

**A PERSONAL  
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY  
EPHESIANS  
BY SHARON CRAVENS**

### Jim's Summary of Chapter 1

The First Chapter of Ephesians is full of encouragement as to our possessions we have been given by the God of the universe. In faith we read and believe this book, and God must know that at times our mind gets discouraged as we live in a world that has the Prince of Power lurking and sneaking skepticism into our thought process through his deceptive and beguiling efforts. As the Psalmist tells us, we must have the Word to wash and cleanse our mind to deal with this daily assault.

This is definitely a pep rally, and God makes us step back and appreciate what He has given us. In the process He reminds us that He planned all this from the beginning, and the emphasis on being elect/predestinated reminds us very strongly that it is absolutely nothing that we did to earn these tremendous riches. It was such a strong plan we couldn't even say that we were born or sneaked into it through the masses, because He had to go to the extra intention of adopting us. Jesus is His "natural son"; we are His adopted ones by intention; and as in Roman culture, the adopted sons had all the rights and privileges of the natural son. The chapter goes on to tell us that God is bringing all promises, rights and privileges together into one as we may doubt that we have all these privileges at present. He tells us that His Spirit is a down payment to assure us that this is all true.

Sharon, when I live such a pathetic life for Christ sometimes, the devil doesn't even have to cause me to doubt; I can figure out my utter depravity all on my own. That makes this "grace" all the more unbelievable. I will believe it anyway because the Spirit does tell me it is right. I pray that I will better follow the purpose for which God did all this....to be holy and perfect so that tremendous praise will reflect back to the Father.

He did tell us why He did all these things in this chapter. Because He wanted to! Hey, it was His pleasure to do it this way.

In this chapter I think we are being taught that we should have nothing to say about his timing on things, because he planned all this and there is nothing we can do to change it. The more we bemoan why or the timing of His acts, we are not praying "Thy will be done."

My dad was particularly impressive to me about his reaction to disappointments. Many Christians react to things badly, and after prayer and time they get it all straight. Dad could be told about a death or anything that was negative and had the ability to smile and immediately realize there was nothing he could do about it; he would know God had done or allowed this happening.

I read something interesting when studying this chapter. In the previous letters Paul spoke of the saints as the body of Christ and emphasized the coordination the saints should have being the body. In Ephesians and Colossians when he speaks of the saints as the body, he speaks of the body getting its very sustenance from the head--which is Christ. This is where this chapter ends up I

think. Telling us that saints must be focused on Christ for every breath and thought in life. He points to the cross as the core of the saint's existence. Again, my Dad's life verse was Galatians 6:14, which says: But **God forbid that I should glory**, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

### Sharon's verse-by-verse breakdown

#### **Eph. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:**

Paul's letter to the Colossians starts off the very same way. Since I have already done that portion of Colossians, I will quote from that journal.

"Paul, an apostle..." - Paul starts out six books in similar fashion (2Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1&2 Timothy)—with a statement to the fact that he is an apostle according to the will or commandment of God. This is an emphasis to the fact that his Damascus Road experience was the turning point in his life. Until that time he was a member of Israel's ruling elite and out to destroy the spread of the gospel of Christ. I think this is a wonderful example of God's supernatural intervention in a man's life to accomplish His will. Paul could have rejected the whole experience, but he chose to embrace the truth when it was revealed to him so powerfully. There is nothing in the narrative (Acts 9) indicating that he was forced against his will. In fact, as soon as Jesus identified Himself to Paul as the One he was persecuting, Paul became immediately submissive. He immediately recognized the truth and wanted to serve God in truth. This is also a statement of Paul's authority as established by God to declare His truth.

This letter is addressed to the body of believers at Ephesus, but seems also to be meant for the wider body of believers as a whole. I also got an impression that he could be differentiating between the Ephesian church as a whole and those in the church who were "the faithful in Christ Jesus." Although it shouldn't be the case, I think that is a realistic observation on most church congregations. There are those who identify with the body and attend and others who identify with the body and serve as well as those who through their faith are positioned "in Christ," and those whose profession of faith is just that—profession without possession.

#### **Eph. 1:2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Again, I am going to borrow from my journal on Colossians for this statement.

