

EPHESIANS
PLAIN SENSE PARAPHRASE
4-6-17

[the family has read this book in devotions]

CHAPTER ONE

This letter is from Paul, chosen by God's will to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

3 Give God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, all the praise you can, for he has **blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms** because we are united with Christ.

4 **Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us, in Christ, to be made holy and without fault in his eyes, because of His love for us.** 5 **God determined a long time ago to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.** This is what he wanted to do, and it gives him great pleasure.

6 So we praise Him for His glorious grace that made us acceptable to Him through his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that **he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son** and **forgave our sins.** 8 He, possessing all wisdom and understanding, has lavished **his grace upon us**

9 and has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—in fulfillment of his own good plan. 10 And this is the plan: At the end of the final dispensation he will bring everything together under Christ's authority — everything in heaven and on earth — under Christ.

11 Furthermore, **because we are united with Christ, we share in Christ's inheritance from God**, as he determined to give us a long time ago — and he always makes everything work out according to his plan.

12 God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.

13 And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth — the Good News that *God saves anyone who trusts in Christ*. And **when you believed in Christ, he marked you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, just as He gave Him to us**, whom he promised long ago. 14 The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did all this so we would praise and glorify him.

15 Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, 16 I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, 17 asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you **spiritual wisdom and insight** so that you will grow in your knowledge of God and alignment with Him. 18 I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you will be **filled with the confident hope** he gives to those he calls into His family — his holy people, who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power toward us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of The Church - which is all believers, everywhere. 23 And The Church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

EPHESIANS 2

Once you were spiritually **D**ead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You were **D**isobedient, living in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way; **D**epraved - following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were **D**oomed - subject to God's anger, just like all those in the world who are unsaved.

4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were spiritually dead in sin, because we are united with Christ Jesus, **He made us alive** when he raised Christ from the dead. (Our salvation is all by God's grace!) 6 The reason God raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms was 7 so that, throughout all the ages of

eternity, He -- from the inexhaustible riches of His grace -- will be able to continue to lavish kindness upon us who are united with Christ Jesus!!!

8 God saved you by his grace when you put your faith in Jesus as your Savior. You can't take any credit for your salvation; it is totally a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for any good things we may have done; so none of us can boast about getting saved. 10 For we are God's masterpiece. And the reason He has created us anew in Christ Jesus is so that He can live His life in us and do the good things through us He planned long ago.

11 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. 12 In those days, you were living far from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and, therefore, without any hope of ever being saved. 13 But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were very far away from God, but now you have been brought intimately close to him — through the blood of Christ.

14 For it is Christ, Himself, Who has brought spiritual peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the Old Testament system of law with its many commandments and regulations ["shoulds" and "ought to's"] to be observed to make one right with God. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in

himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Then, together as one body, Christ **reconciled both groups to God** by means of his death for them on the cross, and, thus, our hostility toward each other was put to death.

17 He brought this same Good News of peace with God to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and to the Jews who were near. 18 Now **all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit** because of what Christ has done for us.

19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. **You are citizens** along with all of God's holy people. You are **members of God's family**. 20 Together, **we are his house**, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22 Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

EPHESIANS 3

When I think of all this, I, Paul, in prison because of teaching about Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . .

2 [assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. 3 As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself unveiled his secret plan to me. 4 As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan concerning Christ. 5 God did not reveal it to previous generations,

but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

6 And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the spiritual riches given to God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the same promise of blessings because they both belong to Christ Jesus. 7 By God's grace and through His mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this wonderful Good News.

8 Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret through the ages, from the beginning.

10 God's purpose in all this was to use The Church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Because of Christ and our faith in him, we — who were once despicable sinners and enemies of God — are now able to come boldly and confidently into His very presence — for all eternity!

13 So please don't be discouraged because of my sufferings here in prison. Instead, feel honored that God counts you to be so valuable that your salvation is worth my suffering to bring the Gospel to you.]

14 . . . when I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his **glorious, unlimited resources** he will **empower you with inner strength through his Spirit**; 17 that Christ will feel at home in your hearts as you trust in him; that your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong; 18 and that you may have the ability to understand, as all God's people should, **how infinitely wide, long, high, and deep his love for you is**; 19 that you may come to a confident experiential realization of just how much God loves you - though it is too great to fully understand. When all this happens, you will **experience completely all the fullness of life and power that comes from God**.

20 Now, let us give all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 All praise to Him by all who are in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

EPHESIANS 4

This is why I, in prison for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling — for you have been **called by God into His family!**

2 Always be humble and gentle.

Be patient with each other — making allowance for each other's faults because of your love for each other.

3 Make every effort to stay united in the Spirit — binding yourselves together with peace.

4 For, after all, there is only one Body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

7 However, he has given some unique gifts to The Church through the generosity of Christ.

8 [This is what the Scriptures are referring to,

“When he ascended into Heaven,
he led a crowd of captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

9 Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. 10 And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.]

11 Now these are the gifts Christ has given to The Church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and the teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work, and build up The Church, the Body of Christ. 13 This work is to continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete stature of Christ-in full alignment with God in every way.

