

Christian: Do You Know Who You Are? • Part 1

"Open Your Eyes" • Ephesians 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *New Series*

1. Today we start a new series called, "*Christian: Do You Know Who You Are?*"
2. The reason I've titled it that is because I've come to believe that most Christians really do not know who they are in Christ - and He wants them to!
3. It's a significant part of my task as shepherd to help those the Lord has entrusted to my charge to know Him - and to know who *they* are *in* Him.

B. *Open Your Eyes!*

1. Though we will be concentrating on vs. 1-4 this morning, I'd like to begin by looking at vs. 15-18
2. Paul writes . . .

{15} Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

{16} do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

- a. Paul had received a good report on how the well Ephesians were doing in the Faith
 - b. no doubt he was relieved to get this report - after all, he had spent three years there
 - c. it was gratifying to hear that they were still doing well
3. Then he tells them he is praying for them, and in vs. 17 & 18, he tells them *what* he was praying for them

{17} that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

{18} 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,

4. Remember who Paul is writing this to - to Believers who were already doing well in the faith
5. But here he prays that God would take them *deeper*
6. And this deeper experience with God would begin with their "eyes being opened"
 - a. now, this is not to say that up to this point they had been spiritually *blind*
 - b. it just means that there was a new level of spiritual revelation and knowledge they could move in to
 - c. what they were lacking, what Paul wanted them to see, was who they were in Christ
 - d. notice what Paul says he was praying in v. 18

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;

- 1) that you may know what is the hope of His calling,
 - 2) [that you may know]what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
In other words - that Christ counts YOU as His treasure, His inheritance!
7. The first half of Ephesians is one long list of who we are in Christ
- a. chapter 1 is a condensed and concentrated account of what it means to be a Christian
 - b. we'll be taking a look at the first 4 verses this morning, and the rest of the chapter in the next few weeks

C. By Necessity

1. You will quickly see, as we begin, that we could spend months looking at these 14 verses - so packed with power and revelation as they are
2. In fact, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the famous English preacher, did just that
 - a. he took his congregation through Ephesians verse by verse in an in-depth study
 - b. it took him 6 years
 - c. and his sermons have been transcribed and put into a multi-volume set that occupies shelf space in many pastor's libraries
3. But even Lloyd-Jones only scratched the surface of what we find here . . .

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

1. Few words in the NT have suffered more injury than this word "saint"
2. Even the dictionary defines a saint as a "person officially recognized for holiness of life."
3. Who makes this *official* recognition?
 - a. traditionally, the Roman Catholic or the Greek Orthodox church
 - b. after a person's name is submitted - they are then subjected to some tests
 - 1) their character has to have been above reproach
 - 2) and there must be at least 2 miracles attributed to them
 - 3) oh, and they have to be dead!
 - c. if they pass these three tests, then they are submitted to the church hierarchy and there's a vote
 - d. if they pass - they're declared a "saint"
4. That is not at all who Paul has in mind as he wrote to the church at Ephesus
 - a. this wasn't a letter to a select group of holy but dead people
 - b. it wasn't addressed to 5 inch high plastic statues people put on the dashboards of their chariots
5. By "saints," Paul meant *Christians!*
6. The word "saint" comes from the same word we translate as "holy"

- a. a saint is simple a holy-one
 - b. if something is holy, it means it has been set apart from common use to the special use of God
7. *All* believers are saints because they have been set apart from the world to glorify God
 8. You were not created to seek *your own* glory - you were called into being to glorify *God*
 9. One of the great truths we discover as we follow Christ is that genuine satisfaction comes when we *stop* living for ourselves and *start* living for Him
 10. A Sunday School teacher in a Lutheran church once asked her class of fourth graders what a saint was
 - a. one young boy immediately raised his hand and said,
 - b. a saint is a person whom the light shines through
 - c. he was thinking of the people depicted in the stained glass windows of his church
 - d. but your know what - his description is entirely accurate
 - e. a saint is anyone who trusts in Christ and lives as Jesus said in Matthew 5
- {Mat 5:16} "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."**
11. May the Lord open our eyes that we might see we are *saints* - holy ones - set apart from the common things of this world to the special and eternal purposes of God

