**Ephesians week 4**

Background:

* Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul around AD 60–62 while he was imprisoned in Rome.  
  It was addressed to the church in Ephesus but may have also been a circular letter intended for several churches in Asia Minor.
* Paul had spent about 2–3 years in Ephesus roughly 10–15 years earlier (see Acts 18–19). During that time, he preached first to the Jews in the synagogues and then to the Gentiles.
* Ephesus was a large, cosmopolitan trading city and home to the Temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and possibly the largest building in the world at that time.

**Ephesians 1**

Predestination: God chose both the Jews and Gentiles *before* creation. Ephesians deals with the “mystery” of God’s plan for both Jew and Gentile. Both Jews and Gentiles are adopted as sons (because of Jesus).

**Ephesians 1**

**Ephesians 3:1-13** (Tim Keller)

1. The hardness of life
2. The wonder of grace
3. The brilliance of the church
4. The freedom that comes to those that understand these truths
5. **The Hardness of Life:**

Paul breaks off in v1 as he was distracted and begins to discuss suffering.

**Life is hard** – not just for bad people but also for good Christians. The Bible does not hide this from Christians.

1. **The Wonder of Grace:**

“Mystery” – it was always intended that Gentiles would be part of God’s body and plan. A counter-intuitive revelation.

*“It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.****Even angels long to look into these things.”***

---- 1 Peter 1:12

1. **The Brilliance of the Church**:

V10-11 *“… intent … through the church …”*

***The great purpose of God 1:8-9 – to bring everything together in Jesus Christ***.

Main fact about life is that things fall apart – war, violent crime, racism (societies fall apart); hunger, relationships, disease (bodies fall apart). God, in Christ, will bring all these things together.

V10 – God’s purpose and good news is shown “through the church”. It is through the church community, not the individual, that the world can see what God has in store. The church is a new society.

“ **they** “ – angels and demons, are watching us.

Duet. 4:5-8 and Isaiah 42:6 & 49:6 **>** Israel was always intended to be a light to other nations.

“***81% believe a good Christian does not need to go to church***” This is contrary to what Paul is saying.

Paul is not naive, he knows how bad churches can be. He wrote Corinthians. But Paul still says the church is indispensable.

**How did you become who you are?** Was it individual decisions you have made in a vacuum? No, but because of your family, your upbringing, your culture. As a new Christian you need a new family, a new culture, a new community.

Paul is not lecturing to students but pasting to a hurting people.

1. No suffering is for nothing (Corrie ten Boom “*The Hiding Place*”)
2. No suffering will hurt you

**Q**: What does Paul call himself in v1 – “*a prisoner of Jesus Christ*”. Not of Rome!

1. All suffering intended for glory (coal to diamond – suffering for a purpose)

**Ephesians 3:14-21** (Tim Keller)

“ *I kneel* “ – Paul is passionate about this. Usually people prayed standing, but Paul is kneeling!

Paul prays that we, the church, would be strengthened with the power of the Spirit:

1. Why is that so important?
2. What is it?
3. How do we get it?

**(1) Why is that so important?**

Paul prays for 3 things (for Christians) –

1. Christ dwell in their hearts
2. know the love of Christ
3. filled with fullness of God

**Q**: Why is Paul asking God to give things they already have?

Difference in someone knowing a truth and experiencing a truth.

**(2) What is it?**

**Q**: What is the power/strength of the Holy Spirit?

Inner sensitivity to Gospel truth. Grasp – not just believe but get ahold of it. Grasp = wrestle.

**Q**: How can you know that a ghost pepper is hot? 1) Watch YouTube videos or 2) taste it.

**(3) Filled with Fullness of God/Life** (need both *Zeal* and *Knowledge* [Rom. 10:1-2])

1. Regular seeking prayers
2. Obedience (kneel)
3. Community (“*together with all the saints*”)

Determined Meditation (daily quiet time):

1. Reading (listening) to God
2. Praying (talking) to God
3. Meditating (talking to self) < not emptying your mind but filling it with truth

Isaiah 1:18 “*even if your sins were as scarlet*” Blood on your hands (like Paul). It doesn’t matter what you have done, Jesus’ grace is infinitely wide, long, high to deal with this! Eph. 3:16-19