

EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST: THE CHURCH

Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing

Week 24

Applying the Word to Our Daily Lives

(Eph. 4:1-3)

Daily Food
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Monday

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:1-2; Col. 3:12-13

“The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace (Psa. 29:11) Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord ” (Heb. 12:14)

GRACE USHERS IN PEACE

This week, we will continue to enjoy the book of Ephesians, focusing on chapters 4, 5 and 6. When we study the Bible, we can see the concern of the apostles John, Peter and Paul to present a heavenly vision and then address its practice.

God does not waste any of His words, and every word in the Bible serves a specific purpose. The Bible speaks multiple times of the duo “faith and love,” as well as the trio “faith, love and hope.”

Ephesians 1:1-2 reads, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” What is grace? Grace is God Himself given to us freely in His Son for our enjoyment.

Grace is meant to produce peace in and around us: at home, in the church, with our brethren, at work, in the Lord’s work, etc. Knowing how important this is, the enemy is always trying to deprive us of peace, including the peace in our cities, neighborhood, etc.

In order to have an environment where there is peace, as God’s chosen and beloved saints, we must put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing

and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. As the Lord forgave us, so must we forgive others (Col. 3:12-13).

In other words, if we want to have peace with our brethren, we need to be clothed in mercy and not in demands. Moreover, we need to bear and support one another. If someone falls down, we must help him.

At home, wives and husbands need to always support one another. When they feel weak, one must strengthen the other. When couples argue and try to knock the other down, their children feel unsafe, and go looking for safety elsewhere.

In addition to bearing one another, there must be mutual forgiveness among the brethren. If you say, “I forgive you,” you may be thinking, “I will forgive your mistake, but I don’t make mistakes.” Mutual forgiveness implies acknowledging that not only others make mistakes, but we make mistakes too. While forgiveness may not be easily practiced, those who desire peace must learn to forgive as the Lord forgave us.

Key Point:

Keeping peace with all.

Your Key Point:

Question:

What has been the result of enjoying God’s grace in your life.

Tuesday

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:29-31; Rom. 14:17; Eph. 2:13-17; Col. 3:15

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.” For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, “Peace be within you.” Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good” (Psa. 122:6-9)

THE NEED FOR PEACE IN THE CHURCH LIFE

In order to have a church life full of enjoyment, we need peace; otherwise, we cannot move forward. Hence, we need to allow Christ to be the arbitrator of our heart. In other words, instead of judging and holding on to our reasonings, we should allow Christ to have the final say (Col. 3:15). In the Middle East, for instance, there is not much progress because there is no peace. Having endured intense periods of war in the past, countries such as Japan and Germany have progressed and developed during the peaceful times that followed. Today, these two countries are among the world's most advanced nations.

Ephesians 2:13-14 reads, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle

wall of separation.” The term both here refers to the Jews and the Gentiles. In order to have peace in the church, we need to realize that the Lord has already broken down the wall of enmity. This needs to be a reality in the church life, for the wall has indeed fallen.

The Lord “abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace” (Eph. 2:15). Peace is mentioned yet a second time in this chapter. The Lord is our peace, and He is the One who brings in peace. On the cross, Christ crucified sin, sins, the world, Satan, the old man and the old ordinances.

These ordinances are a great hindrance for the church, mainly among the serving ones, as each one has his own way of doing things. These ordinances, which originate in the soul-life, have already been eliminated by Christ: “And that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near” (Eph. 2:16-17).

In order to grow in number, the church needs peace. If there is peace in the church, people will come.

Let us read Romans 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” The phrase “eating and drinking” here refers to personal preferences.

Some eat meat, others eat vegetables and so on. The kingdom of God, however, is righteousness. As for righteousness, it refers to doing God’s will and living a peaceful life at home and with our brothers. Once there is righteousness, we have peace, and with peace there is joy. In this environment, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

Key Point:

Let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts.

Your Key Point:

Question:

What happens when there is peace in a certain place?

Wednesday

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:15

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
(Eph. 4:1-3)

WALKING IN A WAY WORTHY OF BUILDING UP THE CHURCH

The building up of the church requires us to walk in a way worthy of our calling: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3). We are not competing against one another in the church, but we are members of one another. In a body, there are no competing members; we are all important to one another. There must be mutual care among the brethren and never competition.