B. Vs. 2-3

{2} Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

{3} 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,

1. V. 3 begins one long sentence that runs all the way through v. 14
 - a. Paul is so full of awe at what God has done in His people
 - b. he cannot bring himself to stop - it just spills out
 - c. and verse 3 is a good summary of all that follows
2. We who believe in Christ have been blessed with *every spiritual blessing*
 - a. God holds nothing back!
 - b. as it says in 2 Peter 1:3

{3} [God] has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,

- c. all that we need to live successfully, both in this world, and in the Kingdom, God has given us
3. In Philippians 4:19 Paul says,

My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- a. how rich is God? That's easy - He lacks nothing!
- b. and this verse says that God will supply all our need according to whose supply?
- c. His!
- d. now, notice - He will supply our NEED - not our wants

- e. sometimes it's difficult for us to discern the difference between a want and a genuine need
 - f. but God is not confused
 - 1) He knows our need better than we do
 - 2) and He has promised to meet our need
4. Notice where these blessings are located - "in the heavenly places in Christ"
- a. in other words, the sphere or realm of the blessings we have is not this earth
 - b. they do not originate here or correlate to this material plane
 - c. they are blessings that exist and operate in the spiritual realm
 - d. for instance, Russia has the ruble, and we have the dollar
 - 1) word has it that very soon, because of Russia's economic crisis, the dollar will be outlawed and only the ruble will be accepted as a medium for exchange
 - 2) when that happens, goods and products will stop being imported into the nation
 - 3) already Slava tells us that the store shelves are empty as people have bought everything in sight
 - 4) here in the US, the economy is sound and the dollar is strong
 - 5) the stores are well stocked and we can buy what we need
 - e. the dollar is no good in Russia, but the ruble is no good here
 - f. if I can use this as a crude analogy; Russia is the world; it has it's own currency, it's own values, it's own blessings - but it is bankrupt and the shelves are bare!
 - g. but you and I are citizens of a different nation - The Kingdom of God
 - 1) the shelves are full
 - 2) and we have been given a checkbook with an unlimited balance
 - h. what blessing do you want to live with - rubles or dollars?
5. Christian - you have been blessed with every blessing of the Spirit *In Christ*
- a. it's His name on the signature line of each of those checks
 - b. whatever your need, you can fill one of them out -
 - c. by faith tear it off, and cash it at the Bank of Heaven
6. The great tragedy in the Church is that even though we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing, far too many believers live like spiritual paupers
7. William Randolph Hearst, once read of an extremely valuable piece of art, which he decided he must add to his already extensive collection.
- a. he instructed his art agent to scour the galleries of the world to find the masterpiece he was determined to have at any price.
 - b. after many months of painstaking search, the agent reported that the piece could not be purchased
 - c. it turns out it already belonged to Mr. Hearst and had been stored in one of his warehouses for many years.
8. Many believers become entangled in a quest for something *more* in the Christian life,
- a. they long for something *special*, something extra that the "ordinary" Christian life doesn't possess.
 - b. they talk of getting more of the Holy Spirit, more power, more blessings
 - c. as if the resources of God were divinely doled out one at a time like pills

- from a prescriptions
- d. they think that God's blessings are only unlocked by some spiritual combination that only an initiated few can know
- 9. Paul puts such ideas to rest - each of us have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ.
- 10. Oh that our eyes may be enlightened to see the full measure of these blessings