"grace...and peace..." - This blessing from Paul is used in every one of his epistles. I know I have noted several times throughout my journals that you can't experience the peace of God without first experiencing His grace. It is by His grace that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8), and it is only in Christ that we can find peace. Peace is a work of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22), and we don't benefit from the presence of the Spirit in our lives until we are "in Christ."

Eph. 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Eph. 1:13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,  
Eph. 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

And a little different emphasis from the journal on Romans.

It's worth repeating again, that you can't experience the peace of God without first experiencing His grace. It's by grace we are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8). The word for "peace" includes the thought "set at one again." I love that expression. Through our salvation we become spiritually reconnected in fellowship to the Creator as was intended from the beginning. Peace is also a reflection of the temperament of our spirit. My favorite verse is Isaiah 26:3 (see journal for Isaiah); the key point in that verse is the promise of peace for the person "whose mind is stayed on Thee." We need to learn to keep our focus on Jesus and not on the things/trials/temptations of the world. We should "trust" that God is going to do/allow what is best in our lives.

Is. 26:3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

**Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

As Paul thinks about the grace and peace that are ours in God through Christ, he can't help but break out with words of praise. Not only is grace and peace ours for the taking, we are blessed with "all spiritual blessings" in Christ. As stated above, these blessings come to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and we don't benefit from His presence in our lives until we are "in Christ." I think it is important to note that it is "spiritual" blessings that we possess from the moment we are saved—not material blessings (as so many "prosperity preachers" would lead one to believe today). In "heaven"--the focus is on spiritual treasure, not physical. God often chooses to bless us physically and materially as well as spiritually, but that is not the emphasis here. The inheritance we receive "in Christ" and have access to now is spiritual in nature.

**Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

Paul goes on to tell us that these blessings are ours "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." This is an amazing truth that speaks to the truth of our amazing God. I don't know why people try to isolate this truth from the rest of scripture. They try to make God contradict Himself and say that He has chosen some to salvation and others to damnation. Scripture is so clear that He is not willing that any should perish. Paul made the truth very clear in his letter to the Romans.

**Rom. 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

To *foreknow* means to know beforehand. *Predestinate* is to “limit in advance, determine before.” Because He is God, He knew everything that ever would happen before He ever created one thing. (That truth alone poses many questions that I can’t begin to discuss.) The fact is that He knew in advance every person’s response to Him—whether it would be in faith and obedience or rejection and disobedience. Those who fell into the category of faith and obedience were predestined to be likened to His Son Jesus.

We are chosen through His foreknowledge, and God knew each person that would come to Him in faith before He ever created the world. In my opinion, that is the only way there is no contradiction. It in no way lessens God’s authority; it only increases my awe of Who He Is. Scripture is very clear that God has sovereignly decided to give man the ability to make the choice whether to follow Him in faith and obedience or not. Ezekiel is very clear in that regard.

**Ezek. 18:32** For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

**Ezek. 33:11** Say unto them, *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

And from my journal on Ezekiel for this verse: God takes no pleasure in the death of wicked people. He created man for fellowship with Him, to bring Him honor and glory. He is not, however, going to force man into a relationship with Him. Love can’t be coerced; it can only be freely given. I believe that is why God sovereignly chose to allow man freedom of choice.

Those who are “chosen” are to live holy (pure, moral) lives without blame (unblemished, faultless). This is not an empty or unfair expectation. God can rightly expect this from us because He has given us His Holy Spirit to empower us. Again, we don’t become programmed robots once we become His children. It is our choice to submit and obey. He has equipped us for victory. If we experience defeat, it is because we have not chosen to avail ourselves of His provision.

“before Him” – This is a reference to the fact that our lives are open books to Him. He keeps watch over His own. He doesn’t take us into His family and then abandon us to our own devices. He is ever present and ready to respond to our cries for help, to chastise as necessary, and to make sure that we are given opportunities to grow spiritually. I think that every believer that grabs on to this one truth will find himself growing and more victorious than ever before in his walk with the Lord.

“in love” – This is the most important character trait we can possess in the eyes of God. It should also be the most powerful motivating force in our life. I am involved in a correspondence study of 1Corinthians and just happen to have

finished the first half of chapter 13. The Holy Spirit makes it very clear through the apostle that unless our actions are motivated by and done in love, they will profit us nothing in the eyes of God.

