

December 15

Ephesians 1-6

An outline of Ephesians:

- the new life which God has given us in Christ
- the new society which God has created through Christ
- the new standards that God expects of His new society, especially unity and purity
- the new relationships into which God has brought us -- harmony in the home and hostility toward the devil

**New Life** – aka Salvation is the most important theme of the first three chapters of the Book of Ephesians

- We are told that salvation begins with God
- He predestined us, He chose us before the foundation of the world
- accomplished through the work of Christ
- Jesus has redeemed us. We have redemption through His blood
- He has abolished the wall of separation between Israel and the Gentiles, and brought us near to God through the work of the cross
- the cross of Calvary defines the purpose of the incarnation
- it is through the work that Christ accomplished on that cross that we have salvation
- salvation is by grace
- Salvation is through faith. It is by means of faith that the gift of God's grace is appropriated to every individual who will believe.
- The Holy Spirit seals that salvation. The Holy Spirit indwells us as a down payment -- as a guarantee of our inheritance
- salvation is for the purpose of giving great glory to God

### **New Society** –

A society of reconciliation – in this culture people and God have been reconciled to each other. That means that no person is more important than another. Nobody deserves power over the rest. God is solely in charge and he reigns! As a result, we are reconciled to each other – so there is now neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, all are one in Christ! Can you imagine a society where there is no class warfare? No racism? No sexism? Well, that is the goal of this New Society. That is the church!

### **New Standards**

Chapter 4 deals with the standards which God expects of this new society, particularly with reference to unity and purity.

Also in the fourth chapter, Paul discusses what we might call 'diversity in unity.' We are made to be one in Christ. But each of us, though we have the same Spirit, the same hope, the same Lord, the same baptism, has been given different gifts. Here

we are told that God gave some to be prophets, some to be apostles, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, but the purpose of these different gifts is to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ might be built up.

We all have different gifts and we all are responsible to use those gifts, not for the purpose of edifying ourselves, but for the purpose of building the body of Christ. That theme of "body building" carries right through the whole of the fourth chapter and ends by enjoining us not to let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up -- building the body -- so that we might benefit them.

### **New Relationships –**

Summarized in two phrases – Men, love your wives. Women, respect your husbands. Deepest needs of men and women... when they are met, marriages thrive. Recommend book by Eggerich – "Love and Respect" based on these verses.

I'd also point out that the key to successful relationships is willing submission. In the marriage, in the marketplace, in the families. When each person is looking out for the interests of the other, in humble submission...everything seems to work. Paul is letting them know that ALL of these relationships are based on a simple idea... mutual submission. When we are racing for the bottom, everybody wins!

The final famous part of Ephesians is found in chapter 6, where we are told to "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God." Do you remember the pieces?

- Helmet of Salvation
- Breastplate of Righteousness
- Belt of Truth
- Shoes of the gospel of Peace
- Sword of the Spirit
- Shield of faith

Friend used to literally put it on every day to prepare for the battle he was walking into. Cool, eh? Maybe you are in a battle today and you need some armor. God's armor works real well. I'd highly recommend it!