

## Refuge City Church — August 6, 2023 “All for His glory” (Ephesians 1:1-6)

### **Introduction**

- The apostle Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus.
  - Some believe this letter was written around the same time as Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. [prison letters]
  - [Acts 19] Paul spent 2 years in Ephesus, preaching the gospel and establishing the Church; to which he would eventually leave Timothy to oversee [1 Timothy 1:3]
  - *Why Ephesus?*
    - An affluent society, but they had a problem with “the Way” [Acts 19:23]
    - Christianity and the Church was disrupting their way of life [idols & prosperity]
    - So much so that a riot breaks out in support their goddess Diana/Artemis.
      - The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was the chief center for this cult.
      - Considered one of the ‘seven wonders of the ancient world’.
- This letter, not written to respond to a particular situation, but serves as an encouragement...
  1. To remain faithful to the only gospel.
    - **Revelation 2:3-4**, “I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”
      - **1 Corinthians 13:1**, “[without] love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.”
  2. To promote unity in the body of Christ.
    - **Ephesians 4:3**, “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
      - **Ephesians 2:13**, “...[we have] been brought near by the blood of Christ.”
  3. To walk in love.
    - **Ephesians 5:1-2**, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
- Through this letter, we will develop a greater understanding of who we are, what we’re called to do, and how to live out the gospel, love, and purpose in our lives.

### **“He set us apart” [Verses 1-2]**

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

- “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus”
  - Right off the bat, if we remember who Paul was [Acts 9], the religious elitist, and the hatred he had for the gospel message of Jesus, we understand the transformative power of the love of God!
- “To the *saints* who are in Ephesus, and are faithful.”
  - That is who we are!
  - Holy and set apart by God for His purposes.
    - **Psalms 4:3**, “But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself...”

- **1 Peter 1:15**, “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,”
- **Jeremiah 15:11**, “The Lord said, “Surely I will set you free for purposes of good;”
- **1 Peter 2:5**, “you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
- **LAST WEEK:** We talked about the necessary progression to grow in our faith and understanding of who God is!
  - There are times when we need to be reminded of just that, and rest in Him.
- “*Grace and peace*”: We, set apart, live in God’s *unmerited favor* [given what we don’t deserve], by which we have peace to operate *undisturbed*, amidst a fallen world.

### “He chose us” [Verses 3-6]

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

- Have you thought at length why you come to church week after week, year after year? [why we worship, tithe/give, why we study the Bible, etc.]
  - It’s all to ‘bless’ God, praise Him for everything He’s given to us.
  - **QUOTE:** “We are not sitting here, and groaning, and crying, and fretting, and worrying, and questioning our own salvation. He has blessed us; and therefore we will bless him. If you think little of what God has done for you, you will do very little for him; but if you have a great notion of his great mercy to you, you will be greatly grateful to your gracious God.” [Charles Spurgeon]
- “*Every spiritual blessing*”: we need to limit, if not stop altogether, focusing on what we don’t have physically or monetarily, and reflect on what He’s given to us.
  - Anyone have a bad case of the “yeah buts”?
    - Isn’t God good? Yeah, but how come all this bad stuff has happened?
    - Look at everything He has done for us! Yeah, but I wish He would do this...
    - Consider what you have. Yeah, but I would really like it if He would give me...
  - **James 1:17**, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...”
  - His very Spirit in us, and everything we need to operate in this world!
    - We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, therefore every hardship, pain, and hang up we experience here has it’s roots in the spiritual realm.
    - So God has given us everything we need to live, and it’s meant to bless our life!
  - **2 Corinthians 8:9**, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”
- **QUESTION:** You know why God blesses us?
  - Because that was His plan from the beginning of time.
  - He chose us, and predestined us to be a part of His family before He created this world; even before God uttered the words “Let there be light.”

- **Romans 8:29**, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...”
- **Jeremiah 1:5**, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...”
- This is the message for *everyone*:
  - **Luke 9:23**, “And he said to *all*, “If *anyone* would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”
  - **2 Peter 3:9**, “[The Lord does] not wish that any should perish, but that *all* should reach repentance.”
- We are blessed to live in the sphere of God’s family because of the saving work of Jesus.
  - Steve Jobs, recalls an early story from his life:
    - “I was, I remember right here on the lawn, telling Lisa McMoyloar from across the street that I was adopted. And she said, ‘So does that mean your real parents didn’t want you?’ Ooooh, lightening bolts went off in my head. I remember running into the house, I think I was like crying, asking my parents. And they sat me down and said, ‘No, you don’t understand. We specifically picked you out.’ From then on, I realized that I was not just abandoned. I was chosen. I was special.”
    - Walter Isaacson [biographer] said, “I think that’s the key to understanding Steve Jobs.”
    - **John 14:18**, “I will not leave you as *orphans*; I will come to you...”
    - **John 14:23**, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our *home* with him.”
  - We live in Him, with Him, all because He chose us, blessed us with the Spirit of Himself in us, accomplished through the blood of Jesus.
  - **Romans 8:16-17**, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”
  - **[vs. 6]** “to the praise of his glorious grace...”

## **Conclusion**

- **Today:** God has blessed us by giving us everything we need to live the life He has given to us.
  - He chose us before the world was formed, to be adopted into His family, for His good purposes. [let that be our pre-eminent focus]
- **Next week:** We continue our look at the blessings God has given to us, through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the empowerment we have by the Holy Spirit in us.