1Cor. 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

The word for *love* in this verse is the same word translated “charity” in 1Corinthians 13. I think an excerpt from that study would be appropriate here.

“charity” = agape = love, i.e. affection or benevolence..... from a root that states, “embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety”

In today’s vernacular the word love has a broad spectrum of application. The Greek language has different words to express different types of love. The type of love being described in this chapter is a matter of the mind more than the heart. That is why it is often referenced as “unconditional” love. It’s a love based on the choice of the person expressing that love to love as a matter of “principle, duty and propriety.” As believers, we have been commanded by the Lord to love one another.

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

Mark 12:31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

The wellspring of that love as expressed by the believer to others finds its roots in the love that God has for us. His love toward us is unconditional, and our love for each other should be unconditional. The fact that God commands us to love tells us that it is based on a decision to obey Him or not. He would not command us to do something outside our ability to obey. When Jesus reiterated this command to His disciples, He identified it as a “new commandment.”

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

What made it new? It’s new because it is a command rooted in the life example of Jesus--“as I have loved you.” His example was clear in expressing an unconditional love for each of His disciples. In fact, His love, a love of choice, led Him to lay down His life to die on the cross as the sacrifice for the sin of all mankind. If God’s love for us were dependent on our lovableness (which is how we usually make connection to loving), we would be hopelessly lost.

**Eph. 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,**

All of us who have accepted Christ in faith as Lord and Savior have been set apart as God’s children. Our position in the family is secured through adoption, a loving choice on the part of our Creator. Jesus Christ is the only natural born

son of God in the flesh. The Greek for the word “by” in the phrase “by Jesus Christ” states “the channel of an act; through....” In other words, it is only through the sacrificial provision of Jesus through His obedient death on the cross that we are privileged to become part of God’s family. Some of these sentences are long, and I had to go back to the beginning of verse three to confirm that “to himself” referenced the Father. It is God the Father that is identified as the authority figure in the Trinity. Son and Spirit act according to His will, His purposes, according to scripture. (And still they are One. No I don’t understand it, but I do accept it as truth by faith.)

Is. 14:24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and **as I have purposed**, so shall it stand:

Is. 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but **it shall accomplish that which I please**, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Matt. 18:14 Even so **it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven**, that one of these little ones should perish.

Matt. 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father**, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless **not as I will, but as thou wilt**.

Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done**, as in heaven, so in earth.

John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because **I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father** which hath sent me.

John 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for **my Father is greater than I**.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

John 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth*; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, **and shall be in you**.

Rev. 1:18 **I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore**, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Rev. 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter....

Rev. 2:7 He that hath an ear, **let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches**;

John 10:30 **I and my Father are one**.

Eph. 1:6 **To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved**.

Why has God chosen to bless us so amazingly? “To the praise of the glory of His grace.” It is through grace, an act of His love that we don’t deserve, that God chose to accept us as His children through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus, “the

beloved." I think it is worth repeating the old acronym for grace—God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

1John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

**Eph. 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;**

"In whom" = Jesus

"we have redemption" = Webster uses five words to define redemption-- repurchase; ransom; release; rescue; deliverance.

- Repurchase - We were created to be God's children. Through Adam we sold ourselves into the slavery of sin under the father of sin—Satan. God has bought us back so to speak.
- Ransom – We had been taken prisoner or captive by Satan when we yielded to his temptation. God paid our ransom through the sacrifice of His Son to provide us a way out of that bondage.
- Release – Our redemption has released us from the bondage of sin and made us new creations in Christ.
- Rescue – As sinners, those who were in rebellion against God, we were bound for eternal hell. Through faith in the redemptive work of Christ on our behalf we have been rescued from that destiny and can now look forward to eternity in heaven.
- Deliverance – Not only have we been rescued from damnation for eternity and released from the bondage of sin, we have been empowered to achieve victory over the flesh and the attack of the enemy. We have absolutely no restraints to living a victorious life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

How is this redemption made possible? Through the shed blood of the pure and innocent Son of God, the man Jesus. From the very beginning God has taught us that provision for sin involves the sacrifice of innocent blood as evidenced when He provided animal skins as coverings for Adam and Eve to cover them after their rebellion. Until the coming of Jesus, forgiveness through sacrifice had to be sought on a continual basis. The sacrifice of Jesus made a once-for-all provision for man's sin based simply upon his asking in repentance and faith.

