

Text: Ephesians 1:15-23

Meaning: Paul referred to the church as a blessing

Big Idea: The Family of God is a blessing

Objective: Get in on the blessings of the Family of God

Theme: Reasons why Church is a blessing

CHURCH IS A BLESSING

Church is the gathering of God's people to worship, pray, study and apply God's Word, and to celebrate the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

THE CHURCH IS A BLESSING

Church is not a building, it is the people of God filled with the Spirit of God.

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.

THREE REASONS why the church is a blessing:

1. A PEOPLE TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

Paul says they were living lives he was grateful for. He couldn't say this about every church. His letter to the Galatians, for example, he begins with a scathing rebuke to them for not preaching the true gospel.

Here, Paul says "I'm GRATEFUL FOR YOU!"

Why was he grateful for them? BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH AND THEIR LOVE.

Faith and Love are the foundations of salvation. A Child of God will have faith and love if they have anything at all.

Faith – trust in Christ that He is who He claimed to be, He did what the witnesses say He did, and that I have what He says I have in Him.

Love – our response to His grace. Jesus said the greatest command is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That is salvation, and it is that love which is the indelible mark of Christ in your life.

When the Holy Spirit comes to live in us at salvation he births in our heart a deep love for the people of God. In the Spirit God brings together people from all different walks of life, different races, different nationalities, differing financial means, and different personalities and political stances, into one big loving family called the Church.

2. A FAMILY TO PRAY FOR

Keep in mind Paul is in a Roman jail cell. He can't teach any Bible studies. Can't preach any sermons to the church at Ephesus. He can't lead any ministry programs or make any church decisions. BUT WHAT HE CAN DO IS PRAY EARNESTLY AND FERVENTLY FOR THEM.

What Paul came to realize through His imprisonment is that THE GREATEST THING WE DO FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THE CHURCH IS PRAY FOR EACH OTHER!

And effective prayer is not just GOD BLESS THEM prayers. He goes into detail here about how he was praying for them.

VERSE 17 – the prayer of intercession

VERSES 18-19 – the explanation of what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

It is the Holy Spirit of God who gives us wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. Jesus told the disciples it was better that He go away so the Helper, the Holy Spirit, could come to live in them. He said the Spirit of truth will guide us into all truth. Without submission to and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit we cannot fully understand the truth of God's Word.

Knowledge of God

Then Paul goes into an explanation of the knowledge of God.

Hope – Our hope is in the finished work of Christ and the promise of His coming Kingdom. This hope is steadfast and sure and serves as the very anchor of our soul. The reason so many people are tossed to and fro by the winds of doctrine and the waves of circumstance is simply because their HOPE IS NOT IN CHRIST! We must find our complete identity and place our complete trust in Christ. He is OUR HOPE!

Riches – So many people live poor Christian lives, and I'm not talking about financial poverty. I'm talking about spiritual poverty. So many Christians act as if they don't have the resources to obey God. In Christ we have an endless supply of wisdom, peace, healing, provision, and grace. Whatever God calls you to, and whoever God calls you to do it with, and whatever circumstances he calls you to face, you have everything you need in Christ to CONQUER!

IF GOD CALLS YOU TO IT HE WILL SEE YOU THROUGH IT!

Power – Paul prayed that they would know the IMMEASURABLE GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER TOWARD US. POWER!

CHILD OF GOD – SIN, DEATH, HELL, AND THE DEVIL HIMSELF HAVE BEEN DEFEATED – THEREFORE WE ARE NOT! We have been endowed with power from on high! Believe that today! Claim that today!

You are not the sum total of your mistakes! You are not the summary of what others say about you!

Some people are quick to tell you what they CAN'T DO! Beloved, DON'T TELL MAN WHAT YOU CAN'T DO – TELL MAN OF WHAT GOD CAN DO!

3. A SAVIOR TO LIVE FOR

Why do we gather every Sunday to worship? Why do we gather for Bible study both at the building and in homes throughout the week? Why do we put our money and resources together to bless people in our city? Why do we mobilize together to serve others and share Christ?

BECAUSE WE SERVE A RISEN SAVIOR NAMED JESUS! IT'S ALL ABOUT OUR KING JESUS!

Triune God – Father of Glory, Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit

Risen Christ – raised from the dead

Mediator – Seated at the Right Hand interceding for us

Authority – not just above, he is FAR ABOVE all authority

Highest Name – Name is our strong tower

Head and Feet – He is head over the church and all things are under His feet. That means whatever is over my head is under His feet!

Fills all in all – The Church is like a balloon. It's useless without the breath of God. The only way the church can rise to become what God wants her to be is to be filled with the knowledge of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

The question is not IS THE CHURCH FULL OF PEOPLE? The question is are the PEOPLE FULL OF THE SPIRIT?

So, is the church simply filled with people or are we filled with the Spirit?