

EPHESIANS: SIT, WALK, STAND

Imagine sitting in the recliner sipping lemonade when you hear a knock on the door. You peek through the window and see Ed McMahon standing on your front porch. He's holding a 4 foot by 6 foot check from the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes. The check is written for \$10 million, and it's made payable to *you!*

You realize that all of a sudden you've hit the jackpot. You've found the pot of gold. You've hit the mother-lode. You've become an instant multi-millionaire...

In Ephesians Paul plays the role of a spiritual Ed McMahon. He knocks on the door of our hearts with some exciting news. *In Christ we've struck it rich!*

Paul begins Ephesians showing-off our spiritual portfolio - *who we are and all we have in Christ*. He wants us to see ourselves seated,

or positioned, in Christ. 2:6 says that God has made us to "sit together in the heavenly places in Christ." After we learn to sit - our walk, or conduct, comes next. In 4:1 Paul encourages all believers "to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called". And once we learn to walk, then we can stand and fight against the enemy. Paul says in 6:11, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

But notice the sequence... we've got to sit before we can walk, and walk before we can stand. The Christian life is *sit, walk, stand*.

Ephesians is our *wealth, walk, and warfare* - or, our *calling, conduct, and conflict*.

Chapters 1-3, is the believer's spiritual *habitat*; Chapters 4-5 we're heaven's *diplomat*. And chapter 6 describes our *spiritual combat*.

Devotion Box - Two Addresses

The book of Ephesians is Paul's letter to a group of believers on the shores of the Aegean Sea in Asia Minor - but it's a unique letter in that it has two addresses.

Its recipients are occupying two locations simultaneously. Physically they are "in Ephesus" and spiritually they are "in Christ". If Paul were writing to us today he would write "To the saints who are in Atlanta, and faithful in Christ Jesus..." Every believer has two locations. Physically, I live in Atlanta. Spiritually, I live in Christ.

With any physical locale there are natural advantages that accompany the surroundings - perks and privileges that cost you nothing - that just come with the turf. The Christians in Ephesus visited the beach and ate fresh seafood. In Atlanta we can play in the fountains at Centennial Park and cheer for the Braves. Atlanta and Ephesus are both nice places, but both locations have their shortcomings.

Not so with our spiritual location. Verse 3 says God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." "*In Christ*" is the *in place!* In Christ you have at your disposal "every spiritual blessing". There's nothing missing. There's nothing you need you don't possess. You're a spiritual tycoon!

GOD'S TREASURE CHEST

Imagine a treasure chest. Paul pops it open, and combs through the gold doubloons with his fingers. In verses 3-14, this is what he does with our riches in Christ....

Verses 4-5, in Christ, God "chose us" and "predestined us to adoption as sons". Verse 6 tells us we've been "accepted in the Beloved". Verse 7 says we "have redemption through His blood". Verses 9-10 tell us that in Christ we're a part of a grand purpose. Through the ages of time God has been gathering "together in one all things in Christ." Verse 11 says we have an eternal "inheritance".

But what about in the meantime?

There're also immediate blessings in Christ!

Verse 13 says when we first trusted in Jesus we "were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise". The Spirit's presence in my life is the Father's mark of ownership. The Holy Spirit is the proof of purchase that we belong to God.

The Spirit is also "the guarantee of our inheritance". He's the down payment on all our future blessings. The blessings we'll experience one day in heaven we can know to a lesser degree right now through the indwelling Spirit.

And remember- these blessings come not as a result of our *performance*, but our *position*. Our blessings in Christ can't be earned by good works or rituals. They're benefits of membership. If you're in Christ they come with the turf!

It reminds me of the art dealer whose son died. Soon after the father followed. A crowd gathered for the auction of the man's enormous collection. According to the father's wishes the first piece auctioned was a portrait of his son. The painting was worth very little, and the only bid was for a few dollars. It was offered by a friend of the family.

But with that one purchase the auctioneer closed the auction. He awarded the entire collection to the man who had purchased the son's portrait. It turns out the collector wanted all his wealth to go to the person who loved his son. That's why God's blessings are *in Christ*. *To receive God's wealth you have to love His Son*.

RAGS TO RICHES

Ephesians 2 recounts a “rags to riches” story! And the main character is you!

