

Letter to the Ephesians

There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to
one hope when you were called;
one Lord,
one faith,
one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is over all and through all and in all.
Ephesians 4:4-6



*"It's fine, just use an old picture of us,
I'm sure we look the same". - Sam (probably)*

Paul cannot find enough descriptive words to characterize God's awesome power. He calls it incredibly great and links nearly every power-denoting term in the Greek language to describe it (1:19–20). The divine power is possibly the object of the four dimensional terms—breadth, length, height, and depth—in 3:18. The most illustrious display of his power, of course, was in raising Jesus from the dead and exalting him to his right hand, where he presently reigns as “head over everything” (1:20–23).

[The Ephesians] also needed to know that two of the defining characteristics of God were his love and holiness. They could put their trust in him. God's plan encompasses the whole of human history, but its focal point is the Lord Jesus Christ and what he accomplished through his passion and resurrection.

Paul thus extols God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:17). It was precisely by working in and through the Lord Jesus Christ that God was able to provide redemption and the forgiveness of sins. God applied the work of Christ to his people so they could have forgiveness and a new life (2:5–6, 13).

Salvation is thus a free gift from God and is not something that can be earned through any form of work or merit (2:8–9).

God's people respond to him by living a life of obedience, by engaging in his mission in the dark and lost world, and by bringing glory to him. Glory is something that already characterizes who he is in his awesome power and grand act of redemption. In fact, Paul calls him “the glorious Father” (1:17). But it is the call of the church to properly recognize God for who he is as glorious (3:21). Paul models this ever so well to the Ephesians by his threefold exclamation in the eulogy of 1:3–14: “to the praise of his glory.”

- Clinton Arnold

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special kind of spiritual enlightenment, through which they had attained a secret or higher level of knowledge not accessible to the uninitiated. *Example: Ms. Ingrid “Sam, you said you made these bed, explain to me why they look so sloppy?!?” Sam, “Life is full of those profound mysteries in life that we can't explain.”*

Illumination. The ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian person and community in assisting believers to interpret, understand and obey the Scriptures. Illumination is a matter of faith as well as intellectual assent—the Spirit's goal in illumination *moves beyond mere intellectual assent to propositions of Scripture to the moving of the human will to trust Christ and obey him.*

KWF, Keswick Wrestling Federalization – mostly polished and much embellished rhetoric about respective strength, occasional matches exaggerated to those not in the guys side of the hall with flourish. *Example: Josh: “And then I put Rob in a helicopter move and spun him around until he started yelling “Josh is the man! – KWF!”*

Modalism. Also called Sabellianism, the trinitarian heresy that does not view Father, Son and Spirit as three particular “persons in relation” but merely as three modes or manifestations of the one divine person of God. *Example: God comes in salvation history as Father to create and give the law, as Son to redeem and as Spirit to impart grace.*

Navyseal: – adjective furtive; sly. Distant etymology (A member of the special forces who is trained for unconventional warfare on sea, air, and land.) A colloquialism for describing clandestine schemes, real or imagined that are best if blame is escaped and uncredited. *Example: Craig: “And then we'll just spray all of our clothes with axe and then no one will know that Sam and I are on a summer laundry strike – navyseal!”*

Visible church. The church as an organization that encompasses baptized members of local congregations, in contrast to the invisible church, which includes all true believers and therefore is known only to God. Alternately, the church as consisting of those who are now living, in contrast to the invisible company of saints who have died and are now present in heaven.



The countless stories of lives changed at America's KESWICK are evidence of something undeniable - That when people get together and get alone with God's Word it, as promised, accomplishes what God wants it to do in people like us who are in need of change (*Isa 55.11*).

We want yours to be one of those stories - to join the thousands of hearts spoken to and lives transformed. Our passion is that you might look back on this week as a moment where God started to do something different in your life. It might all start with you reading His word.

This week we're opening up and letting St. Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus speak to us. We speakers will be spending time presenting what we've learned, but you'll get the most out of it if you study it as well. - Find a quiet place, find the airplane mode for your cell phone, open up Ephesians and join the growing number of lives transformed and hearts impacted by God at America's KESWICK. If you have any questions or feedback about the passages, feel free to reach out to any of us - we love talking about the power of God's Word.

