

**Episode:** Paul's Letters Series No. 11

**Narrator:** Tychicus

**Primary Scriptures:** Ephesians 1-6

**Story Summary:** Paul's letter to the churches in Ephesus

**Location:** Roman Empire; Asia; Ephesus

**Time:** AD 30 Jesus crucified and resurrected; Pentecost; Holy Spirit arrives  
AD 48 Paul's "famine visit" to Jerusalem; First Missionary Journey starts  
AD 50 Council at Jerusalem; Start of Second Missionary Journey.  
AD 53 Start of Third Missionary Journey  
AD 61 Paul writes *Ephesians* while imprisoned

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Ephesians 1:4-6, 11-12, 18; 2:1-2, 8-10; 3:10, 16-17; 4:12-13 22-24; 29-30; 5:3, 15-17, 21; 6:4, 11-13

This episode assumes Paul wrote *Ephesians* in about 61 AD, while imprisoned in Rome. A few years earlier, Paul lived in Ephesus for about three years during the Third Missionary Journey, so he knew many of the Christians in the church there. From Paul's interactions with their elders at the end of that journey, we know the people of Ephesus loved him, and he loved them back.

The church at Ephesus had been founded and established by Priscilla, Aquila, and Paul. It seems they built a firm foundation because Paul does not have to address any obvious problems in this letter to them.

If you were to be banished to an island and only got to take one of Paul's letters, which one would you take? *Ephesians* would be well worth considering because in it, Paul shares theological insights and very practical information for living a Christian life.

In his opening statements, Paul offers insights about God's will and predestination that have kept theologians befuddled and arguing through the centuries. One thing not up for disagreement is this truth: God is above all things and over all things. Through His mercy and grace, He has given life to those who follow Him. Ephesians 2:8-10 are some of the most familiar, and influential, verses in the Bible. It is worth the time to read these verses in various versions of the Bible in an effort to glean everything you can from them.

Ephesians 4-6 give guidance about powerfully living in unity in the church, within families, and among individual Christians. The Ephesians lived in a society that reveled in drunkenness, sexual excess, and idolatry. The information Paul gives them about righteous living may sound elementary to modern Christians, but it would have been surprising news to many of them. Nevertheless, everything Paul tells the Ephesians remains relevant in the modern world. That is one reason *Ephesians* is so important to contemporary Christians.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Since *Ephesians* is written to the entire church at Ephesus, choose some passages at random and explain how they could be applied both to the church and to individuals.
2. The phrase “to the praise of his glory” appears three times in Ephesians 1<sup>1</sup>. What does that mean in general? What does it mean to your life today?
3. The idea of predestination permeates Ephesians 1:3-14. How would you define *predestination*? What does that mean for you and for the rest of the world?
4. Ephesians was written as a letter to the church at Ephesus and its members. Your Bible probably has chapters, verses, paragraphs, and section headings which have all been added. Try to see how you would understand Chapters 4, 5, and 6 if you only had it in letter form. Would you see Paul’s instructions to the family as just an extension of his instructions to the church? Would you think of spiritual warfare as being an individual battle or a battle as a church community (or both)?

### Application Questions:

1. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 at least five times out loud, pausing each time to contemplate it. How have you been saved? Who causes you to be saved? Is your salvation earned or is it a gift? Are you a special person designed by God, or just one faceless person among seven billion on earth? What did God prepare for you to do?
2. Looking at Ephesians 4:11-13, what are some works of service you can start doing to help build up the church you attend?
3. Looking at Ephesians 4:15, how can you speak the truth in love to someone about a difficult situation that needs to be addressed?
4. Ephesians 4:20-24 talks about the old self and the new self. In your life, what did your old self look like? What does your new self look like?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prays for the “eyes of your heart” to be enlightened. What does that mean to you? How could you “see” better with the eyes of your heart?
2. Based on Ephesians 3:16-19, what kind of love does Jesus have for you? How easy or difficult is it for you to receive that love?
3. It is work having friends and being a friend. If you behave according to Ephesians 4:2, will you have more friends?
4. Looking at Ephesians 4:29, what would you say is unwholesome talk? Is it swearing? Is it saying mean things? Is it telling things in such a way that it is deceptive?
5. Based on the movies and games you have seen, are battles best fought as individuals or as teams? Reading Ephesians 6:10-17, do you see spiritual battles fought as individuals or as units of people?

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<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14