

## Session 2 - Knowing our identity from God's perspective – 03.05.20

### Introduction

One of the most amazing truths that we can see from the book of Ephesians is that God views His people in a very special way. There is something truly outstanding and amazing about the new position we find ourselves in now that we are in Christ. This is something that as believers, we may not always feel is true, but if we belong to Jesus, we need to recognise it and then live in the good of it. We need to start by agreeing with what God says about us.

Definition – In Christ is the reality of our ability to stand before God, it determines how God sees us because of the work of Christ, and defines and directs our steps now that we are different in this world (Paul puts it like this in 2 Corinthians 5:17 – If anyone is in Christ, he is a new Creation, the old has gone and the new has come.) There is now to be a different way of living because I am a new type of person – by being born again a person has become a new type of human.

Paul contrasts the low and perilous position we were in before we knew God with the amazing realities we have now been blessed with. Our current position as those who are in Christ is very different from the position of those who do not know God.

This is vital to remember; because we may feel like there is no outward difference. However, there is a world of difference between the people of God, those who are part of God's family and those who are in the world.

In the first couple of chapters Paul paints this incredible contrast between those in the world and those who belong to Christ. This contrast is so amazing that when we see it, we are left in wonder of the work of God in Christ to us and the power of the gospel.

The following things show we must draw out.,

1. Grace. The work of God in Jesus to save us is not about anything that we have done in ourselves. It is the gift of God. It is the work of His grace.
  - a. God's Grace is His unmerited and undeserved, lavish and freely given favour towards us. This means that when we appreciate what we have received in Jesus we are so unbelievably amazed at the overwhelming greatness of His grace towards us.
  - b. Ephesians 2:4-7 *'But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved — 6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.'*

- i. We get to be trophies of the grace of God throughout all of the ages.
    - c. Ephesians 2:8-9, *'For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9not a result of works, so that no one may boast.'*
    - d. Ephesians 1:5 *'In love he predestined us'*
    - e. Ephesians 1:6 *'to the praise of his glorious grace'*
2. Worship. It can easily be noted that the beginning of the letter is an overflow of worship from the heart of Paul for what he had seen of God's great plan and purpose being worked out in God's world through Jesus.
- a. Importance of Revelation – Ephesians 3:4 we are told that this letter is communicating to us of his insight into the mystery of Christ.
  - b. Revelation will lead you into worship and thanksgiving to God. Lived experience, it is not just a new thought, but something that grips the whole course of your life. This is then a directing change.

3. Contrast that Paul shares with us about the difference between our lives before and after Christ, is really exemplified in the truth that we are now sons and we were once slaves.

Ephesians 1:5 – *In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ*

Ephesians 2:1-3 *'And you were dead in the trespasses and sins Ǻin which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — Ǻamong whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body<sup>p</sup> and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

Once you and I were children locked in slavery under the devil, but now we are sons and daughters with an inheritance in Christ.

Perhaps you are sitting there and you are wondering whether oer not you can bbe free, you just seemed so burdened, well I have news for you. Jesus came to set the captives free and he called you to take part in God's plan and purpose for his world.

John 1:9-13 – *The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11He came to his own,b and his own peoplec did not*

receive him. 12But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Romans 8:12-17

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Jesus taught us to pray with Him; 'our father who is in heaven..' (Matthew 6:9)

John 20:17, 'Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (Jesus to Mary Magdelene)

We have become sons; we have become co-heirs with Christ

Ephesians 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

#### 4. What is in the inheritance.

- a. We are now blessed rather than cursed – Ephesians 2 describes a people who could be described as cursed – held under the prince of the power of the air
- b. We have been made alive in Christ when we were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:5)
- c. We have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 1:7)
- d. We have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit – He is the down payment of what is yet to come.
- e. Chosen in Jesus Christ – even before the world began.

#### 5. God didn't make a mistake, sometimes we can feel, I don't deserve this, is this the lot that I should have? Does God know who I am?

Ephesians 1:7-9 *'In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9making knownc to us the mystery of his will,*

God has lavished His grace upon us with all wisdom and understanding. He knows what He was doing and had full insight into your part in His eternal plan.

6. Prays that we would know the hope of our calling. We need to see that there is a purpose in our calling.
  - a. Hope of calling – **Fullness of inheritance**
  - b. Riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints – **God's inheritance is in us, we get to be the return on the sowing of Jesus the seed, the resurrection has brought many sons to glory.. (Romans 8:29)**
  - c. Immeasurable power towards us who believe – resurrection power (Romans 8:11 – the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us) – **Power to live.**
  - d. The purpose is to be involved in God's plan for His world
  - e. As we live the ultimate in the immediate, we live as sons of God, knowing our inheritance with the power of God towards us
  - f. Ephesians 1:9-10, *'making knownc to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.'*
  - g. God is calling us to live in the light of our sonship and calling of being involved in His ultimate

We are called to live as sons today, living our future in our present by the power of the Holy Spirit.