C. V. 4

{4} 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,

1. God wants you to know that He chose you!
 - a. long before you chose Him, He chose YOU!
 - b. His choice pre-dates the creation;
 - c. before He ever laid the forms that bound the earth - He set His thought and grace on you and called you to be His!
2. Now, I realize that this leads us into sticky theological ground and opens a can of debate among the Calvinists and the Arminianists, and the "I-Couldn't-Care-Less-Alists"
3. It is not my aim nor attempt to take sides in this debate today
4. The Spirit does not intend this to be a topic for debate this morning, but a truth to bless us
5. For those of you caught up in the age old argument between Calvin and Arminius, set it aside and let this passage bless you
6. Be still - and open your eyes
7. We have been chosen by God - what a precious truth!
8. Think of it - from the vantage point of eternity - God looked out over all creation, all history
 - a. He looked down the annals of time
 - b. He looked over all the galaxies and planets; the infinite vastness of space
 - c. and he saw YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 - d. and He chose you to be His eternal companion,
 - e. He chose you that one day you should step out of time into eternity
 - 1) out of this tent into a mansion
 - 2) out of this cursed and fallen world into a blessed and glorious heaven
9. When I was a kid, we played a lot of games
 - a. baseball, soccer, kickball
 - b. before every game, captains would be picked and then they would chose teams
 - c. I hated this selection process because I was occasionally one of the last ones picked
 - d. it was always so disheartening and embarrassing to be left for the last few choices
 - e. even though you got picked, you felt like a loser and that no one wanted you
 - f. and heaven forbid you were the very last - because the other kids would actually say something like, "Why do we always get stuck with him or

- her?"
10. But you know what - even if you were one of the last ones picked, if your team won, you felt great!
 11. God's putting together a winning team - Heaven's All Stars
 - a. and on game day, the bible tells us they are going to ride into the stadium on white horses behind their Captain Jesus Christ
 - b. and then they are going to royally whoop the devil and his team
 12. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is saying that God has picked you to be on His team!
 13. Do you know what that means? It means you are a winner!
 14. God doesn't chose losers
 - a. well, they *were* losers before He chose them
 - b. but His choosing turns them from losers *into* winners!
 15. This choosing God does effects our lives now! Notice what Paul says . . .

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

- a. remember what would happen when you were picked to play on a team?
 - b. everyone lines up together, and the captains stand in front of everyone else
 - c. then as players a picked, they move from where they are to next to the captain
 - d. sides are drawn and each team member takes a stand with his or her team
16. God's choice of us means we take a stand with Him
 - a. we come out of the world with it's values and priorities
 - b. to side with God and the priorities of His kingdom
 17. If someone was to take a look at your life and the way you live - would they be able to see that you're on the Lord's team?
 18. Has God's choice of you been effective in setting you apart?
 19. Earlier we saw that the Christian is a saint, a holy-one
 20. Here we see that we are to live *outwardly* what we are *inwardly*!
 21. V. 4 ends with the qualifier, "in love."
 - a. this gives us the quality of holiness we have been chosen for
 - b. it's sad that so many people think of holiness as a straight-laced, buttoned down, high-collared kind of Puritanical stuffiness.
 - c. when they think of holiness they see someone dressed all in black, ram-rod straight posture, one hand behind their back, nose in the air, and scowl on their face as though nothing was good enough, except of course, themselves
 22. This isn't the nature or character of holiness God has chosen us for
 - a. God has chosen us for love
 - b. the holiness God wants for us isn't a narrow life of rules and regulations
 - c. it's a living, breathing, vibrant reality permeated through and through with the joy of love

III. CONCLUSION

A. End Here - -More Next Week

1. We'll have to end it at this point this morning,
2. And will pick it up here next week

B. The Ground Of Choice

1. But as we conclude today, notice carefully the *ground* of God's choice

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world

2. God's choice of us was not some arbitrary selection process
 - a. as though He numbered us off
 - b. and then selected every 5th one
3. God's choice of us to be His own is IN CHRIST!
4. In other words - The Father's choice is the Son, and whoever is IN CHRIST, is chosen!
5. Some people read v. 4 and say, "What if God didn't chose me?"
 - a. to which I reply, "Well, do you believe in Christ as your Savior and Lord?"
 - b. if they say, "Yes." Then I say, "He chose you."
 - c. if they say, "No." Then I say, "Apparently He didn't chose you."
6. I like the way my Pastor, Chuck Smith, puts it
 - a. the door to eternal life has two signs above it; one on each side
 - b. on this side of the door are written the words of

Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. [Acts 2:21]

- c. but once you pass through and look back you find these words

Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world [Ephesians 1:4]

7. The ground of choice is Christ
 - a. chose Him,
 - b. and discover that you've been chosen!