

## Ephesians: Introduction Colossians 1:1-2

### INTRODUCTION

We begin this morning a study of Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus under the banner of **Ephesians: In Christ**. A good (general) working outline for this letter would be:

**Emphasis:** \_\_\_\_\_ **foundation – Ephesians 1-3**

- **Sovereignty & \_\_\_\_\_: The \_\_\_\_\_ of Our Faith (1:1-2:10) Salvation by grace alone through faith alone by in Christ alone to the glory of God alone**
- **Reconciliation & \_\_\_\_\_: The \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Grace (2:11-3:21) The mystery of the church revealed**

**Emphasis:** \_\_\_\_\_ **application – Ephesians 4-6**

- \_\_\_\_\_ & Growing: The Believer's Lifestyle (4:1-32)
- Following & \_\_\_\_\_: The Imitator's Path (5:1-6:9)
- Clashing & \_\_\_\_\_: The Warrior's Strategy (6:10-20)
- Final \_\_\_\_\_: Glad \_\_\_\_\_ (6:21-24)

**Ephesians** answers the question, what does it mean to be in Christ, and what does this demand of us? Answers the question, what does it mean to be the body of Christ?

**Ephesians** — carefully, reverently, prayerfully considered — will change our lives. It is not so much a question of what we will do with the epistle, but what it will do with us.

The first three chapters of this letter reveal to us who we are and the possessions we enjoy. These are the spiritual riches—the spiritual blessings—the spiritual possessions—we have in Christ. We begin to discover these by looking at the first **two verses of Ephesians 1**. I know it seems like there is not very much in these verses, but as we get into them, you will see just how much there really is.

In these **two verses** we have eight items, which come in four pairs of two. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul has carefully crafted this letter.

*Let's dig in...please note...*

**I. The \_\_\_\_\_: two \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Eph 1:1a)**

The human author of the letter, of course, is Paul. He is the author, but in this first part of **verse 1**, he tells us what his authority is. He tells us why he is qualified to write.

**A. Paul is an \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ Jesus**

**B. Paul was an apostle of Christ Jesus by the  
\_\_\_\_\_ of God**

*Please note...*

## II. The \_\_\_\_\_: two \_\_\_\_\_ of the Ephesian believers (Eph 1:1b)

Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus. And here we have **two characteristics** for the believers in Ephesus.

### A. \_\_\_\_\_ as saints

The reason Paul calls them saints is because they are "*in Christ*." By itself, "**saint**" might suggest self-effort resulting in self-improvement. **Candidacy for sainthood has nothing to do with you, but everything to do with Christ.** This favorite Pauline expression simply refers to the fact that we are incorporated into Christ. To be "*in Christ*" is to possess every aspect of salvation; everything necessary to our eternal welfare has been secured for us by the action of God in Christ and is stored up in Christ for us to share and enjoy.

**Let's park here a little longer.** Please note the phrase '*in Christ*.' In fact, please note that two-letter preposition '*in*.' Think about the preposition "*in*". One can be **in** trouble. Or **in** the army. We can be on the **inside** of a discussion, or in a **hot debate**. "*In*" is a preposition of location. One of Paul's favorite descriptions of the Christian life is that of a life lived in Christ.

The words "*in Christ*" are among Paul's favorites to describe a person's new life as a believer. If we took the time to read every reference to being in Christ from Paul's letters we would come up with a list that looks something like this:

- *chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4)*
- *foreordained in Christ (Eph. 1:7)*
- *redeemed and sanctified in Christ (Rom. 3:24, 1 Cor. 1:2)*
- *reconciled to God in Christ (1 Cor. 5:19)*
- *justified in Christ (Gal. 2:17)*
- *given access to God in Christ (Eph. 2:12)*

*But also, Paul is writing...*

### B. \_\_\_\_\_ as faithful

This is the second characteristic of the believers in Ephesus. The adjective **pistos** can have either an active meaning ('**trusting**', '**having faith**') or a passive ('**trustworthy**', '**being faithful**'). The word "**faithful**" is the same word translated as "believing" in **John 20:27** in reference to Thomas: "**do not be unbelieving but believing.**" That better conveys Paul's thought: "**to the saints who are in Ephesus, that is the ones believing in Christ Jesus.**" Certainly, he wanted them to be dependable and reliable people, which is how we might use the word faithful. But reliability doesn't make you a Christian. Only faith in Christ does. So, he's distinguishing the church as those who are the ones believing in Jesus Christ. He makes it clear that he's not speaking of a generic belief in someone named Jesus, but in this one raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God, "**far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come**" (**Eph 1:20–21**).

**At the same time**, the two senses of **pistis**, "**belief**" and "**fidelity**", appear to be blended. Certainly, it is hard to imagine a believer who is not himself believable, or a trustworthy Christian who has not learned trustworthiness from Him in whom he has put his trust.

*So, the saints in Ephesus were also faithful in Christ Jesus, next, please note...*

### III. The \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph 1:2)

#### A. Two \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Grace expresses the motivation behind God's gracious work, and peace, the effect of God's work. We are saints, called to serve because grace is given which produces the peace to endure.**

*Where does this come from?*

#### B. Two \_\_\_\_\_ of these blessings

**They come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

It is interesting to note that these two sources of Christian blessing are also the two sources for Paul's authority: he is an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, and our blessing comes from God and Jesus Christ.

By the way, the word "**and**" used here is the word **kai** in the Greek which here reveals equality. Jesus Christ, though he has a different function and role than God the Father, is equal in power and authority to God. Both are equal. Both are God. And both of them together are the two sources of the believer's blessings.

## **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning? I'd like to return to the designation of "*in Christ.*"

The people at **Ephesus** were reminded that even though they made their home **AT Ephesus** they were living **IN** Christ. When we trust Christ fully as our Redeemer we are changed.

**The Gospel helps us two ways:**

The gospel helps us \_\_\_\_\_ the world for what it is

The gospel gives us a new \_\_\_\_\_ on life

Because of the indwelling of God's Spirit, we now look at things in light of Christ.

- *We see our troubles as tools in the hands of a loving God.*
- *We are more concerned about our soul than about our physical enjoyment.*
- *We draw our self-image not from the applause of men but from the whispers of love from the Savior.*
- *In difficult times we put our confidence in God's Word rather than in the schemes or stuff of men.*
- *We see past this world to the next world.*

The Christian knows that Christ is sufficient for **EVERY** need. *We can stop blaming and start trusting.* Our confidence then is not in our ability to make ourselves better; we are confident in His ability to finish the transformation He has started inside of us.