Before you came to Jesus you had a problem. It was worse than you thought. You weren’t just mal-adjusted, or immature, or dysfunctional, or sick... it was far worse... you were dead. Spiritually, you were separated from the life of God.

According to verse 3 we were sinners by nature. We’re all spiritual stillborns. Hey, we are in bondage to sin and Satan the moment we’re conceived.

It’s a sad story until you reach verse 4. Here’s a ray of light, “But God...” We’d still be dead if God hadn’t butted in and crashed the party. I love the rest of verse 4, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us”. God is rich in what I need most. He has more than enough mercy. It’s been said, “Unlike other kings, the throne of God is made of mercy, not marble.”

Verse 5 says, “even when we were dead in trespasses, (God) made us alive together with Christ”. God performed a divine transplant. He placed *His Holy Spirit* into *my hollow spirit*. God sparked new life in me. I became alive to God - rescued from death to life - from lust to love - from death to a seat in heavenly places.

Verses 8-9 explain that all the credit for our rags to riches story goes to grace. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Grace is love that’s on the house - and it’s grace that motivates God. If it was something we could earn, then we could boast, but God’s favor is a gift. There’s no bragging in heaven.

We are the product of God’s work, not our own. Verse 10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The Greek word translated “workmanship” is the word “*poema*” - from which we get our English word “*poem*”. Guys, we are God’s poetry - God’s work of art. Good works don’t make me fit for God - it’s God who makes me fit for good works.

THE SOCIAL POWER OF THE GOSPEL

In Paul’s day the church consisted of Jews and Gentiles. The Jews tried to keep the Law - the Gentiles didn’t - and compliance to the Law became a wedge between them. But according to verse 15, Jesus broke down this “wall of division”. Instead of Jew and Gentile Jesus created “one new man” - a new race of people.

Humanity is no longer divided into Jew and Gentile - black and white - rich and poor - young and old. Today you are either *in Christ* or *outside Christ*.

Through Jesus we’re not only reconciled to God, but we’re reconciled to our fellow man. The love of Jesus is not just a powerful *spiritual force* - it’s a potent *social force*. The love we’ve received in Christ transcends human differences. It gives feuding people a stronger reason to get together than to remain apart.

Ephesians 2:19-22 teach us that as Christians we’re citizens of the same nation - we’re members of the same family - we’re bricks in the same building. We’re a holy temple - a place of witness and worship. God’s dwelling place on earth! Think of it, we’re the place where God likes to hang out! What an honor!

A SECRET TO SHARE

In 3:4 Paul speaks of the Gospel as a “mystery”. When we use the word “*mystery*” we think of a suspenseful story - a search for a smoking gun. We think of a mystery as a phenomenon with no explanation - a puzzle that can’t be solved. To the contrary, a biblical “mystery” may be a simple, easily understood truth, yet God kept it a secret for a time. It would’ve never been considered by the mind of man had it not been revealed by God. A biblical mystery is “a *sacred secret*”. And throughout the Old Testament the Gospel of Grace was a mystery.

Most secrets are meant to be kept, but not the Gospel. The message of God’s grace is a secret to share!

Devotion Box - What We’ll Be Doing In Heaven

The first step in the Christian life is not a step at all - it’s a sit. We’re not ready to serve Christ until we see ourselves seated in Christ.

Here’s a Top 10 list... *The Top 10 reasons to look forward to heaven...*

“10) You can begin the Lord’s prayer, ‘Our Father who art here.’ 9) You can get the answer to the question, ‘why?’ 8) ‘Touched By An Angel’ is always on TV. 7) Soul music for eternity. 6) Real golden arches. 5) A great view. 4) ‘No pain, no gain’ becomes ‘no pain, no pain’. 3) When you say, ‘O God’, you’ll hear ‘Yes?’ 2) Mansions with no mortgages. 1) All the food is fat free and still tastes great!”

But 2:7 tells us exactly what we’ll do in heaven, “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” It’ll take eternity for God to show us all the ways He loves us.

Devotion Box - The Ultimate Experience

If you were asked to name the ultimate experience how would you answer? Would you say... "flying to the moon", "journeying around the world", "climbing Mount Everest?" To Paul, the ultimate experience was an encounter with God!