Rev. Robert Rodriguez (Rob@SolidRockCC.com)
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Rev. Samuel Sutter (Sam@Goshen.Church)
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HIS PURPOSE

God's Purpose, Restoration, Relationship with God

Sunday PM - Robert Rodriguez

Ephesians 1:9–23 (CSB)

9 He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ 10 as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him. 11 In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, 12 so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory. 13 In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory. 15 This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength. 20 He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens—21 far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

Paul's great prayer at the opening of this letter is a celebration of the larger story within which every single Christian story—every story of individual conversion, faith, spiritual life, obedience and hope—is set. Only by understanding and celebrating the larger story can we hope to understand everything that's going on in our own smaller stories, and so observe God at work in and through our own lives. Take some time, as you ponder Paul's prayer, to reflect on what it meant for him, in prison, to write in praise of the God who has set us free. Then open your heart in prayer on behalf of those who today still long that what God did in Christ might become a reality in their daily lives. – *N.T. Wright*

Hope. Our culture offers no basis for hope. Meaninglessness we know; hope we do not. Death haunts all of us. For all its advantages, our society is frayed and has problems so enormous we have given up on solving them. Crime, poverty, human stupidity, racism, terrorism, and various other "isms" threaten to undo us. The elderly read the obituaries first. The young have lost a sense of hope of making a difference or of being "successful," and their music shows it. Middle-aged people are bored. In other countries the addition of war and famine to the list make the situation absolutely stifling. We have a sense that we cannot solve our problems—either individually or socially. This loss of hope for the present is based on a loss of hope for the future. It is as if society has AIDS and seeks only to drain out of the present all it can. Is hope possible?

- *Klyne Snodgrass*

Notes/Discussion:

God's HANDIWORK
Grace, Salvation, Restoration
Monday AM - Samuel Sutter

Ephesians 1:1-8a (NIV) 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV) 1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Passage Summary: This passage contrasts the horrible plight of believers before their experience of Christ with their new life in Christ now. This experience can only be described as passing from death to life by virtue of their participation with Christ in his resurrection and exaltation. This salvation experience is a gift from God and enables them to live the lives God has called them to live. – *Clinton Arnold*

The main thing Paul wants to stress about all this is the sheer, almost unbelievable, magnificent kindness of God. In four short verses he says this in several different ways. God is rich in mercy; he loved us with a great love; his sheer grace has saved us; his grace is rich beyond all telling; he has lavished kindness upon us. Whenever anyone says, or implies, that God is after all a bit stingy, or mean, or small-minded, look at these verses and think again. – *N.T. Wright*

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” – *Tim Keller*

Notes/Discussion:

MAINTAINING UNITY

Unity, Fellowship, Reconciliation

Monday PM - Robert Rodriguez

Ephesians 2:11-22 (CSB)

11 So, then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh—called “the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” which is done in the flesh by human hands. 12 At that time you were without Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh, 15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that he might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross by which he put the hostility to death. 17 He came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you are also being built together for God’s dwelling in the Spirit.

This Ephesians’ passage contrasts the former godlessness of the Gentiles and their exclusion from the people of God with their new experience of closeness to God and inclusion in his people. This change has taken place on the basis of Jesus’ death on the cross, which resulted in the abrogation of the Mosaic covenant and the creation of a new people of God. This

new humanity enjoys a relationship of peace with God and peace with one another, especially between Jews and Gentiles.
- *Clint Arnold*

Notes/Discussion:

[illegible]

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Calling, Purpose of the Church, Suffering

Tuesday AM- Samuel Sutter

Ephesians 3:1-13 (NIV)