"according to the riches of His grace" – Riches speak of great treasure. The great treasure of the Father is embodied in His Son Jesus. There was nothing more valuable or precious that He could have sacrificed to provide for us in His love. In fact, nothing else would have satisfied The Righteous Judge.

**Eph. 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;**

"Wherein" = His grace

God's grace is provided for us in abundance; in fact, the Greek references superabundance or abundance far in excess of what is needed. When I tie that to my thoughts in the previous verse, it is quite thought-provoking. Nothing less than Jesus would have satisfied the requirements of righteousness, yet the only acceptable sacrifice far exceeded the necessary provision. Through Him we have

received the empowerment and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. In Christ we now have access to “all” wisdom and prudence. *Wisdom* is the ability to make use of knowledge with discernment and judgment. The Greek for *prudence* makes reference to intellectual or moral insight, the power of acute observation and deduction. I decided to see if I could find something on the internet that would add to my understanding and found two quotes that I liked.

<http://www.worldmagblog.com/blog/archives/001983.html>

“Prudence is the practical wisdom to choose the best means to a good end and wisdom to do the right thing and to do the right thing well (from Biblical Christian Ethics, David Jones, Covenant Theological Seminary).”

[http://cbc-kjv.org/AS%20Sermons/wisdom\\_charity\\_principle\\_things.htm](http://cbc-kjv.org/AS%20Sermons/wisdom_charity_principle_things.htm)

“Prudence is the exercise of sound judgment in avoiding evils; wisdom is the exercise of sound judgment either in avoiding evils or attempting good. Prudence then is a species, of which wisdom is the genus.”

In other words, based on God’s provision for us “in Christ,” we have no excuse for making bad decisions or falling for the deceit of the enemy.

**Eph. 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:**

I think the wording of the CJB gives a little clearer understanding on this verse.

“...he has made known to us his secret plan, which by his own will he designed beforehand in connection with the Messiah....”

Before the coming of Christ the provision God made for the redemption of mankind was a mystery. This included the truth that this provision had been determined before our creation. This also included the truth that the whole plan is part of “His will.” Knowing everything before ever creating a thing, it was still the Father’s will to create and provide for restoration in fellowship for His rebellious creation. No, I don’t begin to understand it.

**Eph. 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:**

The wording of the NLT reads a little easier:

And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

The Greek for *dispensation* speaks of administration and stewardship. My question becomes, “Whose administration and stewardship?” Man was given administrative/stewardship responsibilities at the time of his creation. Though he failed miserably when he rebelled against God in the garden, that responsibility was never rescinded. It was, however, made much more difficult by the curse that resulted from his sin.

“the fullness of times” – This phrase reminds me of God’s description in Genesis 15 of the Amorites—“for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” God was explaining to Abraham that his descendants would not be allowed to enter the “promised land” until the Amorites had reached the point recognized by God as

the point of no return so to speak. (1/11) It occurred to me as I read through this section again that maybe this described the point at which not even one more Amorite alive would choose to acknowledge the one true God of heaven and earth.

God is very clear that His longsuffering is due to His desire that all men come to repentance.

2Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

I think verse 10 is reference to the time at the end of the millennium when the wicked will be condemned for eternity and everything in heaven and earth will be unified "in Christ."

"he might gather together...in Christ" – I got a picture in my mind of someone gathering together his collection of most treasured possessions that all find their value through their connection with one main treasure—His precious Son.

**Eph. 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:**

**Eph. 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**

"In whom" = Christ

"obtained an inheritance" = to assign (a privilege)

"predestinated" = predetermined (by His foreknowledge, Rom. 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate....)

