

## Ephesians 1:1-6

Eph 1:1 (NIV) 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul wrote this letter while a prisoner in Rome. Some of the early manuscripts do not have "in Ephesus". It is believed that this letter was first sent to Ephesus but meant to be a circulatory letter to the churches of Asia Minor. Paul means 'small' which was his Greek name. His Hebrew name was Saul. Saul means 'desired'. The first records of his interaction with the church always uses the name Saul. As his ministry became increasingly to the Gentile world he began to use his Greek name.

An apostle is a person sent as a representative to communicate the decisions of others who are in authority. Today we would use the word 'ambassador'. The Sanhedrin had authority over the Jewish world. When they made a decision that affected someone outside of their meeting place they would send an 'apostle' to deliver the message. When Paul used this word he was expressing that he did not have any authority in himself but was simply conveying the authority of another. The disciples chose a man to take Judas place, a twelfth apostle, but Paul may be saying that God overruled their decision and chose him. It was not Paul's choice. He was persecuting Christians. God met him on the road to Damascus and told him He wanted to use him to spread the good news of salvation through Jesus.

The word saints has a very interesting origin. The world called the followers of Christ, Christians, meaning little Christs. When the Apostle Paul looked for a term he saw it in the word *hagios*. When the Greeks offered meat upon the altar of their god the meat was then *hagios*, meaning dedicated to God. Paul thought, hey that is what we are, a piece of meat dedicated to God, laid on the altar for Him to do with as He wills. The expression, "the faithful in Christ Jesus" is a reworded repetition of saints. It is a common Hebrew tool clarifying and elaborating on the meaning of the previous expression. A saint is one who is faithful to God and is in Christ Jesus. Being in Christ makes us faithful. God sees the faithfulness of His Son. Abiding in Christ produces a fruitful and therefore faithful life. If you are like that meat on the altar then you are abiding in Christ and producing fruit for the Kingdom a God. You are faithful. This was his introduction. It is a letter to believers.

Eph 1:2 (NIV) 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is said to be the most beautiful word ever penned, *charis*. Like peace, it comes from God. Grace is our greatest need. It is God's unmerited favor. He

gives it to us freely because of the work of His Son. God sees value in you because His Son made it possible for you to be transformed into His image. That means there is invaluable raw material in you. It just needs the transforming process that is instantaneous and yet life long. It is instantaneous in God's eyes and yet it is a life long work in our experience.

Peace is also from God. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are no longer at war with God. We have laid down the weapons of our rebellion and come into harmony with His will and ways. It is a peace unlike anything the world has to offer. This was a common Greek greeting but knowing Christ raised the greeting to a whole new level of which the Greek mind had only an inkling. Man usually does not realize that a great deal of his unrest comes from the war in his heart against God. Peace is an end to that war. The note of your heart now harmonizes with that of God's as your will comes in line with His. That is real peace. Remember Paul is writing this in prison. It is not dependent on conditions and circumstances. It is a peace that passes understanding. This Greek word would call to mind the Hebrew equivalent *shalom*. *Shalom* was not just the absence of strife but every possible good for the person upon whom it was pronounced. That is what God does for His children. (Ro 8:28)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.  
Eph 1:3 (NIV)

Verse 3 through 14 is one long lyrical statement of praise. Again, consider where the Apostle is as he writes and then wonder at the praise that overflows from his lips. Praise is due to God because of all these wonderful things. First, we have every spiritual blessing that can be received in Christ Jesus. You can't ask for a spiritual blessing you don't already have. You can ask that you avail yourself to those blessings in a greater way. You can ask for a willingness to let them flow through your life to others, but you can't ask for more because you have it all in Jesus. 1Cor 3:21-23 That is something to praise God about regardless of what your present conditions are!

Eph 1:4-6 (NIV) *4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*

We have every spiritual blessing in Christ because we were chosen in him before the world was made. Paul never sees us choosing Jesus, for he was a rebel against God. He sees the mercy of God picking us out. That is consistent with Jesus statement in John 15:16, "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you." Have you praised God for choosing you? He set His love upon you and

me. I don't know why, but I'm praising God for it. Some believe only a few are chosen. Others believe those who will choose to be chosen are chosen. I think it is a mystery we will have to wait for heaven to get an answer to. In the mean time just praise Him for choosing you!

He chose you to be holy. That means 'set apart for God's purposes'. You are to be different from the world around you. The fruits of the Spirit should set you apart as a very strange character. Your work, your leisure, your worship, and your conversation should all display Jesus character to a sin sick world. This is the same root as the word for saints in verse one, lives dedicated to God. And we are chosen to be blameless. That is like the unblemished lamb. In God's sight we are spotless, set apart for His use, children of God. Experientially we still stumble and are in the process of being transformed into the image of Jesus. But rest assured, God sees the finished product. Whew!

Some translators would put the words "in love" with this last thought, some would add it onto the next verse. We will use the NIV rendering. It was love that chose us, before we were formed, to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. Why? It was His pleasure, His will. It will bring praise to the glorious grace of God. Men and angels wonder that God would choose such defiled beings to be transformed into sons. When we consider it we marvel at the wonder of God's grace (undeserved favor) and can only say, "Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise." That grace is our free gift in Jesus, the One he loves. "This is my son, Whom I love, with Him I am pleased!" When you are in the One that pleases God, you are loved just as he is loved.

Questions for review:

How did Paul see his calling?

What did it mean to be an apostle?

What does it mean to be saints/holy?

What is grace?

What is peace?

Why and when did God choose you?

How does God see you?