

# EPHESIANS

## **Greetings (1:1-2)**

**1** From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will.  
To all in Ephesus who are saints, set apart by God for His purposes; those who live out their lives in Christ Jesus in a faithful way.  
<sup>2</sup>May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ impart grace and peace to you.

## **Blessed with every spiritual blessing (1:3-6)**

<sup>3</sup>Give praise to Him, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For He has blessed us through our life in Christ with every spiritual blessing that belongs to His heavenly Kingdom. <sup>4,5</sup>This is because He chose us before He created the world to belong to Christ, to be made holy and blameless in His sight. Because of this amazing love, He decided that we should be adopted as His sons when we place our faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, this was His purpose and even His joy!  
<sup>6</sup>Why should He do such a thing? Because this causes His people to praise Him for His glorious grace, that which He gives freely to those who deserve nothing from Him. All this grace He has given us in Jesus, the Son whom He loves.

## **Chosen to belong to Christ (1:7-19)**

<sup>7-8</sup>In Christ we have been redeemed. With His own blood He has made it possible for all our sins to be forgiven and so has purchased us with the price of His blood, so that now we belong to Him. All this is the result of the immense riches of God's grace that He has lavished on us. Yes, He has given us wisdom to receive His grace and to understand the wonderful ways in which He has blessed us.  
<sup>9</sup>He has even made His will known to us. Although this remains a mystery to others, it has been His good pleasure to reveal His purposes to those who now live in Christ. <sup>10</sup>His purposes will only be fully realised when time as we now know it will have reached its climax. Then we shall see that God has brought everything in heaven and on earth together under the headship and authority of Christ.

<sup>11</sup>We were chosen to belong to Him. This was God's plan from the beginning, and He works out everything so His will and His purposes are completely fulfilled. <sup>12</sup>All this is so that we who first put our hope in Christ might live for His praise and glory. <sup>13</sup>But you also, like us, were placed in Christ when you heard the truth of the gospel of salvation and believed. Then He marked you in a very special way by placing His personal seal upon you: He gave you His own promised Holy Spirit to live within you. <sup>14</sup>The gift of His Spirit is a deposit from God that guarantees our inheritance and keeps us as those who are His possession, living in the power of His redeeming love. Yes, that we might live for His praise and glory!

<sup>15-16</sup>Ever since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and the way you love your fellow saints, those who also belong to Him, I have been continually thankful that you also share in His life. So I keep remembering you when I pray. <sup>17</sup>I ask that the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may impart to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation of who He is and what He has done for you, so that you will come to know Him better. <sup>18-19</sup>I also pray for your heart to be filled with light, that you will see for yourself, and know in your experience, the hope to which He has called you, the purpose He wants to see fulfilled in your life. What is this hope? That His saints, all those who belong to Him, will enjoy the riches of a glorious inheritance; and that they may also know His power working in them because they believe in Him, a power so great that it cannot be compared with any other power!

### **Jesus reigns over all (1:20-23)**

You have an example of this power, of exactly how mighty it is, in the resurrection of Christ. <sup>20</sup>Yes, the power that raised Him from the dead and caused Him to be seated in heaven at His Father's right hand is that same power which is within you now. <sup>21</sup>As a result of this power, Jesus is now reigning far above every other ruler, authority, power and dominion. He is greater than anyone else could ever be, not only in this present age but also in the future age that He will inaugurate.

<sup>22-23</sup>God has placed everything under Jesus' feet. He has appointed Him to have authority over everything for the sake of the church, which is His Body on earth. And He intends the fullness of Christ's life to fill everything in every way, first in the church, and then in the new creation.

**Alive in Christ (2:1-5)**

**2** What you are now is in direct contrast to what you used to be. Once you were spiritually dead because your lives were full of sin and disobedience to God's Word.<sup>2</sup> That is how you used to live, when you lived according to the world's standards, because you were subject to God's enemy, belonged to his negative kingdom of darkness and were controlled by the spirit who still works in the disobedient.