God has called us to walk with all lowliness and gentleness. In the church, there should never be one who desires to take advantage of another. If I were to

damage a brother, I would be damaging myself. It is also important that we do not cultivate an environment of mistrust in our midst.

Being longsuffering and patient is needed while helping to perfect others that they may grow in life. We ought to bear one another. Imagine that you were playing soccer, and a professional player joins your team. I believe you would not say, “I don’t want him in my team; he will steal my thunder.” Dear saints, we are all in the same team. Our enemy, on the other hand, wants to decrease our team. Let us be patient and meek, and strive to keep the oneness of the Spirit. We keep this oneness by turning to the Spirit. When we live in our flesh, we damage the whole body of Christ. Only by turning to the Spirit can we keep the bond of peace. This peace unites and leads us forward in the edification of the church.

Ephesians 4:4 reads, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.” Thanks to God, there is only one body. Do not concern yourself with competition, for all members are important in this body. Moreover, there is only one hope, which means that we should not divide ourselves, as we all share one body, one Spirit and one hope: “one

Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (vv. 5-6).

God has given us Christ, who is full of grace. Grace is the first gift we received through redemption.

God delivered us from sin and redeemed us. Through Christ, we received God’s life and were put into the church. Now, as members of the body of Christ, we are being built up together into the dwelling place of God in the Spirit. We are not isolated in the universe, but all part of this collective building. Hallelujah!

Key Point:

We need one another to grow in life and build up the body of Christ.

Your Key Point:

Question:

Have you been walking in a manner worthy of your calling?

Thursday

Scripture Reading: Isa. 55:1; John 1:14, 17; Eph. 4:7-16; 1 John 4:7-10

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (*1 John 3:16*)

WALKING IN GRACE

The walk in grace revealed in the book of Ephesians, is directly linked to the exercise of our gifts for the building up of the church: “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (4:7). Isaiah 55:1 invites us to come to the waters, that we may buy and eat without money or price.

This is grace.

Is there a way to intensify this enjoyment? Yes! By exercising our gifts! In the human body, when a member functions, it receives nourishment and oxygen. However, if a member is immobilized or not exercised, it succumbs to atrophy. Likewise, if you do not exercise your gifts, you will not receive more grace, and thus you will not grow. When someone believes in the Lord Jesus, he becomes a member of the body of Christ and the Spirit gives him a gift. Ephesians 4:8-10 tells us that He “gave gifts to men.” The first gift we received was the gift of calling on the Lord’s name, “Oh Lord Jesus!” As a new member begins to function in the

body, serving with others, the divine life will grow in him.

Jesus has descended into the lower parts of the earth and ascended into the heavens that He might fill all things. He Himself has given to the church “some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).

The brethren mentioned in the previous verses have consecrated their lives to look after, serve and perfect their brethren for the work of the ministry. In the church, people are not replaced by others, but perfected. The goal of this perfecting is to help us grow “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Eph. 4:13-14).

The care we experience in the church life is quite encouraging: “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from

whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:15-16). We are all in this process. As members of one another, we need to build up one another in love.

Walking in grace is not merely receiving something from God in a passive way, but rather becoming an active member of the body of Christ, exercising our gift to promote the growth of the whole body. When the body grows, we grow. Hallelujah!

Key Point:

Growing in life through grace.

Your Key Point:

Question:

What does it mean to walk in grace?

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:17-28

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” *(John 1:1-5,14)*

WALKING IN TRUTH

God is the source of light, and His light comes to us as truth. In his gospel, John says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus manifested truth among men, who, having been created after the image and likeness of truth, did not have truth as their content and substance.

Truth is immutable, constant and unshakable. Hence, Hebrews 12:28 tells us about an unshakable kingdom. Everything that can be shaken in your life, will be shaken by God. Sometimes, we experience difficult situations and do not understand why. God shakes what has no substance, so that only what is real may remain: truth. He is using our time in the church life to remove everything that is false, all that is vanity.

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the

futility of their mind” (Eph. 4:17). While the natural man walks according to his vain thoughts, God’s children cannot walk like the Gentiles. What is occupying our thoughts these days? Our thoughts must be filled with truth and divine substance.

Continuing in Ephesians 4, verses 21-24 read, “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” We used to walk by our old man, in deceitfulness. Now, in the church, we are being instructed in the truth that is in Jesus. If anyone still lives by the old man, his life will be inconsistent and without truth as its content. Let us put off the old man, and put on the new man created by God out of truth.

