

Introduction to Ephesians

In 1 Tim 1,2 we learned. Forsake feuds and fusses instead focus on furthering the faith, First of all pray.

Psalm 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs. So let's laugh with Him about ourselves. The theme for the humor is "Forsake feuds and fusses".

The feud between the two clothing stores down the street finally came to an end. It ended in a tie. While discussing trigonometry, two mathematicians had a disagreement over the best method for measuring angles. It turned into a protracted argument.

Thought I won an argument with my wife about how to rearrange our furniture... But when I got home, the tables were turned!

In 1 Tim 1:3 Paul instructs Timothy to instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines. He is telling Timothy our people are spending energy on unprofitable questions and not on building their faith or bringing others to faith. Tell the church to forsake feuds and fusses instead focus on furthering the faith.

To make this happen Paul says, "First of all pray for all people". Requests, Prayers, Intercessions to get relationships right and thanksgivings for everything that God causes to work right and everything that seems to be working wrong but which God actually working for our good.

I asked, "How did Paul, Timothy and the church at Ephesus get to this point that needed Paul's direction?" As I thought about that, it hit me recently that Acts, Ephesians and 1 and 2 Timothy and the Gospel of John are all related to each other, no, they are intertwined with each other. They are one historical spiritual thread that runs through the church at Ephesus. Look at this thread of scripture:

- Acts 18-20 (The planting of the church at Ephesus 52 AD, by Paul, Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla. This includes the public burning of magic books, the silversmith's riot),
- Acts 20:17-38 (Paul's good bye to the church at Ephesus 56 AD),
- Ephesians (Paul's letter to the church to give it a written focus. 62 AD).
- 1 Timothy, (Paul's instruction to the maturing church that if getting off focus 64-66 AD).
- The apostle John was in Ephesus 90-100AD and wrote The Gospel of John and the three epistles by John.

After our study of Galatians on Monday nights finishes, we will begin Ephesians. So, I wanted to have us see how it fits with Acts that we have studied and 1 Timothy which I have spoken on. In preparation for studying Ephesians, I hope to give you a little outline of the book. I also want you to see the linkages between what Paul had taught the Ephesians and what he had to re-teach in 1 Timothy.

Ephesians – I want to show that what Paul wrote in Ephesians, he reminded them again in 1 Timothy.

Chapter 1 God's blessings in Jesus the Messiah

Simply listen:

Eph 1:3 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, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation

of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our wrongdoings, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He set forth in Him, 10 regarding His plan of the fullness of the times, to bring all things together in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

God had a plan. God designed an entire universe so we could flourish. God designed us, gave us a will and loved us so much that he provided a way for us to be redeemed. And this redemption is the fulfillment of His plan that brings all things together in Christ. All the disconnected pieces of life on this earth are brought together in Christ. Paul reminds Timothy of the redemption plan:

1 Tim 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. 16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

2 From dead to His workmanship

Eph 2:1 And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We were ignorant not understanding what death we were bringing to ourselves and others. Paul knew where he came from and reminded Timothy.

1 Tim 1:13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. 16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

Paul was God's workmanship, to be an example for those who would believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life.

2:11-3 The MYSTERY: From strangers and aliens to fellow citizens with the saints

2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the people of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

3:4 the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to mankind, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

These promises, which is now our scripture, the Bible, have become ours. Being Gentiles, we didn't have God's promises. But now in Christ we have a blank check we can write out for whatever we know our Father has for us. This is how we fight the fruitful fight.

1 Tim 1:18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, 19 keeping faith and a good conscience,

4 Instruction for Growth in Christ

You have been born again. You have God's promises, so walk in a way that honors your Father.

4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Paul instructs Timothy and the church to walk in a manner worthy.

1 Tim 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Paul has told the church how God gives that instruction:

4:11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ;

4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

God gives us teachers to help us grow up and escape the craftiness of deceitful scheming to escape the fusses and feuds.

1 Tim 1:3 instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, (Forsake fusses and feuds)

5 Imitate God

5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Just as Paul implored the Ephesians to imitate God, Jesus demonstrated through Paul the changed life as an example for the Ephesians.

1 Tim 1:16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

Paul explains what not to do:

5:3 But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness or foolish talk, or vulgar joking, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

He reiterates this to Timothy:

1 Tim 1:8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

6 King of the Real Battle

You have to serve somebody, devil or the Lord.

6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

6:9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Slaves and masters – realize there is one Master of all.

We are to appeal to the highest king. Neither governments nor legal documents will, in the end, get us ultimate justice. We have but one appeal, to our heavenly Father, who gives the ultimate justice.

1 Tim 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

The battle is not with what we see.

6:10-11 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

1 Tim 1:18 fight the good fight, holding faith and a good conscience.

6:19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel

Focus on furthering faith, First of all, pray for all people.

Let us pray for leaders.

Let us pray for those around who need to know the Lord.