical criteria, which were witness to the risen Lord, divinely commissioned and sent by Christ for the establishment of the church and the inscripturation of the written word of God.

John was the last living apostle. There have been no apostles since then. There is no new supernatural revelation. No new divine prophecy. The scriptures are sufficient, final, and infallible.

[27 : 21] Janine is not an apostle. Application of our understanding of the apostolic office.

What is your view of divine revelation? Are you susceptible to disreputable claims of present-day divine revelation? Or a word from the Lord?

Or apostolic appointment? The second London Baptist confession in chapter 1, speaking of Holy Scripture, in paragraph 1, it says, The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

These former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people now being ceased. And in the book of Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1 to 2, it says, Who, at various times and in various ways, spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his son.

Listen to O. Palmer Robertson again. Far from hindering enthusiasm and a sense of the immediacy of God's presence in their midst, faith in the sufficiency of Scripture will move them to serve him with the full vigor of their beings.

[28 : 34] The Gospel of Luke explains that Jesus enlivened his followers by opening to them the Scriptures, beginning with Moses and all the prophets. He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Why? The resurrected Jesus opened the Scriptures to them because that would be the way by which spiritual life would be sustained for them from that point on.

As a consequence of his opening the Scriptures, their hearts burned within them. The same principle has continued throughout all the ages. As the resurrected Christ, through his Spirit, opens the Scriptures to his people, their hearts have burned within them.

Much greater than depending on the stimulus of new revelation of the Spirit is living out of the sufficiency of the final word as it is found in the Christ of the Scriptures.

You're familiar with the old hymn, how firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word. What more can he say than to you he has said who unto the Savior for refuge has fled?

[29 : 45] Do you see Scripture as sufficient, final, and authoritative? Do you understand the inspiration of Scripture as divine revelation, as one harmonious message of salvation in Christ alone?

Do you come to Scripture anticipating to hear God speak? Back to our text. So, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus.

So, here we now have the recipients of the letter. The saints. The understanding of saints has been misunderstood, misapplied, misused.

So, what exactly are saints? Saints are set apart by God and for God. They are separated from the world and consecrated to God. They are reconciled to God.

Saints are members of the household of God and brethren in Christ. Martin Lloyd-Jones explains saints as being every Christian is a saint. You cannot be a Christian without being a saint, and you cannot be a saint and a Christian without being separated in some radical sense from the world.

[31 : 02] Saints have union with Christ. They are died to sin and raised with them to new life. They are in Christ. They are elected in Christ.

They are died in Christ. They are buried in Christ. They are raised anew in Christ. They are forgiven in Christ. They are justified in Christ, and they will be glorified in Christ.

Saints are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

This letter is written to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus.

This is a lively faith, a receiving and resting on Christ. We read in verse 13 that they heard the gospel and believed.

The saints in Ephesus are not justified by their faithfulness, rather they are verified. This is genuine faith from God which bears fruit, the fruit of faithfulness.

[32 : 07] The saints are described as living stones being built up as a spiritual house, the church, the new spiritual temple of God. Now you are light in the Lord.

This is in stark contrast to the course of the world, darkness, those outside of Christ, the lost, dead, and trespassed in sin, children of wrath. The saints who are in Ephesus.

So a quick understanding of Ephesus. What were the issues in Ephesus at the time? There was Roman emperor worship, temple of Diana worship, pagan idolatry, and curious arts, which is black magic, witchcraft, and sorcery.

And here in this setting, God established and built his church, a spiritual temple, his dwelling place with his people by the proclamation of his message of salvation in a setting of heathen worship and satanic darkness.

They were fortified by the apostle Paul. In Acts 19.1, when Paul comes, there were already believers. And it happened while Apollos was at Corinth that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus and finding some disciples.

[33 : 19] So Paul found disciples and fortified. He spent three months reasoning in the synagogue and then two years teaching in the school of Tyrannus.

And then later in Acts 20, we see, we read that Paul did not shrink from declaring anything profitable, nor from declaring the whole counsel of God and testified to the gospel of the grace of God.

So here is then the significance of the context behind the greeting. Paul taught and exhorted the whole counsel of God as Christ's commissioned spokesman of divine, supernatural revelation, which is essential for God's glory, man's salvation, faith, and life.

Lastly, the salutation, the formal salutation and the greeting. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So a couple of quick notes on grace and peace, which we will see unpacked much further as we progress through Ephesians.

Grace is God's unmerited favor. The key word here is unmerited. Grace is God's unmerited favor. Richard Muller describes grace as the gracious or benevolent disposition of God towards sinful mankind.

[34 : 43] Unmerited favor towards sinful mankind. We must be careful that our view of ourselves does not eclipse the grace of God. That we don't eclipse the breadth, the length, the height, and depth of God's love and the riches of his glory by thinking that God's favor in some ways merited, earned, rewarded, or deserved, or anything other than 100% of grace.