Verse 25 says, “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.” Lying is the opposite of truth. As members of one another, let us only speak the truth to avoid harming others.

Key Point:

Christ came to us full of grace and truth.

Your Key Point:

Question:

What is the result of putting on the new man?

Saturday

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:29–5:19

“Therefore, He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Eph. 5:14-17)

WALKING IN LOVE, IN LIGHT AND IN SPIRIT

The book of Ephesians shows us that we need to live in a manner worthy of our calling. In the last two days, we have been learning what it means to walk in grace and in truth. Today, we will address the walk in love, in light and in spirit.

Ephesians chapter 5 begins by speaking about walking in love: “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love” (vv. 1-2a). As God’s children through Jesus Christ, we can also walk in love.

Since God is light, we can also walk as sons of light: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light” (Eph. 5:8-13). As sons of light, we must reprove the shameful and unfruitful works of darkness.

That which is not truth cannot exist in the light. Only truth abides in the light, as it reproves everything that is false.

While God’s children must walk in light, some might still be

attached and conformed to this present age.

Hence, the Lord says, “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph. 5:14). Unlike the foolish, we need to be awakened and active, redeeming our time.

The best way to be active is to be filled with the Spirit by walking in spirit: “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18-19). When a person is drunk, he is generally not ashamed of what he does, as he does not care what others may think. In the church life, we need to exercise our spirit and be drunk with the Spirit. In the meetings, those who are drunk with the Spirit might leap, sing, proclaim the Word, prophesy and so on, without feeling timid or ashamed.

He who is filled with the Spirit overflows grace and truth to those around him. Let us have this experience in the church life and in our homes. Do not always come to the meetings hoping that someone else will warm up your spirit. In order to be filled with the Spirit, let us sing spiritual songs and speak psalms to one another. We should always exercise our spirit, and not just sing a song because we like the melody.

Key Point:

Exercising our Spirit.

Your Key Point:

Question:

How will you go to the church meetings from now on?

Sunday

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:20–6:24

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” (*Eph. 6:17-18*)

CONCLUDING PRACTICES IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

At the end of the book of Ephesians, Paul highlights the practice of the Word in the lives of the believers: “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God” (5:20-21). If each one of us considers the other superior, we will have no problems in the church. Let us learn to submit to one another.

In the following verse, Paul addresses married life: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (v. 22). After reading this, some sisters may say, “If my husband were like that other brother, I would submit to him.” The verse, however, says “submit to your own husbands.” God will surely use your spouse to work His grace and glory into you. If the Lord has given you a spouse, live a good and peaceful life together. Regardless of who is right or wrong, just ask forgiveness. Also, do not make empty promises, saying that you will change; instead say, “I want to lay hold of God’s grace and His truth in Jesus. I believe that God’s glory will change me.”

In chapter 6, Paul offers a word for children, encouraging

them to honor their parents in order to live a long life (vv. 1-3). Regardless of the condition of your parents, you must honor them. As for the parents, Paul says, “Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (v. 4). Do not provoke your children, but raise them in the Lord’s discipline.

The Lord wants to deal with every aspect of our lives, including the relationship between employer and employee: “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men”

(Eph. 6:5-7). We should never deceive our employers, only working when he is around. Remember that we are working for the Lord.

Paul also has a word for the employers: “And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” (Eph. 6:9). Sometimes it is especially difficult to employ brothers, as they may expect some kind of special treatment.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:10-12). Our battle is not against our brethren, parents, neighbors or spouse, but against spiritual powers and principalities.

As we fight, we need to pay special attention to the Word and prayer: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Eph. 6:17-18). We must learn to pray, for the battle we are waging is spiritual and not of this earth. The powers of darkness want to halt our spiritual progress and the spread of the gospel of God.

May the Lord give us grace to practice the rich words found in the book of Ephesians. It is not enough to have the revelation of its first three chapters, yet disregard its practice, which is for the building up of the body of Christ. As His collective bride and warrior, the Lord is making us holy and without blemish, and equipping us to fight the powers of darkness for the sake of His interests and kingdom. Let us preach the gospel and help others carry out God’s eternal will! Hallelujah!

Key Point:

Walking in spirit daily.

Your Key Point:

Question:

How much have you been interceding for others?

Additional Reading

Enrich your reading of the Daily Food by simultaneously reading the books suggested below:

“The Great Diamonds of the Bible” – chap. 34 – Dong Yu Lan