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — 2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. 7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Christians often get discouraged because of affliction, and we feel guilty and unsure what to do about it. After all, we know that God is good, loves us, and gives us grace. But sometimes Christianity can seem as if it's not "working" because we are suffering. While life in Christ doesn't prevent us from facing

affliction, it does empower us to endure whatever we may face by God's grace and for his glory and our good. The Christians scattered in churches in and around the city of Ephesus were in a season of discouragement. They experienced collective, vicarious, empathetic, testimonial, demonic, and providential affliction. The example for Christian discouragement in Ephesians 3 comes from St. Paul, the pen of a man perhaps lying on a cold floor in the dark with an aching body from repeated beating, truthfully speaking of his "tribulations" while exhorting his brothers and sisters in Ephesus to "not lose heart" (v. 13) during theirs. How can we, like Paul, suffer affliction without losing affection? What is the secret to avoiding discouragement, bitterness, unbelief, anger, sullenness, indifference, or rebellion? How do we as victims of gossip, abuse, assault, betrayal, mockery, abandonment, theft, slander, adultery, and the like "not lose heart" while suffering?... Because afflictions cost us so much, they are too precious to waste. Though God may not cause your affliction, he can use your affliction for his glory, others' good, and your growth, if you are in Christ. Only by trying less to dissect and avoid our sufferings and instead embracing them as opportunities in Christ to grow, glorify God, and share the gospel will we begin to "not lose heart," and instead find joy in our circumstances, whatever they may be. – *Who Do You Think You Are?*

Notes/Discussion:

SPIRITUAL GIFTING

Maturity, Fruit of the Spirit, Spiritual Gifts

Tuesday PM - Robert Rodriguez

Ephesians 4:1–16 (CSB)

1 Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling—5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. 7 Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 For it says: When he ascended on high, he took the captives captive; he gave gifts to people. 9 But what does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower parts of the earth? 10 The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things. 11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. 14 Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. 15 But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. 16 From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

As a consequence of God's great plan of salvation and the believers' new identity in Christ, Paul begins a series of admoni-

tions for the readers. He appeals to them to maintain the unity that already exists in the one body God has created. This unity is an essential and natural by-product of the common faith they confess, but it must also be maintained through developing the social virtues associated with selfless love.

– *Clint Arnold*

It is hard to do ministry well: We can summarize many of Paul's prayers in two longings: to know God better and to love people more intelligently. Both "better" and "more intelligently" demand that we hammer things out into the particulars. What does wise love look like? How do we converse with others in ways that make the right kind of difference? How do we understand the knotty problems of life, so that we can offer people real help? We all know what wise, mutual, life-changing counseling means: "Speaking the truth in love we grow up... speak only constructive, timely words that give grace to those who hear... encourage one another daily" (Eph. 4:15, 29; Heb. 3:12-13, author's paraphrase). But how do we do something that is so easy to say and so hard to do? It is hard to do church well: Church so easily becomes... well, becomes "church" (you fill in whatever ruts are most familiar). But if Jesus is full of grace and truth, then it must be possible to form communities more full of grace and truth. By hook or by crook, by blood, sweat, and tears, we can at least row the boat in the right direction. The old saying was ora et labora: pray and work. Many elements go into building a community that glorifies God heart, soul, mind, and might. We won't say it all, but we will camp on several things of central importance. The flourishing of wise, mutual, life-changing counseling is one proof that everything else about church is accomplishing what it's supposed to. -*David Powlison*

Notes/Discussion:

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY

Attitude, Transformation, Forgiveness, Speech

Wednesday AM- Samuel Sutter

Ephesians 4:17-5:2 (NIV)

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. 20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. 1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

As other Gentiles walk. He means those who had not yet been converted to Christ. But, at the same time, he reminds the Ephesians how necessary it was that they should repent, since by nature they resembled lost and condemned men. The miserable and shocking condition of other nations is held out as the motive to a change of disposition. He asserts that believers differ from unbelievers; and points out, as we shall see, the causes of this difference. "With regard to the former, he accuses their mind of vanity: and let us remember, that he speaks generally of all who have not been renewed by the Spirit of Christ. - *John Calvin*

