

First Love: A Deeper Understanding of Church From the Book of Ephesians

Northern Virginia Church of Christ Fall 2017

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Date	Class	Memory Verse
October 1	Ephesians 1: Restore Awe	Ephesians 1:18
October 8	Ephesians 2: Get Grace	Ephesians 2:10
October 15	Ephesians 3: Behold the Bride	Ephesians 3:10
October 22	Ephesians 4: The Battle for Unity	Ephesians 4:15
October 29	Ephesians 5: The Song of Life	Ephesians 6:18
November 5	Ephesians 6/Revelation 2: First Love	Test

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people (Ephesians 1:18, NIV)

The City of Ephesus

- “Jewel” of the Mediterranean
- Prominent city in Asia
- The city included:
 - A Large Theater
 - The Temple of Diana (Artemis)
 - Large Port
 - Later: Celsus Library (AD 117)



Ephesus Church Timeline

53-55 AD – Paul planted church in Ephesus during 3rd Journey

- Acts 18-19 – Apollos & John the Baptist “disciples”; Synagogue → Lecture Hall → Asia
- 1 & 2 Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:8) and “fought wild beasts in Ephesus” (1 Cor. 15:32)
- Acts 20 – Addressed Ephesian Elders

60 AD Paul wrote Ephesians from Roman prison

- 1 Tim. 1:3 to Ephesus’ church leader, Timothy w/ Tychicus (2 Tim. 4:12) and Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:18)

~75-95 AD – John lived in Ephesus

- Mary may have come with him; May have written John, 1/2/3 John there

• “Elder” among the “Seven Churches of Revelation”

95 AD – John exiled to Patmos

- Wrote Revelation, including a letter to the church in Ephesus
- Commended their perseverance, hard work, doctrine but confronted them: they lost their “First Love”



Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians

Author: Paul the Prisoner (3:1, 4:1, 6:19-20)

Audience: Ephesus and Asia (circulated letter)

Theme: God’s (and Paul’s) passion for the church

- Intricate analogies for God’s love that include
 - adoption, marriage, and family
 - admonitions toward holy living, spiritual warfare, and heavenly inheritance

Devotional Thoughts from Ephesians 1

1. The Prisoner's Greeting (Ephesians 1:1-2)

To the saints – God's (holy) people – (Strong's 40: ἅγιος or hagios) – set apart; “likeness of nature with the Lord” because we are “different from the world.”

- References to Saints: Ephesians 1:15 (*love for all the saints*), 2:19 (*fellow citizens with God's people*), 3:8 (*least of the saints*), 3:18, 4:12 (*equip the saints*), 5:3 (*these are improper for God's holy people*), 6:18 (*pray for all the saints*).

God's faithful family – see quote!

Grace and peace – Paul begins and ends with “grace”

“It's easy to look at the church and see all of the member's flaws. Can we follow Paul's example and see a faithful family of saints?”

(First Love)

2. The Song of Praise (Ephesians 1:3-14) one long sentence...

Praise be to God... Jesus... and the Spirit...

God wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)

- *Chosen to be blameless* – That's how God sees us
- *Predestined for adoption* – He wants everyone to be his child
- *Chosen and predestined according to his purpose* – God has a plan
- *Every spiritual blessing in Christ* – What are we lacking?
- *Invaded by the Holy Spirit (our guarantee)* – Will you invite him in?
- *Renamed in God's Family* – Do you accept your new name?

“Paul used his understanding of God (theology) to expand their vision, their dreams, and their worship by bringing them face-to-face with the Father.”

(First Love)

3. The Power of the Church (Ephesians 1:15-23)

- 1 of 2 lengthy prayers (see 3:14-19)
- Paul remembers their “faith and love”
- He prays for spiritual insight, inspiration, & power
- Jesus' resurrection power: to “*serve and empower the church!*”

“*For we are his body, the church and we fill this earth with his fullness everywhere, in every way, in everything!*”

“God applies all of his hope, power, wisdom, presence, and glory to serve and empower us as the church so that we can fill the earth with all the fullness of God.”

(First Love)

Word Studies from Ephesians

Heavenly Realms (Strong's 2032: ἐπουρανίους or epouraniois) – “in the heavenly sphere, spiritual.” **The heavenly realms are a spiritual place where God dwells (1:20) [and evil forces (3:10, 6:12)]. Christ is seated beside God (1:20) and we are seated (spiritually) beside Jesus (2:6) with every spiritual blessing (1:3).**

Inheritance (Strong's 2817: κληρονομίας or klēronomias) and **Heir** (Strong's 4789: συνκληρονόμα or synklēronoma) – “the gift of God to His chosen people (**heirs**). In the Old Testament, the Promised Land. In the New Testament, a possession viewed in one sense as present, in another as future (‘age to come’ in 1:21 and 2:7); a share, participation.” **God planned a glorious inheritance for us (1:18). He guaranteed our inheritance through the Holy Spirit (1:14). Immoral, impure, or greedy people have no such inheritance (5:5). Gentiles now share in the same inheritance as the Jews (3:6).**

Ephesus Contest

1. What continent is Ephesus in? _____
2. Who started the church in Ephesus? _____
- 3-4. Name 2 authors who wrote letters to Ephesus: _____
- 5-10. Name 2-6 books possibly written from Ephesus: _____

Bonus: What NT letter is most like Ephesians? _____

Bonus: Name 3-6 well-known leaders who spent time in Ephesus: _____