

Ephesians - Lesson 4

Ephesians 2:1-22

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Catechism

Creed - 1st Article

Review

- We went over Eph. 1:15-23.
- In these verses Paul mentions:
 - The three Christian virtues of Faith, Hope, & Love
 - Introduces the topics wisdom, revelation, and knowledge. These three are major themes of Ephesians.
- Also discussed how the right hand of God is not a physical location like people during the reformation and some today believe, but it is a place of power and authority.

Chapter 2

Verses 1-10

- **Read verses 1-10**
- **QUESTION: Looking at these first ten verses, what sort of structure or flow do you see?**
- This pericope has been called one of Paul's most succinct presentations of scripture.
- Flow:
 - 2:1-3 - We are dead in trespasses and sins
 - Focus is on "you"
 - It is dominated by language of the Law.
 - Paul reveals the forces at work:
 - The devil - ruler of the authority of the air (v.2)
 - The world (v.2)
 - Our sinful nature - passion, desires, and thoughts of the flesh (v.3)
 - As a result, God's wrath is poured out on those sinners.
 - 2:4-9 - Resurrection with Christ by the grace of God
 - Verse 4 the focus changes.
 - Focus is on what God has done in Christ
 - See the gospel language of:
 - grace (v.5, 7, 8)
 - gift of God (v.8)
 - in/with Christ (v.5, 6, 7, 10)
 - faith (v.8)
 - re-creation (v.10)
 - The wrath seen in verse 3 is averted by grace in verse 8.
 - Grace as we've discussed before is God's favorable attitude toward us in Christ.
 - Salvation is written in a way that denotes a past action with present reality.
 - By grace through faith in Christ removes our works.

- It ultimately involves a future deliverance from God’s wrath on judgment day.
 - Ultimately throughout this section we see a movement from death to life.
 - This is all on account what Christ has done on the cross for the world.
 - 2:10 - New life walking in works prepared by God.
 - See below...
- Walking
 - This section is bracketed by the word “Walk”
 - First in verse 2
 - Second in verse 10
 - Paul’s use of this verb is closer to actual OT language “to walk,” which was a metaphor for the believer’s lifelong relationship with God.
 - One’s path is set by spiritual-forces that control one’s life.
 - **READ Deut. 30:15-20**
 - 15-16 reveals that walking leads to either life or death
 - The pagan walks in:
 - Darkness
 - Isaiah 9:2 - The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...
 - In the counsel of the wicked
 - Psalm 1:1 - Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsels of the wicked...
 - Walk away from God
 - Jeremiah 5:23 - But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away.
 - Child of God, a Christian, walks in:
 - His Word - God’s teaching, that is law and gospel
 - The way
 - 1 Kings 3:14 - And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statues and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.
 - Walks with God
 - Gen 5:24 - Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.
 - To walk is thus to believe and trust and so to follow.
 - Christianity is called “the Way” because it involves walking in the path forged by Christ
 - It is following him along the road to life.
 - Verse 2 reveals that we once walked under the control of those evil spiritual forces. This path leads to death.
 - Verse 10 reveals that since we are in Christ, we walk in those good works which are His.

Verses 11-22

- **Read verses 11-22**
- The “*therefore*” that begins this section indicates that this section is connected to the previous section.
- In the previous section Paul establishes our common salvation in Christ (2:1-10).
- Now, he more specifically draws out its implications for the unity of all people within Christ’s one body.
- Then and Now