The key truth in this verse is that God is sovereign. Everything in creation is working out according to His sovereign purposes according to His choice, desire and pleasure. These are very hard truths to understand in light of many truths taught in scripture. I don't have to totally understand it to believe it. God chose to create us to enjoy a relationship of love and fellowship. Because love cannot be forced and must be freely given, God sovereignly decided to give man a will of his own. With that choice came the ability to love and obey God or reject Him. God is not willing that any should perish, but He will not go out of character as the "God of love" to force someone into a relationship they do not desire. He is loving, persistent and patient in His overtures to us, but He allows us to make our own choice. He purposed not to intervene in spite of His foreknowledge that many would reject Him. Love can't be understood without a reference to hate. Good can't be understood without reference to evil. God is holy and righteous and loving, and we have no right to question His sovereignty in these choices. We need to accept the truth that His ways and thoughts are far beyond our ability to understand. We should just be filled with love and praise for the One who loves us so unconditionally and completely.

*Isaiah 55:8–9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

“we....who first trusted in Christ” – This would be a reference to the birth of the church at Pentecost and in the early years after Christ ascended. The church at that time was composed of primarily Jewish believers. It is primarily through the ministry of Paul that the gospel began to be spread throughout the Gentile world.

**Eph. 1:13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,**

**Eph. 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**

“In whom ye also trusted” = Christ

The Ephesian Gentiles responded to the gospel in faith after hearing it. Faith comes by hearing the word of God.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Their faith resulted in salvation just as surely as had the faith of Jewish believers. The proof—They were sealed by the Holy Spirit that had been promised by Jesus.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The Greek for *sealed* states, “to stamp for security or preservation.” Again, the fact that I am sealed with the Holy Spirit guarantees the security of my salvation. God (or His Spirit) never fails in what He does. That seal is a pledge of more to come, a divine assurance of good. The Greek for *earnest* reinforces that truth; it is defined as something “given in advance as security for the rest.” What is He an advance on? The eternal inheritance that we will receive as children of God. We will take full possession of that inheritance when we receive our glorified bodies. This inheritance was bought for us at a price far beyond our ability to pay. It was freely provided for us through a loving Father and the loving obedience of His Son.

1Cor. 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Everything He has done on our behalf as our Creator, Lord and Savior is cause for great praise and declares His glory. I have never really heard God’s glory defined to my satisfaction. I think this is because His glory is a reflection of Who

He Is, and we will not really begin to understand that truth until we are in His presence. The fact that He lovingly provided salvation for an unloving and unlovable creation is a picture of Who He Is as loving, merciful, gracious, and forgiving. But that is only part of Who He Is.

(6/09) How do we know we are sealed with the Spirit? Through the fruit of the Spirit produced in our life.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

**Eph. 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,**

**Eph. 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;**

"Wherefore" – Because the salvation of men gives praise to the glory of God...

Paul cannot contain his praise and thankfulness to know that the Ephesians had placed their faith in Jesus as Lord and had evidenced that faith by showing their love for other believers.

John 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

He assures the Ephesian believers that he remembers them in prayer, and the next few verses tell how he prays for them. That is something that I am just learning to do more often, especially with written communication. I think it is important for people to know that we are specific in our prayers for them, and that our greatest concern is for their spiritual needs.

**Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:**

**Eph. 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,**

**Eph. 1:19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,**

**Eph. 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,**

This sentence seems never-ending, but I wanted to group the verses that focused on Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. He prayed that:

- God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him – This could be read two ways: 1) as a prayer for wisdom and a prayer for revelation... or 2) as a prayer for wisdom and revelation... that go hand-in-hand. I understand it to be as a unit. Worldly wisdom and knowledge are available for all to aspire to. Spiritual wisdom in applying Spirit-revealed knowledge of Christ is a pursuit to which only Christians can aspire. [Christian = One who publicly acknowledges faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior and gives

evidence of their profession.] Knowledge of Christ is knowledge of His Word, and its truth is ministered to the believer through the Holy Spirit.

John 16:13-14 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

1Cor. 2:12-14 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God...which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- Their eyes of understanding be enlightened – The Greek for *enlightened* states, “to shed rays...illuminate...make to see.” In other words, he is praying for the eyes of their mind, their spiritual understanding.
- They know the hope of His calling – Paul defines this hope in his letters to the Romans and the Corinthians.  
Rom. 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

1Cor. 15:19-22 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

2Cor. 5:1-2 For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: We have been chosen to be glorified; we will be clothed with a new body in holiness like Jesus for eternity to enjoy fellowship with Him forever. The hope of the Christian is a confident expectation.