Paul describes life's ultimate experience in 3:16-21... He prays for us "to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." Through prayer we can draw *internal strength* from an *eternal source*. He adds "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;" He wants Jesus to be at home in our hearts – *even if He has to make some changes to do so*. He prays again, "that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;" Paul wants us to go beyond a basic understand of God's love and grasp the full volume of His love for us. Finally, Paul asks, "that (we) may be filled with all the fullness of God." Paul wants every pore of every part of our lives saturated with God's influence.

And after praying such a wonderful prayer Paul leaves it up to the Lord to do even more. In verse 20 he praises God "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..." Hey, the ultimate trip is an encounter with God!

WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING

In Christ Jesus you and I have the most prestigious position on earth. President, Prime Minister, Premier, Pope... pale in comparison with being a child of God.

In 1974 Richard Nixon resigned the presidency, and Gerald Ford took his place. Nixon did the work to become president. He shook hands and kissed babies. Ford did nothing, but once he was sworn in, we all expected Gerald to do a good job. Likewise, you've done nothing to become a child of God. It's a free gift – the result of His grace. But now that you are God's child He wants you to live like it. 4:1 tells us, "to walk worthy of the calling with which you've been called".

And verse 2 says that such a high calling demands a lowly walk. We're to walk in "lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love."

GIFTS FROM HEAVEN

Ephesians 4:7-11 tells us what Jesus did during the three days and nights his body lay in Joseph's tomb. Paul says His Spirit descended to Hades, where he rescued the saints who had believed in His coming beforehand. Jesus took these captives captive to Himself, and ushered them into the presence of the Father in heaven.

But Jesus wasn't done... *He gave gifts to men – and men as gifts*. He gave the church gifted leaders: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers. He still gives leaders to the church. *Jesus equips the church with men who can equip the church*.

Devotion Box - Keeping The Unity Of The Spirit

Ephesians 4:3 "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Unity is not something we produce. It's a gift from God - a work of the Spirit.

And understand - "the unity of the Spirit" is not a *unity of doctrine* – or a *unity of format* – or a *unity of friendship*. We won't all agree on all points of doctrine. There will always be various styles of worship. And we won't all be best friends.

But there is an affinity between all true believers. There's a warmth, a bond, an identification between us – the same Spirit lives inside us - and it's up to us to do whatever it takes to preserve that unity. Don't let hurt feelings, misunderstandings, or jealousies threaten our unity. Be humble. Be patient. Bear with one another. When a contention arises - work it out. Let's do all we can to remain united.

Verse 4 reminds us that when God looks on this world He sees only one Church made up of all true believers from many different churches. "There is one body." In addition, there's only "one Spirit... one calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all." Let's work hard to maintain our unity.

A PASTOR'S PRIORITY

Notice the pastor's job in 4:12. It's the "equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry". Most people think the minister's job is to do all the ministering - not so! It's a pastor-teacher's job to equip his people to minister.

The greatest need in the church today is for men to teach God's people God's Word. *Too often we preach to save sinners, rather than strengthen saints*. God's plan is for the pastor to prepare the people - then the people to reach the world.

When a pastor's priority is to teach God's Word the saints are no longer tossed to and fro, and carried about with every faddish and false doctrine that blows their way... Rather, they experience steady growth and reach spiritual maturity.

Devotion Box - Putting Off And Putting On

In 4:17-24 Paul encourages the Ephesians to "put off... the old man", and "put on the new man". He says in verse 23, "be renewed in the spirit of your mind..."

When we come to Christ our spirits are transformed, but the mind needs to be renewed. We need to adopt Christian values, perspectives, and mind-sets.

Guys, we need to hang up old attitudes and adopt new ones. Stop thinking like a heathen, and focus in on who you are in Christ. If you see yourself as a Christian, and think Christian thoughts - you're more likely to live a Christian life.