<sup>3</sup>All of us at one time shared in that ungodly lifestyle, longing to satisfy our flesh. We all sought to gratify our fleshly desires and sin filled much of our thinking. Just like everybody else, we were subjects of God's anger because of our sinful disposition.

<sup>4,5</sup>Despite all this, because of His great love for us, God who is so rich in mercy and because He loves us so much, actually brought us to life with Christ, even when we were spiritually dead because of our sins. What a wonderful work of His grace to save us out of the death and darkness of sin, out of the hands of the evil one we once served!

**Seated with Christ (2:6-7)**

<sup>6</sup>Now He has actually raised us up with Christ and sees us seated with Him in heavenly places because He has placed us in Christ Jesus.<sup>7</sup> He has done this so that in the future we might demonstrate that the riches of His grace are so immense that nothing can be compared to such riches. And this grace has been shown to us because of His kindness towards us, expressed in all Christ Jesus has done for us.

**Saved by His grace (2:8-10)**

<sup>8</sup>You see, it is only because of His grace that you have been saved. All you did was to put your faith in His willingness to be merciful and gracious towards you. So your salvation is not anything you could possibly have worked out for yourselves; it is completely God's gift to you.<sup>9</sup> You can never boast that you achieved acceptance by God through the works you have performed.

<sup>10</sup>The truth is that we are the work of God's own hands. Now we live in Christ Jesus, we are able to do the good works that are the evidence of our salvation. It is good to know that these are the very works that God planned and prepared for us to accomplish!

**Reconciliation to God and one another (2:11-22)**

<sup>11</sup>So never forget that you used to be foreigners, outside of God's Kingdom, because you had only natural birth and were not among

those whom God had set aside for Himself by entering into covenant with them. The relationship you have with Him now has nothing to do with outward actions such as circumcision, works done by men.

<sup>12</sup>You used to be separated from Christ because of your sin. You were excluded from having citizenship in Israel, God's chosen people. You were outside the covenant relationship with God based on His promises. You were without hope for the future and had to live your life in the world without God.

<sup>13</sup>Look at the difference now that you are in Christ Jesus and belong to Him. Instead of living far away from God, you have been united with Him through what Jesus did by shedding His blood for you.

<sup>14</sup>So He is our peace. Because we have been forgiven and accepted by God, we are at peace with Him. Those who were outside the covenant, the relationship God has made possible for His people, are now made one with those who belong to the covenant. He has made these two one, Jew and non-Jew, by destroying the barrier that once divided them, that was like a dividing wall of hostility that existed between them.

<sup>15-16</sup>Through what He accomplished when He became man, He abolished the whole idea of serving God through a legalistic approach of obeying a series of religious rules and regulations. His intention was to create a new people out of the two opposing groups that existed before. The only way was to make it possible for anyone, no matter what His race, to be at peace with God, and to draw them together into one Body, to reconcile them to one another. He accomplished all this through the cross which dealt a death blow to their former hostility.

<sup>17</sup>Jesus came and preached peace with God to those outside His covenant with Israel, as well as those who were part of that relationship. <sup>18</sup>Now through Him we all have direct and personal access to the Father through the same Holy Spirit who lives in every believer in Jesus Christ.

<sup>19</sup>So as a result, you are no longer foreigners outside of God's purpose; you are not aliens but children of God, fellow citizens with all who belong to Christ. Together you are God's people and members of His household. <sup>20</sup>Your life together is built on the foundation of truth that has come to us through the apostles and prophets, Jesus Himself being the chief Cornerstone, the pivotal truth of the revelation God has given us through them. <sup>21</sup>In Christ Jesus the whole building of living stones, whether believing Jews or non-Jews, is built to be a holy temple housing the Lord's presence. <sup>22</sup>Yes, in Him you are

being built together to be those in whom God Himself lives by His Spirit.

### **A servant of the gospel (3:1-13)**

**3** This is the reason why I, Paul, am happy to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ; it is for your sake. <sup>2-3</sup>You have heard about the way God has given me such grace for your benefit, so that I could tell you of the hidden things that have been revealed to me. <sup>4</sup>Now that I am writing in this way you will be able to understand the insight I have been given into these truths about Christ that remained hidden to those of other generations.

<sup>5</sup>These things have now been revealed by the Spirit to those whom God has raised up as apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup>It seems strange that because of the gospel those who are not Jews are heirs together with Israel, of all that God has promised. Both Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Christ form one Body and they share together in the promises given by God through Him.

<sup>7</sup>God called me to be a servant of this gospel and gave me His grace so He would work powerfully through me. <sup>8</sup>I consider myself less than the very lowest of God's people; yet, He gave me such grace. He enabled me to preach the gospel to the Gentile nations, telling them of the immense riches of Christ. <sup>9</sup>I have been able to explain to everyone those things that formerly remained hidden in the purposes of God, who created everything. <sup>10</sup>His plan has always been that now His great wisdom should be revealed through the church, His people; that the church should declare these truths even to the heavenly rulers and authorities.

<sup>11</sup>It has always been His purpose from the very beginning that all this should be made possible in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>12</sup>Because you live in Him and have faith in Him, you are able to approach God freely and with confidence. <sup>13</sup>So I ask you not to be put off because I have had to suffer for your sake. Rather regard these sufferings as a means by which you have come to know God's glory!

### **Prayer for the saints on earth (3:14-21)**

<sup>14-15</sup>You can see from all this why I kneel before the Father, the One who is responsible for His entire family, those already in heaven and those on the earth. <sup>16</sup>I pray that out of His glorious riches you will be strengthened with power by the working of His Spirit in your inmost being. <sup>17-19</sup>This is so that you will know the presence of Christ in your hearts because of your faith in Him.

I also pray that your lives will be deeply rooted in His love; that you will be so steadfast in this love that, like all those who believe in Jesus and who are set apart for His purposes as His saints, you will be able to comprehend something of the amazing extent of Christ's love. This love seems boundless and unlimited and through that love you can be filled to the fullest extent with God Himself.

<sup>20</sup>He is able to do so much more than all you would ever dare to ask Him or even imagine that He would give you, through His power that He has already placed within you. <sup>21</sup>So let His glory be revealed in the church. And let those who belong to Him live to give Him glory; yes, believers of every successive generation, for ever. Amen! It shall be so!

### **Maintain unity with the believers (4:1-6)**

**4** I am a prisoner for the Lord's sake and I encourage you to live in a way that is worthy of this great calling you have received from Him. <sup>2</sup>This involves remaining humble and gentle, being patient and sensitive to the needs of others out of your love for them. <sup>3</sup>Do everything you can to maintain the unity you have with other believers in the power of the Spirit by remaining at peace with them. <sup>4</sup>For there is one Body of Christ and only one Holy Spirit, and we all share in the one hope to which we were called in Christ. <sup>5-6</sup>There is only one Lord, and we all share in the same faith in Him. There is only one baptism into Christ, only one God and Father of us all. He is over all of us, He works through all of us and His life is in all of us!

### **Grace given to fulfil the call (4:7-10)**

<sup>7</sup>Yet, at the same time, each one of us is given the particular grace we need to fulfil our calling, and it is Christ Himself who imparts this grace to us. <sup>8</sup>This is why we can understand, from what was written years ago, that when He ascended back to heaven He led a procession of those who had formerly been captives and gave gifts to those who were to continue the work of His Kingdom here on earth.

<sup>9</sup>We need to understand that before He ascended to heaven, Christ first descended to where the souls were kept waiting for the release He alone could give. <sup>10</sup>Yes, He who descended there to free them is the same Lord who ascended to the highest place in heaven, so that the whole universe could be filled with His glory!

### **God's order in His body (4:11-16)**

<sup>11</sup>This same Lord Jesus appointed some of those who belonged to Him to be apostles, responsible for the ordering of His church, others to be those through whom He would speak prophetically to His people. Some were anointed to be evangelists who would reap a harvest of souls for God's Kingdom, others He made pastors with hearts of love and compassion to care for His people. Still others He made teachers, those who live His Word and can enable others to do likewise.

<sup>12-13</sup>All these various ministries have a common purpose. They are to prepare God's people to serve Him, happily doing the works God prepared for them. This is what will enable the Body of Christ to be built up in the way He desires, and will bring people into unity in their faith, sharing in a common knowledge and experience of God's Son. Having servant hearts shows that people are mature in their life in Christ and that they are able to enjoy everything God has made available to us in Him, the fullness of His life that He came to impart.

<sup>14</sup>Those who are mature in this way will no longer be like immature toddlers easily swayed and pulled this way and that. They will not be like corks bobbing about on the sea, or like falling leaves that are at the mercy of any wind that blows them around. Immature people are like that because they do not have a grasp of the truth of God's Word. So they are easily swayed by the latest fashion in 'spiritual' teaching. They are deceived by those who want to manipulate and use them and their money for their own ends.

<sup>15</sup>The mature are not like that. They speak the truth to others out of love for them and, therefore, in a loving way. They are believers who keep growing in their faith, becoming more and more like Christ who is the Head of the Body to which they belong. <sup>16</sup>From Him, the Head, the whole Body is to draw together in unity. Every part is to fulfil its function in love, for the health of the whole Body. And this is accomplished by each fulfilling the work Christ has appointed for him or her.

### **Keep walking in God's ways (4:17-32)**

<sup>17</sup>Now I will tell you something so important that I insist in the Lord's Name that you respond to what I say. You must no longer live in the way that those who belong to the world live. Worldly thinking is futile. <sup>18</sup>Worldly people live in spiritual darkness, without



understanding God's purposes. They do not possess His life and they remain in ignorance. Because their hearts are hardened they resist the truth of the gospel. <sup>19</sup>They have no spiritual sensitivity because of the way they indulge their sensual appetites. So they indulge themselves in pleasing their flesh, their natural desires, in all kinds of impurity. They are never satisfied, but continually lust after ways that are even more ungodly.

<sup>20</sup>You never came to know Christ by living in such ways. <sup>21</sup>No, you heard about Him when you were taught the truth of the gospel, for the truth is only to be found in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>As far as your former way of life is concerned, you were taught from the very beginning to put off your old sinful nature, that old self that was corrupted by its deceitful desires.

<sup>23</sup>Instead you were made new with a totally different mindset. <sup>24</sup>And you made the decision to put on the new life which enables you to become what God wants you to be, living in ways that are right in His eyes, being His holy people, set apart from the world to live the life of His Kingdom here on earth.

<sup>25</sup>So it is essential for each of you to rid yourselves completely of everything that is false and instead speak truthfully to others; for we are all members of the one Body of Christ, a Body of truth! <sup>26-27</sup>It is said, "even if you are angry do not sin". Do not hold onto your anger; be rid of it before the end of the day, otherwise you could give the devil a foothold to take advantage of you. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who used to steal in his old life must, of course, no longer steal. Instead he must have a proper job, working for his living by doing something useful with his hands. Then, instead of taking he will have something to give to needy people.

<sup>29</sup>Do not speak in an impure or critical way. Instead of mouthing unclean or negative things, speak in a way that will encourage and benefit others because you are addressing their needs. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve God's Holy Spirit in any way. Remember you have had the seal of the Spirit placed on you to keep you walking in God's ways until the day when He takes you to be with Himself.

<sup>31</sup>Rid yourselves of every negative thing, being bitter in your attitudes, being angry and resentful. Do not get into disputes with others, especially physical ones! Do not slander others or have any malicious attitudes towards them. <sup>32</sup>Instead be kind and compassionate to one another, always ready to forgive in the same way that, through Christ, God has always been willing to forgive you!



**Live in love (5:1-7)**

**5** Therefore, because you are His dearly loved children, seek to be like God your Father. <sup>2</sup>Live a life full of love. Christ has commanded us to love others as He has loved us by giving His life in sacrifice for us, an offering to God that was totally pleasing to Him.

<sup>3</sup>To live in such love means that there must not be any sexual immorality among you, nor any kind of impurity in your hearts. There is to be no greed. You see, all these things are totally out of order for people who belong to God, His holy people. <sup>4</sup>You should be careful how you use your mouths, so you do not speak in any obscene or foolish way and you avoid all jokes with improper innuendos. All these things are so out of place that you should not even want to be involved in any of them. How much better to use your mouth to thank God for His amazing love and blessings!

<sup>5</sup>You see, it is absolutely certain that there is no inheritance in the Kingdom of God and of Christ for any immoral, impure or greedy person! <sup>6</sup>So do not be deceived by the empty platitudes of those who say that everyone will go to heaven. Such deception hides the truth that God's anger will come on the disobedient. <sup>7</sup>This is why you are not to align yourself with those who live in such ways.

**Walk in the light of truth (5:8-10)**

<sup>8</sup>Yes, you lived in darkness in your old life, but now you are the children of light, living in the One who is the Light. So live as children who walk in the light of God's truth. <sup>9-10</sup>What is the evidence of such a walk? That you express God's goodness, righteousness and truth; that you know what to do to please Him.

**No compromise (5:11-14)**

<sup>11</sup>You cannot compromise. Have absolutely nothing to do with the things God regards as darkness. These things are sinful and produce nothing good in your lives. You should expose sin, not walk in it. <sup>12</sup>It would be shameful for you even to talk about the things disobedient people do, often in secret. <sup>13</sup>The time will come when everything will be exposed by the light, even the things people have tried to hide. <sup>14</sup>By its very nature, light exposes things and there should be nothing in your lives that you would be ashamed of when everything is exposed. Such a time will come which is why we are told:

“It is time to wake up if you are asleep spiritually; rise up from a life of dead works and Christ will shine on you with His Light.”

### **Be wise about the way you live (5:15-20)**

<sup>15</sup>This causes you to realise that you will have to be very careful about the way you live; to be wise, not foolish. <sup>16</sup>Make use of every opportunity to please God by the way you live, especially as there is so much evil in the world around you. <sup>17</sup>How much better to understand what God wants of you than to live in a sinful, foolish manner.

<sup>18</sup>For example, if you think there is nothing wrong in getting drunk you have an ungodly mindset and a depraved lifestyle. How much better to be filled with God’s Spirit. <sup>19</sup>He will inspire you to rejoice together using psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing because there is a song of praise for God in your hearts. That is infinitely better than drunkenness or bawdy revelling. <sup>20</sup>In fact, if you rejoice in the Lord you will always be thanking your heavenly Father for the way He orders your life, because you are so grateful that you live in Christ Jesus, your Lord.

### **Marriage between Christ and His church (5:21-33)**

<sup>21</sup>What you are to do, then, is this: because you want to honour Christ in your life, submit to one another.

<sup>22-23</sup>Wives, be submissive to your husbands in the same way that you would be towards the Lord. Christ is Head of the church which is His Body, those whom He has saved. God’s order is that your husband is responsible for you in the same way that Christ is responsible for His Church. <sup>24</sup>So as the members of the church submit to Christ, it is only right that wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25-26</sup>However, this does not mean that husbands are to dominate their wives. No, they are to love them in the same way that Christ has shown His love for His church. He did this by serving and then giving His life for His Body. This sacrifice has made the church a holy Body, a people set apart for His purposes; a people made pure because they have been cleansed by the purifying power of God’s Word. <sup>27</sup>His intention is that all who belong to His Body will become a radiant people, revealing His glory; a church set free from the imperfections that so clearly exist at present. In fact, He is preparing for Himself a church without any blemishes, holy and blameless in His sight.

<sup>28</sup>When you consider these truths, you can see how husbands need to love their wives. Christ loves His church as His own Body; so husbands love your wives as you would your own bodies. You see, the husband who loves his wife also loves himself. <sup>29-30</sup>So treat your wife in the same way that you would treat your own body. You do not hate your body by willingly inflicting any harm on it; instead you feed and care for it, even as Christ feeds and cares for us because we are members of His Body, the church.

<sup>31</sup>In order to love your wives in the way God intends, it is written clearly that a man will leave his father and mother and become one with his wife. Husband and wife become one flesh.

<sup>32</sup>This is a profound truth about Christ and His church that not everyone understands. <sup>33</sup>Yet in the same way, every one of you must love his wife as he loves himself; and a wife should always show respect for her husband because he cares for her.

### **Children and parents (6:1-4)**

**6** What about children? They are to obey their parents in the same way that they would obey the Lord, for this is right in His eyes. <sup>2-3</sup>He has commanded, "Give honour to your father and mother." This is the first of the commandments that has a promise attached to it, "then you will prosper in the long life that God will grant you on the earth."

<sup>4</sup>Fathers, you are not to cause your children to be frustrated; you are not to suppress them or their giftings, but rather you are to train them, instructing them in the Lord's ways.

### **Demonstrate a right attitude in the workplace (6:5-9)**

<sup>5</sup>And what should your attitude be in the workplace? Show a good, obedient attitude towards those in authority over you. Respect them and the position they hold and do this sincerely from your heart, even in the same way that you would obey Christ your heavenly Master.

<sup>6</sup>It is not a matter of simply wanting to find favour with your bosses, especially when they are watching what you are doing. No, you need to have a submissive heart and attitude, doing what is right because you want to please Christ who also sees what you are doing. <sup>7</sup>If you regard what you do at work as serving the Lord rather than men, then you will do it wholeheartedly with a good

heart attitude. <sup>8</sup>What is more, the Lord is the one who will reward us for the way we have worked, whether we are bosses or workers.

<sup>9</sup>So a word for those of you who have responsibility over others at work: treat them as Christ treats you. Do not threaten them because your Lord does not threaten you; and He is Master over everyone, reigning as He does in heaven. He does not show favouritism to anyone, but deals fairly and justly with all; so that is what you are to do.

### **Your spiritual armour (6:10-18)**

<sup>10</sup>Above all, be strong in your faith and dependence on the Lord, on His might and power. <sup>11</sup>He has provided His protection for you in several ways. Clothed with His gifts and resources, you will be able to stand against all the devil's disruptive tactics. <sup>12</sup>Your battle is not against people but against the negative spiritual forces that influence and control them; against the spiritual rulers, authorities and powers that are at work in this world that is in bondage to the darkness of sin. They are in league with those evil spiritual forces that exist outside the world.

<sup>13</sup>So accept everything God has made available to you, to enable you to stand steadfast when evil attacks. Yes, no matter what happens you are able to stand firm and to remain standing. <sup>14</sup>You stand firm with His truth like a belt you keep around your waist for support. His righteousness is like a breastplate that protects you. <sup>15</sup>You wear the shoes of the gospel so that you are always ready for any eventuality and can walk in peace. <sup>16</sup>Your faith is like a shield that you have to take hold of and that enables you to overcome anything the devil throws at you. <sup>17</sup>The assurance of your salvation is like a protective helmet, enabling you to counter all the devil's lies and efforts to deceive you in your thinking.

<sup>18</sup>You have, not only a defensive shield, but an offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit which is God's Word. Whenever you pray, depend on the Spirit to lead you and fill your prayer with His life and power, no matter what you are asking of God. How important to pray in the Spirit continually for all your fellow believers.

### **Final greetings (6:19-24)**

<sup>19</sup>And pray for me also. Whenever I speak in the Lord's Name I need Him to supply what I say, so that I will be able to reveal the truth of the gospel to those with no spiritual understanding. <sup>20</sup>I am still an ambassador of the truth, even though I am in chains at present. So

I pray that, despite everything, I will be bold in declaring the truth without any fear.

<sup>21</sup>Tychicus is a dear brother and the Lord's faithful servant. He can tell you far more about my circumstances than I can write now.

<sup>22</sup>This is why I am sending him to you. However he will also be a great encouragement to you.

<sup>23-24</sup>I bless all the brothers with God's peace. May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ impart both love and faith to you, together with the grace that He delights to pour out freely on all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a never-ending love!

