

Series: "Ephesians: Discovering Our Riches in Christ"

"The State of the Church"

Overview of Ephesians

January 20, 2008

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ILL. -

Last Sunday Carol & Sarah & I needed to talk about some issues that were going on in our lives. So, in order to be in an environment where we could focus, we decided to go to a restaurant; just the three of us. Away from everyone else so we could talk the issues through. I won't tell you where we went or the issues we were talking about, but what I do want to mention to you was the 'large' menu that they had. I opened this menu up and it was probably 5-6 pages in length with food items with an insert of their specials added inside. I began looking at all the items that restaurant provided and the first thought I had was... "I would like to sample every one of these!" They all looked so good and mouth watering!

My second thought was, "Why don't they just serve '2' items and make my choice easy?"

But then I realized if they did that I would return only a couple of times and find another restaurant to go to with more items on the menu!

SLIDE – "Discovering Our Riches in Christ" Pg. 1156

We are beginning a new series of messages today on the book of Ephesians. I couldn't help but think of my thoughts at this restaurant as I was approaching my study in preparation for our message today! We are terming our series "**Discovering Our Riches in Christ**" for a couple of different reasons:

- When we come to the book of Ephesians it is like going to that restaurant - spiritually! Ephesians has so much available for us it will astound us! We will want it all! And it all is so 'mouth-watering'!
- And...after we get a taste of what is here we will definitely come back for more!
- And...the menu is so large we will never get tired of it!
- And...we can come back to Ephesians over and over again and the second and third and fourth times are as good as the first!
- It is RICH with truth about our relationship with Christ!

Take your Bibles, please and open them to the New Testament book of Ephesians 1. If you didn't bring your Bible with you today I would encourage you to reach forward and grab that burgundy colored Bible and turn to page 1156. (1st Service – Video Café – Raise hands for a Bible and someone will come by and hand you one! Keep it up!)

As you are doing that let me ask you a question...

Did you know the book of Ephesians has 5 verses in it that actually 'talk' about the "riches in Christ"? No other New Testament book has as many verses that refer to OUR "riches in Christ" as this book! Look at them with me as you are finding it...

SLIDE – 1:7

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

SLIDE – 1:18

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

SLIDE – 2:7

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

SLIDE – 3:8

Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

SLIDE – 3:16

I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being...

No wonder Warren Wiersbe titles his commentary on the book of Ephesians...

SLIDE – BE RICH



Fly with me a few hundred feet up as we take a ‘bird’s eye view’ of the book of Ephesians. This will help us get our bearings. (Chicago’s Sears Tower? Seattle’s Space Needle? See landmarks.)

SLIDE – Getting Our Bearings

Key Theme: The believer’s riches in Christ! (Timed to come in)

SLIDE –

Key Verse: 1:3

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.

That is what our “riches” are... “*every spiritual blessing in Christ.*” And that is what our study of the book of Ephesians is going to inform us of. Do you know what you have been blessed with as a believer? I find most Christians really do not know what those spiritual blessings are. Ahhhh...what we are missing out on!

As we stand on the top of the towers looking down on the book of Ephesians to get our bearings we can best understand what is written to us by seeing that it divides itself into simply two sections. It would be like looking North from the towers...then looking South.

SLIDE – (All timed to come in)

Key Sections:

Chapters 1-3
Our Blessings
Our Position
Our Wealth

Chapters 4-6
Our Behavior
Our Practice
Our Walk

Once again look at 1:3 with me...READ

It talks of our ‘blessings’ we receive when we come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Turn with me to 4:1...READ

What we received (in Christ) is in chapters 1-3; and how we live out what we received (because we’re a Christian) is in chapters 4-6.

If we were to add to our list we could add these...

SLIDE – (All timed to come in)

Our Riches
Doctrine
Christ’s Love

Our Responsibilities
Duty
Our Life

Okay? If we can learn that we’re are half-way home!

You see...

SLIDE –

The Key Idea: If I just knew what I ‘spiritually’ received from Christ when I trusted Him as my Savior - I could live for Him with much more ease and personal victory!

Wouldn’t YOU like to live for Christ with much more ease and personal victory? Sure you would! Knowing Ephesians will do that for us!

ILL. - Let be put it this way...

You are aware that a week from Monday, January 28, 2008 at 9pm (Eastern Time) President Bush gives his State of the Union address, right? We are all used to these addresses where the President appears before all of Congress and many special guests and spells out where we’ve been as a Nation (our current condition if you will) and then proceeds to project where he would like to take us as the future unfolds.

Ephesians is like a State of the Church address! Remember now, the Church he is referring to here is us! The body of Christ! All those who have been saved by His grace! Christians! All who name the name of Christ as their Savior. And in the first half of the book we hear “our state” or “our condition”. In the second half of the book we are “encouraged” or “charged” to live according to the condition we are currently in. So let’s look at the book that way!

SLIDE – Understanding Our Condition

Chapter 1 - What God has done for us

FOCUS - God’s Sovereignty

Look at it just briefly with me...

