



## Ephesians Chapter 1 verses 1 – 14

### Background Detail :-

**Author** – Paul. Written while he was in prison in Rome awaiting trial. The letter that is written not just with Ephesus in mind but is being written as a circular letter to be passed around a number of different fellowships!

**Purpose of Book** – Over this time Paul has written a number of letters, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. What is being expounded upon here is the growing revelation that the Holy Spirit is manifesting to Paul regarding the church of Jesus Christ. With all the tensions that are around between the Gentile Christians and the Jewish ones, Paul in this letter unravels the mysteries of the church and declares to God's people all that they have in common through the wonderful salvation of Jesus Christ. What he does in this letter is explain the identity of the church and in this, centralizes the reality of salvation and church development under the Lordship, power and activity of Christ himself. In every sense he exalts the victory and person of Jesus Christ and declares clearly a church which is the body of Christ, empowered and equipped to have victory in the world today.

**Discuss** – **What are the common blessings and privileges that we have as Christians that unite us with each other?**  
**Why do you think with all this in common the church can still be a place that is divided?**  
**What do you think we can do to overcome these difficulties?**

**Read** – Ephesians 1 v 1 – 14

Paul starts of this letter by in verse 1 calling the believers in Ephesus, Saints in the Lord Jesus Christ. What he is declaring here is not a title, but a condition that is theirs through the saving work of Christ within their lives. Right from the beginning he is saying whether Jewish or Gentile believer we are all one in Christ and have a common position before God.

**Discuss** – What do you think being a Saint of Jesus Christ actually means?

Do you think most people's view of sainthood today is Scriptural and helpful to the Christian?

For Paul the idea of being a Saint does not revolve around the good deeds of a person or their ability to do supernatural things. For Paul being a Saint is all about the activity of God. It is about the fact that God has made us holy through His Son Jesus. It is about the fact that we have and are being sanctified / changed through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are made holy by responding to God's call when He summoned us into His Kingdom.

In the following verses Paul gives us 3 activities and blessings that our salvation rests upon and is established through:-

**The first reality** that Paul establishes for us is that the salvation of the individual is dependent upon the choice of God.

**Read:-** Verse 4 - Verse 5 – Verse 11

There has been much discussion in church history around this subject of choice. Do we choose and respond to God to receive salvation or does God choose us and then open our eyes that we will be saved. Whatever view you take, one thing is clear, Scripture declares that God right before the world was made had ordained that some would come to salvation and thus show the world the reality of His grace, mercy and love.

**Discuss** – In light of these passages do you think a person chooses God – or God chooses the person?

Where do you think a person's free will comes into conversion?

It is important to say that for Paul he wants to remind the readers that it not by good deeds, religious duty or a random act of being born into the right nation that you are saved. Paul sees the sovereign choice of God at work. In this he levels the playing field for both Jew and Gentile alike. It is a wonderful declaration that we have been chosen by God before the formation of the world. It declares to us that we are a people of undeserved favor, who are precious to God and whose lives are not governed by chance or the frailty of man – but we have a sure and guaranteed destiny in Christ!

**The second reality** we find is that in Jesus we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of his glorious grace. (Verse 7) What we find here is that not only has God called us, but he has provided the means, in Christ, that we might be forgiven, cleansed and justified before Him. It is God Himself who has removed the offending barrier of sin, satisfied and taken away the punishment for sin that justice demands. It is the pureness and the power of Christ's blood that has done what man cannot do for himself, thus no man can boast. What we see is that salvation is of **God's design** – It is **God's provision** in Christ - It is **His delight** because of His great love for us and it is of **His choosing** – by undeserved favor.

**Discuss** – How does it make you feel to know that God Himself has been the instigator of your salvation?

How do you think these realities are meant to build the bonds of unity strong among all those who believe?