14 Then we will no longer be like immature children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every new teaching.

We will not be deceived when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will know and express the truth — in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his Body, The Church - the Called Out Ones. 16 He makes the entire body fit together perfectly. As each part makes its own unique contribution, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

17 With the Lord's authority I say this: Stop living like the unsaved around you do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they are aimlessly wandering around far from the life God gives, because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure, and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

20 But that is definitely not the kind of life you have been given in Christ. 21 Now, having heard about Jesus and having learned the truth that is in Him, 22 throw off your dirty, tattered, old sinful nature and your former way of life, which are corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your **beautiful new nature**, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

25 Let us stop lying to each other. Let us be truthful with each other, for we are all parts of the same Body.

26 And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t end the day angry, 27 for the devil will use our anger to cause trouble in our lives and relationships.

28 If you have been a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good honest work — and then give generously to others in need.

29 Don’t use profane or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

30 And do not grieve God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has marked you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

31 Get rid of all unforgiveness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of sinful behavior.

32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God, in Christ, has forgiven you. [See Col. 2:14 and 3:14]

EPHESIANS 5

Just as children imitate their parents, so you should imitate God in everything you do, because **you are his dear children.**

2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. Remember how much He loved us and offered himself as a loving sacrifice for us — which was a sacrifice that smelled deliciously pleasing to God.

3 Let no sexual immorality, impurity, or materialistic greed be found among you. Such sins have absolutely no place among God's people.

4 Our tongues are not to be used for obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, our tongues are to be characterized by thankfulness to God.

5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or materialistically greedy Christian will have any inheritance waiting for them in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a materialistic person is an idolater, worshiping the possessions of this world.

6 Don't be fooled by a world that tries to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will someday fall on this disobedient world.

7 Don't participate in the things these kinds of people do.
8 You used to not know any better and walked in darkness, but now **you have been enlightened by the Lord**. So live as people of the light! 9 For this light within you - the life of Christ - produces only what is good and right and true.

10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. 11 Take no part in the worthless deeds of sin and darkness; instead, expose them. 12 It is embarrassing to even talk about the things that ungodly people do in their personal lives. 13 But their sinful motives and actions will be exposed when the light shines on them, 14 for light makes

everything visible. This is why it is said in the Old Testament,

“Awake, O sleeper,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light.”

15 So, Christian, be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but with understanding of what the Lord wants you to do. 18 Instead of getting drunk to have a good time - because that will ruin your life, be intoxicated with the Holy Spirit — 19 you'll soon be having a great time singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts, 20 and giving thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Furthermore, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 For wives, this means submitting to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For a husband is the head of his wife just as Christ is the head of The Church. Christ is the Savior of his Body, The Church. 24 Just as The Church submits to Christ in everything, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

25 For husbands, submission means that you are to love your wives, just as Christ loved The Church. He loved The Church so much that He gave up his life for her 26 to make her **holy and clean** — and now she is kept holy and clean by the washing of God's word. 27 He gave His life

for her to present her to himself as a glorious church **without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.** 28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. 29 For no one hates his own body, but feeds and cares for it — just as Christ cares for The Church. 30 For The Church is Christ's body on this earth.

31 As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." 32 This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. 33 So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must submit to her husband.

EPHESIANS 6

For children, the right thing for you to do in keeping with this new way of life in the Lord is to obey your parents. 2 "Honor your father and mother" is the first commandment that comes with a promise. 3 If you honor your father and mother, the Bible promises that "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the wise discipline and loving instruction that comes from the Lord.

5 Employees, obey your earthly employers with true respect and esteem. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6 Work to please them at all times, not just when they are watching you. As employees of Christ, work in your earthly jobs in a way that pleases God: with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 8 Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are employees or independently wealthy.

9 Employers, treat your employees in the same way: with true respect and esteem. Don't be harsh and intimidating toward them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he does not show favoritism to those in positions of authority.

10 In conclusion: Authentic Christianity is not about *you* - what you ought or ought not to do. It's about being strong in the *Lord* and in *his* mighty power. It's about building "faith muscles" in *the Lord* and in what HE is able to do.

11 Stay covered with all of God's spiritual armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the spirit-world; against the mighty powers of this spiritually dark world, as well as against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, it is important to put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy when he attacks you; so that, after the battle, you will still be

standing firm. 14 To stand your ground, put on the belt of **God's truth** and the body armor of **God's righteousness**. 15 To stand firmly in battle, you will need to put on the shoes of the **peace** and **total confidence that comes from knowing and believing the Good News**. 16 In addition to all of these protections, hold up the shield of your **faith** in God and in His Word - which is able to stop every fiery arrow of the devil. 17 Put on the helmet of **confidence in your salvation**, and have a good grip on the sword of the Spirit, which is **the Word of God**.

18 And don't forget to stay in **close communication with God through the Holy Spirit**, at all times and on every occasion. This is how we stay on guard! And it is important that we continually hold each other up in prayer, too.

19 And please pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's secret plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. 20 I am in chains now, but I am still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So please pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

21 To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

23 May God's peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ fill you with love and faithfulness.

24 May God's grace be eternally upon all who sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ.