

Last time ~ **In introducing Paul's letter to the Ephesians,**

We began with ... **an over view of 3 things:**

- **The Person** ... that is the writer ... **Paul.**
 - **The Place** ... **the letter's destination:** ... **Ephesus.**
 - **The 'Story so far'** ... what's been happening ?
- Then we looked at the first ~ 7 verses.

In a moment we'll continue to read from (Chpt.1.)

But first ... Let's talk about **Bible translations** ...

All of us older ones, grew up with the AV (in USA, = KJV)

We got used to ... **reading ~ praying ~ & singing,**

In Elizabethan English ... just *as if Queen Elizabeth I. was talking to Walter Raleigh, or Francis Drake !*

Using: **Thee & Thou & 'eth'** on the ends ~ of lots of words

We didn't talk like that ... at any other time !

But we did in church !

We thought ~ it showed proper respect, for God.

Because, we assumed, that's how the NT was written,

But, this was an **assumption** !

And unfortunately, it was **wrong** !

When the King James Version was 1st published in 1611

All the people in England, used: 'Thee & Thou'

And 'walketh' & 'sayeth'. In their **everyday language.**

Both educated & uneducated people, **spoke** like that.

But they didn't use a '*different ...more reverent language*'

For addressing God, neither did the New Testament Christians

However ... So you don't misunderstand me.

The Bible repeatedly says, we **should** show proper respect and reverence for God, the Creator of everything.

Ps.111.v10: **The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom.**

But using archaic English (is not in itself) showing reverence.

Now let's come back to Paul, teaching the Ephesian Christians

We've already established,

That Paul was ... fluent in several languages.

In the 1st Century, there was '**Classical Greek**' that 'scholars' used. ... But 'common people' were not familiar with it.

& there was also '**Common Greek**' that was used every day in the markets all over the Empire.

Which made it possible ~ to trade internationally.

The New Testament was written, in this '**Common Greek**'
So that everyone ~ could easily understand it !

In using the New Living Translation ~ the intention is to:

Let **you hear** what Paul wrote ~ **just as clearly in English,**
As the Ephesian Christians heard it, when it was read to them.

Let's read from Ephesians 1.v.6-14

The whole purpose, of doing a detailed study of Ephesians

Is to dig beneath the surface and ask:

*What did these people **understand** by what Paul wrote to them*

And what **application**, does it have ~ for our lives today ?

Firstly ... in an overview of verses 3 -to- 14.

There are 2 little words that occur repeatedly: ('us' & 'in')

v3. How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed **us** with every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly realms, because we belong to Christ.

Skimming thro' these verses we find ~ **God** blessed us,
& loved us, & chose us in Christ ~ **He** adopted us into
His own family ~ & **His** secret plan has been revealed to **us**.
This happened:

In the heavenly realms ... **in** Him... **in** His sight... **in** the one
He loves ... **in** accordance with the riches of his grace.

What was true, for the **people of Ephesus** ~ **then**.

Is also true for **us** ~ **today**.

The repetition of these two little words ...

Emphasises ~ that God's many blessings,
Are not just accidents, or coincidence, they're all part of
God's eternal plan, to provide for His adopted children.

Scripture, also provides us with ...

the **only source** of information ~ about God himself.

He's: ~ all powerful ~ all knowing ~ & totally wise,

But more importantly: He wants **good** things for us.

So it's disappointing ~ when we hear some Christians say:
"**Why did God let this happen to me ?**

I... can't think of any good reason, **Why** He would do that !"

If, it's just an expression, of surprise & annoyance,

We can accept that !

But if, it turns into **anger** ~ and **miss-trust**.

We can only answer:

Hey ! If you knew why God does, or doesn't do, **everything**,
You would be 'God' ! He's the only one, who knows that.

So ~ let's come back to: Chpt.1.vs 7, 8 ... which say:

**He is so rich in kindness, that He purchased our freedom
Through the blood of His Son, and our sins are forgiven.**

**He has showered His kindness on us,
along with all wisdom and understanding.**

God doesn't measure out His grace ~ with a teaspoon !

Yet ... even when He's lavish with it,

His wisdom ~ and his understanding ~ of our situation,
mean that his grace and goodness to us ...

are totally appropriate ~ to our needs and circumstances.

v. 9 **God's secret plan has now been revealed to us:**

**It is a plan centred on Christ,
designed long ago, according to his good pleasure.**

Paul wants to **emphasise** ~ that God's **eternal plan**,
That He's now revealed.

Is not new to Him.

Just ... **previously unknown**, to us !

Revelation means ~ being told something,
That **we couldn't possibly know** ~ any other way.
WHAT... was revealed ?

The secret of God's purpose ... in Christ.

v10: **And this is his plan: At the right time ...He will bring
everything together under the authority of Christ
everything in heaven and on earth.**

The time is coming ~ when earthly: Kings ~ Presidents,
Prime Ministers ~ & Dictators ~ will all be done away with !

Because the **Lord Jesus Christ** will **rule** in heaven & on earth

When will this happen ? (v10 says) **“at the right time”**

Small children ~ have no real understanding of time,
and therefore no patience with delay.

If you say ~ “Let's go to the beach ~ this afternoon !
In no time they'll be asking ~ ‘Can't we go ~ **now** ?’
Only when they grow older, can they begin to understand
a planned delay ~ and enjoy “**Anticipation**” !

But it's not only children ~ that grow impatient with waiting !

Many Christian leaders have tried to calculate:
When, will God's time be up ? & when, will the end be ?

Some have even said: 'I think God must have hidden
A secret code in the Bible ... it'll be there, somewhere !
*If I can just find it, & **crack the code** ... I'll have the answer'*
But Jesus told his disciples: the timing is in God's hands alone
We're not meant to know. So looking, is just a waste of time.

v10: Paul uses a particular word for:

'He will bring everything together'

This word was used for the '**cohesion**'

that comes from good leadership,

And also ~ for '**adding up**' a column of figures.

In a world of confusion,

Where things often ... don't '**add up**' ~ or make sense.

We look forward to a time ...

When everything, will '**add up**' and be brought into:

A meaningful relationship ~ under the Lord's 'leadership'.

Back in v5. we read: His unchanging plan,

has always been to adopt us into His own family...

Last time, we said **Predestined**, as in: '**His unchanging plan**'

Simply means ~ 'chosen in advance' ~ or pre-determined.

v11, Furthermore, because of Christ,

we have received an inheritance from God,

for he chose us from the beginning,

and all things happen ~ just as he decided long ago.

Paul's applying the imagery ~ of the Roman Law of adoption,
Because, it can also describe, **our adoption & Inheritance.**

He chose us from the beginning. (indicates) ...

We're no after-thought. No last minute addition, to his plan.

We were: Chosen to inherit. Chosen to be God's heirs !

People in those days ~ and often still today,

Think of the **Jews** as ... God's chosen people

And they think that means ... 'chosen for privilege'

Lots of Jews ~ like to think that way ~ too ! But ...

That's a misunderstanding, of what's clearly taught in OT.

Because, they were primarily chosen ~ **for responsibility !**

To be a witness to the reality, of the one true God. Ps 33.vs 1-15
When they accepted that **responsibility**, & were obedient to it,

Then ... certain **privileges** ... came with it !

The Roman law regarding adoption, involved ...

These same two elements ~ **Responsibility & Privilege.**

But whether it's the Jews and Gentiles back then,

or us today... When people want, all the **Privileges ...**

without accepting the Responsibility, the system falls over.

Throughout the letter, Paul has been using the word '**us**'

To mean: **both Jewish Christians, and Gentile ones.**

For both of them ... to be sitting in the one congregation ...

Was just as unusual **then**, as it is today ~ when there are both **Jews** and **Palestinians** ~ sitting in the same church. **It does happen** ... but you'll never read about it, in the Herald ~ or in Time magazine.

This 'fellowship' and 'friendship' of two, normally antagonistic groups ~ is a present day example, Of how 'One Day' Christ will bring all things, & all peoples Together, in total harmony, under His leadership.

In verses: **12, 13 & 14.**

Paul reminds them ~ that both Jews & Gentiles, have come Into a right relationship with God ~ on the same basis.

So neither group ~ has any reason to feel superior !

Firstly we need to **listen** ~ and then **respond** to God's offer: That is: **to believe what he says ...and trust him.**

Because ~ as we do our part ~ God always does His !

When Paul first came to Ephesus ~ he met some Jews, Who said ... they had **already** become ... Jesus' disciples. But **their understanding of the gospel**, was very limited.

We pick up that story in ~ Acts 19. vs 1-7

These same people, are now sitting there, in the Church that Paul's writing to.

v13. says: **And now you also, have heard the truth,
the Good News that God saves you.
And when you believed in Christ, he identified you
as His own, by giving you the Holy Spirit,**

Paul uses **two** important words in verses 13, 14...

1^{stly} the word that was used, when a document was **sealed**.

The Ephesians ~ were very familiar with the use of a seal.

Official documents were verified by the seal's impression,
and usually, **personal letters** were sealed, as well.

The seal showed: both the **origin** and the **genuineness of it**.

Any document ~ without a seal ... was suspicious !

Why was the writer not willing to: 'identify himself'

By 'sealing it' ?

Some of us, may remember (from our childhood) well, **I do**.

Being sent to the chemist with a prescription.

The chemist wrapped up everything in brown paper,
and then sealed the parcel, with **red** sealing wax.

It was the Chemist's guarantee ~ that what was in the parcel,
was exactly what the Doctor had prescribed.

If you got home ... and it wasn't still sealed,

You'd be asked '**why**' ? And you'd be in big trouble !

Paul's teaching is applicable ~ to both them, and us.

Not only are we sealed with God's H/S ~ (but there's more)

The 2nd word (in v14) tells us, the Holy Spirit, is God's **deposit** meaning ~ God's **down payment**, & therefore:

The guarantee of our inheritance !

For the young man ~ adopted under Roman law,
His **most precious possession**, was his **adoption document**.
Properly signed and sealed. He needed to guard it with his life.
Because if he lost it ... **who would believe him ?**

Sometimes ~ he was also given a gift of money,
to buy himself some new clothes ~ or whatever he needed.

The signed and sealed document ~ was the legal recognition
of the new relationship ~ But the 'deposit' money,
was a public declaration ~ of the new relationship !

Paul says the Holy Spirit, is **both**: our **sealed guarantee**,
and '**the deposit**' ~ declaring our new **status**
and our new **relationship** with God, the Father.

And still today ~ when you make a substantial purchase:
Like buying a business, or a house ~ you're expected,
to put down a deposit ~ as a sign of genuine intent !

But wait ... there's still a bit more in this verse !
The greek word "arrabon" ~ the word for a deposit,
had another meaning ~ that the **Ephesians** knew very well.

It was the word they used ...for an Engagement ring !
A valuable ~ and visible sign ... of a commitment,
to be fully realised, in the future !

Paul continues in: **Chpt.1. vs. 15, 16, 17**

God's revelation, comes to us on *two levels* !

Firstly, God revealed: to Abraham & Moses, & Isaiah & Paul
Things that were previously unknown ~ about Himself,
And the rules for us, to live out our relationship, with Him.

The second level, of revelation ...

Relates to our personal understanding of God's truth.

It's new to us personally ! ...The H/S gives us insight ...
Into **how** God's truth applies in **our** lives **today**.

Paul says:

*Asking God to give **you** spiritual wisdom, and understanding,
so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.*

That's when **we say**: "Wow ! **I** never realised **that** before !

v18, says: ***I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light,**
so that you can understand the wonderful future ...*

He has promised to those he called.

*I want you to realise what a rich and glorious inheritance,
He has given to his people.*

There are three elements here: **Hope, Inheritance, & Power.**

Paul wants these ~ relatively new Christians to have ...

A growing understanding ~ of the '**hope**' that's theirs now !

And of their '**glorious inheritance**' ~ to come.

Some of them would be trades people,

Some of them would be slaves,

Most of them would be fairly short,

Of 'this world's goods.'

- But God has reserved an inheritance ~ for **each** of them,
That's **beyond** their wildest dreams !
- An inheritance that cannot be disallowed, or confiscated.
- Can't be taken away ~ misplaced ~ or accidentally lost !

Knowing ~ the right thing to do, is one thing,

But having the power to do it ~ is another !

Paul reminds them ...that: God's power
is provided through His Spirit ~ as He indwells us.

Next time we'll pick up at verse 18.

To discover ... what he means by 'God's Power'

And just how ~ it can change our lives !

In 'today's world'