

Knowing Who You Are Ephesians 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The epistle to the Ephesians is one of the greatest theological and practical works in the Bible.

It is simple in its language but majestic in its themes. It describes to us the multiple blessings that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first half of the book takes us the enumeration of these blessings in some of the longest sentences in the New Testament.

The sentence gives the complete thought but they are long for the thought is a divinely spiritual one that many believers never come to appreciate for one reason or another.

The later half of the book gives us various practical instructions that prove just as valuable today as they did 2000 years ago.

This book was not written to for the lazy reader but for the believer who desires to understand the great blessings that God the Father has reserved for them in Jesus Christ.

We begin with the salutation of the book today. It is important to understand who wrote the book and the people to whom he was writing.

But we must remind everyone that this letter is written to all believers everywhere.

Paul had spent over three years at Ephesus during his missionary travels. He had established one of the strongest and most spiritual churches of that day.

From the second chapter of Revelation we find that some 30 to 40 years later, the church was strong and secure but they had lost their first love. They should have revisited this letter of Paul. For nothing will do more to renew our love for the Lord and one another as this epistle.

I. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God

A. Paul

1. He was born in the free city of Tarsus.
2. He was born a Jew, his father was a Pharisee.
3. He was educated in Roman, Greek and Jewish cultures.
4. He was sent to Jerusalem to study under the able guidance of Gamaliel.
5. He had aspired for leadership positions among the Pharisees.
6. He persecuted the church even to Damascus.

B. An apostle.

1. The word has a simple meaning, one sent with a message, or one given a commission to deliver a message.
2. Jesus had named 12 men among the disciples apostles after praying all night long. Luke 6:12 Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:
3. Paul was an apostle chosen “out of due time” 1 Cor 15:8
4. Having the office of an apostle meant special privileges and responsibilities.
5. There are no apostles today in the sense that Paul and Peter were, else the canon of scripture would still be open and unfinished.

C. Of Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus was the one who had sent Paul.
2. It was the message of Jesus Christ that Paul carried.
3. It was only to Jesus Christ that Paul would ultimately give an account.

D. By the will of God.

1. Paul knew that his calling and position was by the will of God.
2. The will of God or His purpose is very important in the themes of this epistle.
3. If Paul’s place had been according to Paul’s will then he would have been a murderer, a blasphemer, a persecutor of the saints and the churches of God.
4. Indeed, if it had not been for God’s sovereign and efficacious will, Paul would not only not have been an apostle, he would not even have been a Christian. Left to himself apart from the grace of God, he fought against God and attempted to destroy his church. James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians
5. Paul had no claim on God for any thing that he had done.
6. He had abandoned his previous life and counted it but garbage to gain Christ.
7. As an *apostolos*, one sent, Paul's authority was not self-generated, but was ordained of God. Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ.
8. The will of God is an important theme in Ephesians, appearing more frequently here than in any other letter. The concern is not about Christians

finding the will of God; rather, the emphasis is on God's purpose with his actions for humanity. The point here is that Paul was an apostle because God wanted him to be. NIV Application Commentary, The – Ephesians: From biblical text...to contemporary life.

II. To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus

A. To the saints

1. The word means holy one.
2. In pagan religion the word was used for anyone or anything dedicated or consecrated to one of the pagan gods.
3. The thousand of temple prostitutes were dedicated to the goddess Diana.
4. The word among Christians was used to explain the position of Christians to God.
5. They were dedicated or consecrated to God.
6. Paul shows that "saints" refers to sanctification in the wider sense. "Saints" includes all that makes us Christians. "Believers" adds what is most essential in this sainthood, namely faith. Lenski New Testament Commentary
7. God had done this to and for them when they became believers.
8. Romans 3:21-22 (NKJV) 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;
9. From that point on they belonged to the God of heaven.
10. A Christian is set apart when God reaches down through the person and power of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians:
11. This has to do with our position in Christ.
 - a. This is who we are, saints, not because of what we do but because of what God has done in us.
 - b. We are holy in His sight and nothing can change that.
 - c. We have been declared righteous on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ
 - d. 1 Corinthians 1:30 (NKJV) 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--

- e. Philippians 3:9 (NKJV) 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;
- f. What God starts He finishes.
- g. This is eternal security.

B. Who are in Ephesus

- 1. Some copies of this letter are found without the designee.
- 2. It is believed by many that this as a general letter to the churches of Asia Minor.

C. And faithful in Christ Jesus

- 1. When a person acts in faith to receive Christ, God acts in grace to give that person Christ's own righteousness. It is Christ's perfect righteousness—not a person's own character or accomplishments, no matter how great they may seem in men's eyes—that establishes every believer as one of God's saints through saving faith. MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians.
- 2. The word has a dual meaning, standing for those who have believed and also for those who are continuing in the faith of faithful.
- 3. Faithfulness on the part of the believer is what we call perseverance.
- 4. Jesus said in Mt 24:13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.
- 5. This has to do with our standing.
 - a. Every true believer will continue to the end “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”
Philippians 2:13
 - b. Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:
 - c. 1John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.
- 6. **In** occurs about 90 times. It stresses the truth of the believer's union with Christ in death, resurrection, ascension and present position. The fact of the believer's 'position in Christ' permeates the entire thought of the epistle. The New Unger's Bible Handbook.

III. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Grace to you.

1. It is also an acknowledgment of the divine grace in which we stand and which has made us mutual members of Christ's Body and of God's divine family. MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians.
2. This is a normal greeting for Paul's letters.
3. It bring to remembrance the blessing of grace, God's unmerited favor that has been exercised by God toward us in order to bring us from sinners to saints.

B. And peace.

C. From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. All that we are and all that we will ever be is due to God's grace toward us.
 2. We were sinners and rebels against God.
 3. But now we are saints and faithful in Christ Jesus.
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His primary concern was to emphasize that just as he had been appointed by God to be an apostle, they too had been separated to God (separation is the key idea in the word "holy"). Paul's addressees were holy because God had set them apart to be his people. The focus is entirely on God's action and the reference is to God's saving work. NIV Application Commentary, The – Ephesians: From biblical text...to contemporary life.

Paul is not merely saying these people believed in Christ; rather, they were in Christ positionally. NIV Application Commentary, The – Ephesians: From biblical text...to contemporary life.