- This section can be understood as contract between the former life as a pagan and the new life in Christ. The then and the now, which begins with the word at one time.
 - Examples:
 - In the flesh (v.11) → In the Lord/Spirit (v.21-22)
 - Alienated from (v.12) → Fellow citizens (v.19)
 - Far off (v.13,17) → Near (v.13, 17)
- The central section (v13-18), which focuses on Christ and his work on the cross, creates this reversal.
- **Re-Read verses 13-18**
- Example:
 - Alienated from Israel (v.12) and Fellow citizens with the saints (v.19)
 - Alienated:
 - Only occurs three times in the NT
 - Common terms are stranger, sojourner
 - It implies that as a gentile they stood apart from God's chosen people.
 - As long as the foreigner remained uncircumcised, they could not participate in the holy things of Israel.
 - This left them separated from the blessings of God.
 - Citizens with the saints
 - Here the sinner is no longer alienated.
 - "Citizens with the saints" indicates an all inclusive group of the baptized - on earth and heaven
 - This is what we confess in the Apostles Creed - communion of the saints.
 - This is a new citizenship and a fulfillment of what Israel was meant to be.
 - Godless (v.12) and Access to the Father (v.18)
 - Godless:
 - Indicates the Gentile was without the true God
 - Failing to acknowledge him and lacking his gifts.
 - Without the true God, one worships false Gods and is subject to God's judgment.
 - Access to the Father
 - In OT times only the holy ones could approach God.
 - Christ, through the working of the Spirit brings access to the Father.
 - Those who were Godless now have access to him.
 - They are holy and maybe near to him
 - To offer sacrifices and receive his blessings.
 - *Like favored subjects approaching a king's throne or children with intimate access to a father, we have the privilege of approaching the Father to have our petitions answered and to receive his gifts.*
 - Dividing wall (v.14) and holy temple (v.21)
 - Dividing wall
 - While there is some discrepancy on this between commentaries, it most likely points to the fact that Gentiles were prohibited from entering the temple proper.
 - Temple had clear divisions between the Court of the Priests, the Court of the Israelites, and the Court of the Women.
 - Gentiles could watch through the gateway from outside the temple.

- Ultimately, this is another indication how Gentiles were separated from God's chosen people.
- Holy Temple
 - Yet, we have been reconciled to God through Christ.
 - The temple barrier that divided and caused hate has been removed.
 - The law that set up a wall to God has been torn down
 - Through the cross of Christ, whose body is the new temple, we are now one with him and have access to him.
- Separated from Christ (v.12) and Built on Christ (v.20)
 - Separated
 - Similar to alienated and sojourner
 - You are apart from Christ on account of sin.
 - Built on Christ
 - To build upon something already built is commonly describe in the NT as incorporation of saints into Christ's church and strengthening in the faith.
 - This foundation was laid by prophets and apostles.
 - It includes both their writing and their preaching, which are one in the same.
 - The cornerstone of course being Christ himself, that which everything is built around.
 - Paul in other instances will use the metaphor that Christ is the foundation with the church being built upon it.
 - **READ 1st Cor. 3:9-14**
 - Some will argue that this is proof that Paul can't be the author.
 - However, Paul, like any writer, is not limited to one metaphor.
 - In this instance he decides to use the metaphor of Christ being the cornerstone. The prophets and apostles complete foundation, with all Christians built upon it.
 - Ultimately, this reveals again the unity we have in Christ.
- Hostility (v.14, 16) and Peace (v.14-17)
 - This contrast comes at center of this pericope.
 - Hostility:
 - Comes to man on account of the power of the Law.
 - This could also be translated as enmity, which would take us back to the fall. Where sin put enmity between man and God.
 - Peace:
 - We have discussed before.
 - Peace comes from outside of us.
 - It was announced by the angels at the birth of Christ,
 - Jesus announced it after his resurrection
 - Paul continues to weave it throughout his letter to the Ephesians
 - Indicates reconciliation between man and God.
 - On account of Christ's death on the cross, the sin that separated God and man has been removed and there is unity.
- Again, to summarize this section, the focus for Paul was to reveal the unity of all people within Christ's one body.
- All people, Jew and Gentile, have been reconciled to God through Christ's death on the cross.

Questions?

Thoughts/Questions

Any other items you would like to discuss?

Closing Prayers

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have safely brought us to this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.