(I will go through vv.1-14 listing the blessings!)

vv. 15-23 are a prayer! Do you know what for? To understand all that was just said in vv. 1-14!!!! READ vv. 18-19 (Ha! Ha!)

These are some heavy duty truths in this first chapter but just like any building that is going to stand the test of time a solid and sure foundation is the key. And that is what these verses are; a sure foundation.

And I know that as I do my best to explain them to you I will not succeed entirely to get the clear picture across. Why? I can't! I don't even understand it all myself! I just know it is true!

But they are wonderful! I will do my best and so enjoy it as I do. Some of you will differ on these thoughts - but I don't care! People have differed on these thoughts for 1000's of years and have yet come into complete agreement. As long as neither one of us are heretical - we're okay! You can't get it all and neither do I!

ILL. -

Do you understand all the components of your computer? NO! Neither do I! But I use it! All I care is that it saves and sends! We do stuff all the time we don't understand but we trust! This will be no different in some areas of theology. Listen - don't wait until you understand all that is in Ch. 1 before you live it! Believe it and go! So much of it is beyond me but I trust my God! Will you? You are in great condition!

Do you know where all of these start?
They start with salvation! With knowing Jesus Christ as our Savior!

That leads us to...

SLIDE -

Chapter 2 - What Christ has done in us
FOCUS - Christ's Grace

READ 2:8-9

End of the chapter talks about being in this new body called the church! Again, all because of salvation by grace!

ILL. -

I wonder today - how many of you seated right here have over the last year - just 2007 - received Jesus Christ as your Savior? Would you mind standing for us so we can all rejoice with you? Please?
(Dan Smith; Mike Grosch; Erin Grosch; Leah; Jess Johnson; Corey)
Last year? 2006
(Bob Manka; Paul Riniker; Charles Wiese; Peter & K Shank; Cathy;)

Just like all the rest of us - God reached down in His Sovereignty; Jesus touched us with His grace; and brought us into His family, the family of God! And He has given us all these spiritual blessings... and more!

We're in good condition! Not great! But good!

That leads us to...

SLIDE -

Chapter 3 - What the Spirit does through us
FOCUS - The Holy Spirit's Power

READ 3:20-21

Introduces us to the necessity of the church; people; as we minister to one another!

We actually do pretty well here! Our church/us a people reach out and care for one another through the power of the Holy Spirit working through us in so many ways! I couldn't begin to list them all!

- 30 + people who visit at the hospital
- Funerals - people who bake just for them/crew who volunteer
- Move - word gets around and families show up
- Summer - water ski team (30+ volunteers)
- Yesterday - 300+ students at Quiz (Beds; food; help)
- Sara - hospital (I go up there and there is Trina doing hair)
- People provide food

Through the Holy Spirit's power!

Family of God is important! Take care of each other! Encourage each other! Our health condition is strong!

In fact, just this past year we had a member of our church find out she had cancer. Well, let me have her tell her story for us!

SLIDE - Judy Twite's story!

Well, all of that is our condition. What effect does our condition have upon how we live today? Everything! If the state of the church is strong our walk in the future will be strong! So let's venture out and project our future for 2008, shall we?

SLIDE - Projecting Our Future

Chapter 4 - Living like believers
RESULT - Unity & Service

READ 4:3; 12-13

Unity - we are working on it! Making effort! Great!
Many have set desires aside for the body! Congratulations! Stretch!
Serving - what a spirit of service
Asked Marggi - over 60% in service (Avg. is 20%)
Attitude is wonderful!

Brings in more and more people...here is a couple who have caught it!

SLIDE – Mike & Sharon James' story!

Let's continue to do so!

And do you know where we are as a result of unity & service? We are at the point where we seriously need to add on to our building.

We can no longer contain...

120-150 children and growing

110-120 teens and growing

Over 700 adults in these 2 services which holds 300 + Video Café which runs around 100-120.

We need to build! (2004/550; 2005/650; 2006/750; 2007/900)

Building fund - \$200/month

That leads us to...

SLIDE –

Chapter 5 - Growing like believers

RESULT - Filled & Rejoicing

READ vv. 18; etc.

Commands us to live like this - impossible - exactly! That is why we need the Spirit in our lives! We need each other to encourage; we need the Spirit to fill us!

ILL. - Peace Univ. - \$12,000 saved

Then it gets dark in Chapter 6. The demonic realm. I hate it! But it is real!

SLIDE –

Chapter 6 - Standing like believers

RESULT - Defeat & Evangelism

READ vv. 13; 19-20

You see - When our theology is straight we can defeat the devil and the demonic realm because he is simply the father of all lies and when truth shines bright both in doctrine and in walk he is a defeated foe!

"You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free!"

SLIDE – Hands (Blessings)

A reminder - If we are believers we are all blessed because of Jesus Christ

A relief - If we are believers we belong to a body

A reassurance - If we are believers we can stand against the assault of our enemies

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