

Contra Mundum Saints & Salutations

Ephesians 1:1-2
January 11, 2015

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. **-Ephesians 1:1-2**

I. THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

- Established by Paul, trained by Priscilla and Aquila, led by Timothy (Acts 18:18-20; Acts 19; 1 Tim. 1:3).
- There is a community of believers in Ephesus - Paul calls them “saints.” The gospel has spread to the surrounding countryside (vs. 1; Acts 19:8-10; Col. 1:7-8; 4:15; Philemon 1:2).

II. MAIN THEMES IN EPHESIANS

- * Life “in Christ” (1:3; phrase used 34 times in Ephesians)
 - * The heavenly places (1:3, 20; 2:6; 6:12)
 - * Unity in the body of Christ (Eph. 4)
 - * The work of the Father, Son, and Spirit (Trinity)
 - * Mystery now made known (1:9; 3:3-9; 5:32; 6:19)
 - * The grace of God (1:7; 2:5; 2:8; 3:2; 3:8)
1. Indicatives: The doctrine of the church (Eph. 1-3).
 2. Imperatives: The duty of the church (Eph. 4-6).

III. THE CALL TO PERSEVERE

- The church in Ephesus had a great start. Its early leadership were heavy hitters, and yet the church, and the believers there, still struggled (1 Tim. 1:3-7; Rev. 2:1-7).
- The Christian walk is almost always a marathon - rarely a sprint. Good starts don’t always mean good finishes (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 3:14; Rev. 2:1-7).

KNOW: The church in Ephesus was planted by Paul and led by Timothy. Even so, it struggled, but there were “saints” there, and Paul had much to teach them from a distance via letter about their struggle against the prevailing pattern of the world and for their life in Christ.

DO: Keep up the fervency of your faith.

Suggested Reading:

Truth Matters, by Andreas Kostenberger, Darrell Bock, Josh Chatraw

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Ephesians 1:1-2

1. Paul, the author of Ephesians, claims to be “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” What does he mean by that?
2. Paul, in Ephesians and elsewhere (e.g. Phil. 1, Col. 1), calls believers “saints.” What is a saint, and do you feel like one?
3. What does it mean to be faithful to God/Jesus? We know he promises to always be faithful to us (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5); how do we reciprocate that?
4. The church in Ephesus suffered through persecution (Rev. 2:2). Many remained faithful, some apparently did not. In what ways are persecutions/toil/difficulties helpful to our walk with Christ, and in what ways are they detrimental? Why does God allow them to take place?
5. Read Revelation 2:1-7. The church in Ephesus had abandoned its “first love.” What can we do, individually and as a church, to maintain our first love?