We all are familiar with John Newton's lyrics, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. Grace is unmerited.

The implications of grace being unmerited is that grace is for wretches. Wretches like me and wretches like who the Ephesians once were.

Dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, walking according to the prince of the power of the air, sons of disobedience, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, children of wrath, without Christ, aliens and strangers, no hope, without God, far off, enmity, without access to the Father, futility of mind, darkened understanding, alienated from the life of God, ignorant and blindness of heart, corrupt, deceitful lusts, darkness, wretches.

Our comprehending the depths of God's grace requires comprehending the depths of sinful man's wretchedness before a holy God.

[36 : 25] It is all of God's greatness and glory, God's unmerited favor. It is grace. Amazing grace.

Grace and peace. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Ian Hamilton on the text explains, When Paul adds peace, he is not blessing these believers with the prospect of a trouble-free life.

Peace from God our Father is the joy and assurance of the Father's love to us in Christ. The Heavenly Father desires all his children to rejoice in the assurance of his love. Assurance of our Father's love is deepened and strengthened the more we look outward to Christ, who he is and what he has done.

Such a peace is not an uninformed presumption to feel unencumbered. Such a peace is not doing away with all that controversial doctrine stuff that threatens peace and unity.

I'm sure you've probably heard that before. Rather, it is an informed application of a biblical understanding of justification.

[37 : 34] Being a pardon for sins by the precious blood of Christ and the accounting as righteous in God's sight only by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us and received by faith alone.

Romans 5.1 says, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This peace is a calmness of mind from being reconciled to God and no longer in fear of condemnation or punishment for sin, but now citizens in Christ's kingdom.

This brings me to my final point of application. Are you still in darkness, death, condemnation, and wrath, or have you been called into marvelous light?

Do you merely believe there is a Christ, or have you closed with Christ? Or have you repented and turned to Christ, believing in him alone for salvation?

Turn to Christ, who is light and life, and in him you will find the riches of his mercy. Hear what John Flavel says.

[38 : 51] Have ye the special saving knowledge of Christ? All his subjects are translated out of the kingdom of darkness. The devil that rules over you in the days of your ignorance is called the ruler of the darkness of this world.

His subjects are all blind, else he would never rule them. As soon as their eyes be opened, they run out of his kingdom, and there is no retaining them in subjection to him any longer.

O inquire then whether you are brought out of darkness into his marvelous light. Do you see your condition? How sad, miserable, wretched it is by nature.

Do you see your remedy, as it lies only in Christ and his precious blood? Do you see the true way of obtaining interest in that blood by faith? Does this knowledge run into practice and put you upon lamenting heartily your misery by sin, thirsting vehemently after Christ and his righteousness, striving continually for a heart to believe and close with Christ?

This will evidence you indeed to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. In conclusion, from our text, Paul, previously Saul of Tarsus, who persecuted the church but was called out of darkness into marvelous light.

[40 : 10] Paul, an apostle, as called and commissioned by the resurrected Christ with authority to reveal divine truth by the Spirit of God as binding authority over the church. Paul writes this pastoral and theological letter to the saints who are in Ephesus, those separated from this present darkness to Christ and in union with Christ.

He writes to them with a salutation of grace and peace, grace being God's unmerited favor in justifying sinners and peace being the joy and assurance of the Father's love to believers in Christ. As we continue on in our series through Ephesians, we will see furthermore in Ephesians verses 3 to 14 that it focuses on the glory and greatness of God and the riches of his grace in the God-given, Christ-secured, Holy Spirit-applied blood-brought privileges in God's plan of redemption, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Let's pray. Our great God, I thank you for your word. I thank you that you, as the inspirer of scripture, of divine truth, have given us in written form the word of God through your means. I thank you, Lord, for the sufficiency of your word and that indeed it contains all that we need for salvation and godly living and faith. I pray, Lord, that as we look to your word, we would indeed anticipate to hear from the living God and that your speaking is your power effecting and that your word is your breathed out divine revelation.

[41 : 52] I pray that we would take this into consideration as we seek to understand what is contained in your word. I thank you, Lord, that you indeed call lost sinners out of darkness into life, into marvelous light.

If there are any here, Lord, who are still in darkness, I pray that you would call them into your marvelous light. I pray that you would use us in this community to call lost sinners out of darkness into marvelous light.

I thank you that you have separated us from this world. I pray that you would help us to live faithfully as saints who have been separated from this world, consecrated to you, that we would live for you. I thank you for your grace, unmerited favor. How amazing your grace is to undeserving wretches. I thank you for the peace that comes from being justified before a holy God.

I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll stand and sing the doxology. I think it's familiar to most, but it's on page Romans 16 at the beginning of the hymn book.

[43 : 00] If you need the word, we'll stand and sing together. And we'll stand and sing together.