Paul longs to see the young churches changing their behaviour. The pagan way of life all around them is deadly. But you can't alter behaviour without changing the mind; and the pagan, Gentile mind, he says, is foolish (verse 17), with darkened understanding and deep-seated ignorance (verse 18). This in turn springs from sheer hard-heartedness. A heart and mind like this produce moral insensitivity, the inability even to notice that some things are right and others are wrong. Once that's in place, anything goes (verse 19). You won't understand where the behaviour comes from unless you understand the state of heart and mind. And you won't change the behaviour unless you change the heart and mind. This isn't what many people today expect to hear. There is a persistent untruth which has made its way into the popular imagination in our day: that Christianity means closing off your mind, ceasing all serious thought, and living in a shallow fantasy world divorced from the solid truths of 'real life'... But the truth is that genuine Christianity opens the mind so that it can grasp truth at deeper and deeper levels... It's a matter of the heart and mind being open to the ever wider range of insight and imagination that comes with 'learning the king' (verse 20). - *N.T. Wright*

THE GOSPEL WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Evangelism, Sanctification, Purity

Wednesday PM - Robert Rodriguez

Ephesians 5:2–20 (CSB)

2 and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. 3 But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. 4 Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. 5 For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things. 7 Therefore, do not become their partners. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light – 9 for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth – 10 testing what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret. 13 Everything exposed by the light is made visible, 14 for what makes everything visible is light. Therefore it is said: Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. 15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk – not as unwise people but as wise – 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Becoming a Christian entails the reception of an entirely new

identity that Paul identifies as “light.” Believers are here summoned to live in accordance with their new identity, which will involve two important activities: (1) Christians need to entirely dissociate themselves from lifestyles associated with “darkness,” that is, evil, sinful behaviors; and, (2) as members of a new community, believers need to expose the deeds of their sinning brothers and sisters as part of a process of restoration that will result in their growth to maturity in Christ.

– *Clinton Arnold*

Don’t be fooled, he says (verse 6). There are a lot of empty words out there—words, that is, which sound big and important, which echo and resonate in our culture, but which have nothing inside them, no life, no truth. Precisely because sex is a good and important part of God’s creation of the animal kingdom, and of humans within it; precisely because it is the means of tenderness and intimacy between husband and wife, as well as the means of God-given procreation; precisely because it is the occasion for great blessing and emotional fulfilment; because of all these, people on the road to the genuinely human existence promised in Christ must avoid all cheap imitations. Casual sex is a parody of the real thing—like drinking from a muddy stream instead of fresh, clear water, or like listening to a symphony on a damaged record or tape player when a world-class orchestra is playing in the theatre around the corner. All the evidence of the ‘liberated’ Western world suggests that these are indeed empty words. Those who relentlessly pursue new experiences regularly end up bitter and disappointed. The emotional electricity, or even the danger, of an illicit or casual relationship may be exciting, but the excitement is of the same sort as you’d get from a drug like cocaine or heroin. It promises the earth and ends up killing you—if not physically, then certainly emotionally. Every time two people make love physically, their bodies are saying, ‘We belong to each other, totally, completely and for ever.’ If that isn’t true, and if it isn’t known by both to be true—if it’s just an experiment, a nice idea at the time, a trial arrangement—their bodies are telling a lie. Sooner or later, the lie will come out.

– *N.T. Wright*

KINGDOM LIVING IN SUBMISSION

Relationships, Honor, Submission

Thursday AM- Samuel Sutter

Ephesians 5:21–6:9 (NIV)

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—30 for we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—3 “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” 4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. 5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if

you were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. 9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Any exercise of power can only be done in service to the Other, not to please oneself. Jesus is the one who did not come to be served, as the world's authority figures expect to be, but to serve, to the point of giving his life. Following the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus's words seemed to have finally sunk in. By the time Paul wrote to the Ephesians, the relationship of Jesus to the church had been made the model for that of a husband and wife. We, the church, submit to Christ in everything, and the parallel of a wife submitting "everything" to her husband is no longer daunting, since we know what kind of behavior the husband has been called on to imitate. To what role must he submit? To that of savior, a servant-leader, who uses his authority and power to express a love that doesn't even stop at dying for the beloved. In Jesus we see all the authoritarianism of authority laid to rest, and all the humility of submission glorified. Rather than demeaning Christ, his submission leads to his ultimate glorification, where God "exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name." ...If a wife's role in relation to her husband is analogous to the church's submission to Christ, then we have nothing to fear. Both women and men get to "play the Jesus role" in marriage—Jesus in his sacrificial authority, Jesus in his sacrificial submission. By accepting our gender roles, and operating within them, we are able to demonstrate to the world concepts that are so counterintuitive as to be completely unintelligible unless they are lived out by men and women in Christian marriages. – *Tim & Kathy Keller*