- They know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints – We have an inheritance because we have been made joint-heirs in Christ.  
Rom. 8:16-17 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of

God, and **joint-heirs with Christ**; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

“Joint-heirs” means that we share in possession of what He possesses.

What does He possess?

John 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given **all things** into his hand.

Rom. 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us **all things**?

Rev. 21:7 **He that overcometh shall inherit all things**; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

- They know the exceeding greatness of his power to those who believe – What is the “exceeding greatness” of God’s power? It is beyond what we can imagine. There is no limit to His power and authority. Almighty God is ready to exert His authority and power on behalf of each one of His children. Nothing can touch us without His permission. We may not always understand “why” He allows things in our lives that seem hurtful and evil, but we can always know that He is in control and is working things for good. We will not be disappointed. We will only be grateful and thankful for the privilege that is ours to be His children and the opportunities He has given us to declare our love for and trust in Him.

1Pet. 1:3-7 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

To whom did Paul make this prayer? To “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.” The only One able to answer such a prayer since He is the source of every good thing.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

What was the supreme example of His power? The raising of His Son Jesus Christ from the dead and establishing Him in power and authority at His right hand in heaven.

**Eph. 1:21** Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

The Father has positioned Jesus in power and authority over every created entity—the ones we know about and the ones we don’t, the ones we see and the

ones we can't. I'm sure that creation embraces far more than we understand. I am truly amazed to know that we are the focus of His love in the creation. I thoroughly identify with the heart of the Psalmist: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4)

I think it is interesting to note that God places an importance on names. The first thing he had Adam do was name the animals (Genesis 2:19-20). He declares that every star has a name, and He knows each one (Isaiah 40:26). Every overcomer (believer) is promised a new name for eternity (Revelation 2:17). God often changed the name of His servants to signify them as such. He is jealous for the honor of His own name.

Lev. 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, **neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.**

Is. 48:9-11 **For my name's sake** will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: **for how should my name be polluted?** and I will not give my glory unto another.

Ezek. 20:14 But **I wrought for my name's sake**, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.

Mal. 2:2 **If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name**, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart.

Eph. 1:22 **And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,**

Eph. 1:23 **Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

The fact that Jesus was given authority over ALL things seems to be all-inclusive. In these verses, however, Paul emphasizes that Christ is the head of the church, which he describes as "His body." Everything about creation revolves around God's purposes for mankind. The angels were created first, but they were created to be ministering spirits.

Heb. 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

They aren't given the privilege of becoming "joint-heirs" with The Son. The universe seems vast beyond comprehension, yet we are the focus of that creation. It is meant to declare God to us. All the laws of science affirm that everything has been designed to support earth and its inhabitants. We have been set apart from the rest of creation in that we are made "in the image of God."

Gen. 1:26 **And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:** and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Gen. 1:27 **So God created man in his *own* image**, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

“the fulness of him that filleth all in all” – The NLT expresses the more obvious understanding:

And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence.

The Complete Jewish Bible gave a more thought-provoking translation.

“...which is his body, the full expression of him who fills all creation.”

I think both are true. There is no place in creation that does not experience the continual presence of God. The Psalmist expressed it this way.

Psa. 139:7-12 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.

Every member of the true church is indwelt by the Holy Spirit—not different Holy Spirits or parts of the Holy Spirit, but in His fullness. Through the Spirit we have been empowered to act without restraint in showing forth the character of God in our lives. We have been gifted according to His purposes and are without lack of anything we need to accomplish those purposes. (This takes me back to verse 3.) We are given life and power and authority in Jesus Christ who indwells us through His Spirit. Why can we not understand that and live in total victory all the time? The flesh is our excuse, but in reality we have no excuse. We possess everything we need “in Christ”—not in part, but in full. It boils down to lack of faith and/or a rebellious spirit, and I speak this to my shame. There is a song that expresses my heart in this area—“Even the wind and the waves obey; why can’t I?”