Bible Scan - Ephesians 1-6

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Tuesday, August 27th @ 6:30 PM—*Ladies Italian Potluck and Bible Study*... Sunday, September 1st—*Special music by "Before You Breathe" @ AM & PM services*.... Tuesday, September 10th 9:45 AM & 7:00 PM *Ladies Bible Study, "Face to Face with Women of the Bible" begins*... Next Bible Scan - August 25, 2002 - Philippians 1-4

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..." - Ephesians 2:10

Bible Scan
Memory Verse

AN ORDERED EQUALITY

Ephesians 5:22-33 talk about marriage, and the specialized roles of a husband and a wife - but that's all prefaced by verse 21, "submitting to one another in the fear of God." Marriage is founded on a mutual submission among two believers. It's been said, "Two people can make a successful marriage only after they get a divorce from themselves."

Speaking of marriage... Paul prescribes *an ordered equality*. In verse 22, the wife is to submit to her husband. In verse 23, the husband is head over the wife. That doesn't mean that men are any better than women. The arrangement is not based on male superiority. In fact, there's no such thing! God considers men and women as equals, but He's given each a specific role to play in the relationship. The husband is to lead. And the wife is to follow.

The word "submit" in verse 22 is the Greek word "*hupotasso*" means "*to arrange under*". Submission doesn't mean *a wife can't have a life* - it just means she'll arrange her life around her husband. Billy's wife, Ruth Graham, expresses Paul's intent in the advice she gives young girls... "Marry someone you don't mind adjusting to. God tailors the wife to fit the husband, not the husband to fit the wife."

A human body comes with one head—not two. Likewise a marriage works best when a wife lets her husband lead - and a husband loves his wife.

Often we think a wife has the more difficult job, but not after you read verse 25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it..." It's easier for a woman to submit to a man she knows loves her sacrificially. It's a lot tougher to be submissive to a selfish fellow who always puts himself first.

Verses 25-30 tell us how Christ loves the Church and how husbands ought to love their wives. Jesus sacrifices, sanctifies, glorifies, and prizes His bride. Men, do you sacrifice for your wife? Do you make her feel special, and encourage her spiritually? Do you share your successes? Are you sensitive to her needs? Guys, "Treat your wife like a thoroughbred and she'll never be a nag!"

PRINCIPLES FOR PARENTS

In the days of Rome kids were bound to obey parents, but parents were free to mistreat kids. Paul gives a reciprocal responsibility to the parents. Yes, kids need to obey, but parents need to lovingly and tenderly point them the right way.

Paul says in verse 4, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath..." Fathers and mothers should be careful not to frustrate their kids. Lower your expectations. Be consistent. Don't tease. Listen to your kids. Watch being overprotective. And always remember how children spell love... T-I-M-E.

Paul tells parents to bring up their kids "in the training and admonition of the Lord." "Training" means *discipline*. "Admonition" means *encouragement*. Bring up your kids with correction and direction - whippin' and equippin'. As Martin Luther said, they need the rod and the apple - *a rod of correction* and *a nod of approval*.

ADVERSARY, ARMOR, ARSENAL

In Ephesians 6 Paul teaches us to *stand* against the devil.

Satan has a big bag of tricks. Paul calls them in verse 11, "the wiles of the devil". They include doubt, jealousy, fear, condemnation, and the like... Satan's strategy is to use what he can to divert your attention off who you are and what you have in Christ. Rather than sitting and walking and standing - he wants you fidgeting and racing and wandering and snoozing. Satan wants to knock you out of a faith position and rob you of your blessings in Christ.

To counter his attacks Paul suits us up in our spiritual armor. Verse 14, *the belt of truth*. Satan manipulates our emotions. Make sure you surround your emotions with God's truth. Walk by faith, not by feeling. Put on *the breastplate of righteousness*. Make sure you want what God wants for you. Clothe your desires with righteousness. Verse 15, the *sandals of peace*. The Roman soldier wore shoes like cleats. If he fought on rocky terrain they gave him a steadier base. Don't get confused by what you *don't know*. Hold on to what you *do know* and let God's peace rule in your heart. Verse 16, *the shield of faith*. At times Satan shoots a barrage of fiery arrows in your direction. Hunker down in faith until the attack is over. Verse 17, the *helmet of salvation*. Fix your mind on the things of God.

Then pick up the two offensive weapons we find in verses 17-18. *Prayer* is the heavy artillery. *The Word* is for hand-to-hand combat.

Through prayer we bomb the strongholds until they're broken down, then we walk in with the Word, and slice up the enemy.