Notes/Discussion:

GET READY FOR WAR

Spiritual Warfare, Faith, Prayer

Thursday PM- Robert Rodriguez

Ephesians 6:10-24 (CSB)

10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit – which is the word of God. 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. 20 For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should. 21 Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me so that you may be informed. 22 I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts. 23 Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul clearly supposes that the forces of evil that put Jesus on the cross have been seriously upset by the victory of the resur-

rection. They are now positively panic-stricken at the thought that the message of this Jesus is everywhere challenging their power and authority, and that communities loyal to Jesus as Lord and king are springing up, bringing together peoples and communities in a new unity, a new humanity, that shows evidence of the creator's sovereign power and hence of their own imminent destruction. They are therefore doing their best to oppose this gospel, to distract or depress the young Christians, to blow them off course by false teaching or temptations to anger or immorality (see 4:17-5:20, where these are the main themes). Sometimes this attack will take the frontal form of actual authorities in towns and cities who try to prevent Christians from spreading the message. Sometimes it will take the more oblique form of persuading Christians to invest time and energy in irrelevant side-issues, or to become fascinated by distorted teaching. Sometimes it will be simply the age-old temptations of money, sex and power. But in each case what individuals and the whole church must do is, first, to recognize that attacks are coming; second, to learn how to put on the complete armour which God offers; and, third, to stand firm and undismayed. – *N.T. Wright*

Notes/Discussion:

GLOSSARY of Frequently Used Terms

Adiaphora: Items of belief not essential to salvation. In Lutheran thought the adiaphora were defined as practices of the church that were neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. In contemporary terms, adiaphora are those things not clearly addressed by Scripture that *Christians may freely practice or believe with a clear conscience before God and that do not affect salvation.*

Antinomianism: (from the Greek: αντί, “against” + νόμος, “law”) is any view which rejects laws or legalism and is against moral, religious or social norms (Latin: mores), or is at least considered to do so: *Example: Mr. Kennedy “Robert, I don’t care if there’s not stop sign there, you need to not crash the hooptie in the woods - I’ll write you up for being an antinomianist!”*

Circumcision: Originally, the practice was instituted by God (toward Abraham), and it became the external act signifying entrance into the OT community of faith. Example: The Mosaic law prescribed that every Jewish male was to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Circumcision was also performed on Gentile proselytes (converts) to Judaism. *According to the NT, through Christ external physical circumcision has been superseded by a spiritual “circumcision of the heart” (Rom 2:29).*

Dietary laws: In mainstream Nicene Christianity, there is no restriction on kinds of animals that can be eaten. This practice stems from Peter’s vision of a sheet with animals, described in the Book of Acts, Chapter 10, in which Saint Peter “sees a sheet containing animals of every description lowered from the sky.” *Example: Isaac, “Robert, did you clean off the dessert trays like I told you?” – Robert: “In Christ there is no clean or unclean... so yes?”*

Gentiles: The Jews divided the world into Jews and non-Jews. Though many Jews established good relations with Gentiles, not least in the Jewish Diaspora (the dispersion of Jews away from Palestine), officially there were taboos against contact such as intermarriage. *In the New Testament the Greek word ethne, ‘nations’, carries the same meanings as goyim.*

Gnosticism. An early Greek religious movement of broad proportions that was particularly influential in the second-century church. Many biblical interpreters see in certain NT documents (such as Colossians, or 1 John) the attempt to answer or refute Gnostic teaching. Gnostics believed that devotees had gained a